

Western Kentucky University

TopSCHOLAR®

---

Faculty/Staff Personal Papers

WKU Archives Records

---

10-9-1966

## UA37/44 Diary to Kelly

Gordon Wilson

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/fac\\_staff\\_papers](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/fac_staff_papers)



Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#), [Oral History Commons](#), and the [Social History Commons](#)

---

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty/Staff Personal Papers by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact [topscholar@wku.edu](mailto:topscholar@wku.edu).

October 9, 1966

THE ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE is a sort of national diary, coming down from Old English times and through the reigns of the Norman princes over England. Apparently it was started by one monastery and then borrowed by others to fill in dates for which there were few records. I once had the good fortune to study, for a graduate assignment, the CHRONICLE for the years 1066-1100, to watch for any changes in language that may have crept in when English was degraded to a non-literary language after the Normans came in. Though I was primarily doing a linguistic study, I could not help seeing the folkish side of the nameless monks who were given the task of bringing up the history to date each year. Good writers might write several pages, often rather poor in grammar but vigorous in narrative ability. Passages dealing with King Alfred's wars with the invaders are particularly thrilling, for they reveal, even in their crude language, the marvelous military ability of Alfred and his many-sided influence on his time and later times. Sometimes, however, the chronicler could not think of any event of importance for a whole year and would merely mention something like "Here (that is, in this year) many cattle died of murrain." We would like to know how this tragedy influenced the life of the brothers in the monastery, but just a bare sentence suffices for a whole year.

Many times I have wished that I had set myself the task of setting down each year a dozen or so items that would bring Western in focus or would tell what happened, in a big general way, in our family. Many years later I can think of many such years and some brief items. Suppose I write a small ANGLO-SAXON CHRONICLE of Western and of Gordon Wilson as a part of it.

"1908. Here I entered the Western Kentucky State Normal School. The General Assembly of Kentucky voted some more money to help the school in its struggles to get started. I got sick and had to leave on April 19."



"1909. In this year, while I was teaching at Moscow, Hickman County, the Board of Regents bought the Potter College property. I returned to Western, then called "the Normal," in early April and stayed till the end of the summer term. I went on the Boat Excursion down Barren River and also on the excursion to Mammoth Cave."

"1910. Here I returned to Bowling Green in early April and remained, as in 1909, through the summer term. Before I got back, the foundation of the Administration Building had been laid, and a great program was given when the cornerstone was placed in the wall. I worked in the summer in teachers' institutes and returned to school in the fall. Here I met my future wife. And here I went on my first excursion to the Cherry Farm."

"1911. In this year, on February 3, we moved to the Hill. I helped move the Library (one two-horse wagonload). In the fall I was chosen on the editorial staff of THE ELEVATOR, with Grover C. Morris, of Owensboro, as editor."

"1912. Here I began, in January, to teach classes in Grammar and Latin (the first Western-trained faculty member who remained with the college until his retirement, forty-seven years later). Here I became engaged to Avis Hines, who taught that fall in Nelson County, near Boston."

And thus I could write for dozens of years, even this late, events that concerned the college and me. Several people, since I retired, have asked me to "look over my diaries" and find out when certain events connected with Western actually occurred. I have been almost ashamed to confess that my regular diary-writing began to be irregular in 1912 and came to a full halt in 1913. But I wish I had had the foresight or something to set down, even as briefly as did the monks, some of the big events, whether they were as national as Alfred's victories or as local as the death of some cattle on a monastery farm.