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October 29, 1967

If I were an old man, in spirit as well as in years, I would lament the bigness of our big university, for it certainly has brought some great changes in the way the students know each other, as well as the way the teachers know each other. Frankly, it is nearly impossible, with our university spread all over such a big campus, for many of the teachers to know each other, unless they are the kind that seeks after ever newer and newer groups as they arrive on the campus. For instance, I would be willing to take a test with dozens of teachers who have been here from three to ten years as to how many of the faculty could be named and/or recognized. And I am sure that there is not a student now on the campus who knows as many students as I knew when we had a fifth as many of them. Now, doesn't that sound like an old man, sure enough?

However, I realize that the type of knowing people that I grew up with just cannot return, that our many-sidedness as well as our size forbids that. When we had one course, which everybody who stayed long enough ultimately had taken--and that meant precious few of the hundreds enrolled--, we had had a chance to see our classmates under all sorts of conditions and in all sorts of courses and had taken their measure, and they had taken ours. For example, I had ten courses in Latin here; for four or six of those I had had approximately the same classmates. I took fully a dozen courses that would now count as English and again had, time and again, some of the fellows I had known all along. The attrition affected largely the elementary courses, so that, if we lived past three or four courses in a single department, we were not likely to lose such a large percentage of those whom we had known in Grammar 2 or Ray's Higher Arithmetic. And a daily chapel, a social program of our own making if we were to have any, and a similar empty or near-empty pocketbook created a group of rather similar

people, and often some rather unusual achievements, too.

Poverty, lack of opportunity, self-support, lives that had not been brought up on entertainment as such--these forced us to rely on ourselves. If we were bored, we couldn't jump into a car and drive away. When we landed here in January after our teaching of one-roomed schools in the fall, we were here to stay until the end of the spring term or, at best, until the end of the summer term. Every year kept picking out the weaklings, so that the dozen who survived out of any given two hundred might be expected to do something pretty big. We have too often remembered only the survivors, forgetting how many casualties we had along the way. And, if we are honest, we might also admit that, as the years went along, we had a way of narrowing more and more our list of new acquaintances. Even some of the teachers whom I have known best have gone to seed on the classes that they taught back in the 1930's and have refused to believe that we have ever had any great ones since then.

No, it is impossible now for most people to know huge hosts of people for the simple reason that in such a crowd the tendency is to find a few congenial souls and know them well and to see the others as a sort of parade. I have often told people how the multitudes who come to Mammoth Cave National Park make little impression upon the regular employees of the Park Service and the Concessions. Therefore, these people tie on to someone who reappears, somebody like me, who can be remembered as having been around a long time. Inside the group of employees there is a remarkable coherence, even considering the vast differences between the backgrounds and education of the group. It is illuminating to attend a party honoring some long-time employee in the park. You could hardly imagine how warm-hearted and folksy these gatherings are. Thousands, even millions, of people--just people--have come and gone; but these few have remained and become

interested in each other.

All this is preliminary to my observation that our students are considerably like the Park Service and Concessions employees: those who are thrown together become rather close friends and, in their way, are probably as loyal to what you and I regard as Western as were students of other times. But it is nearly impossible to get a very large number interested in a school affair just because it is a school affair. Hence it seems to many oldsters who have talked to me that School Spirit, whatever that is, is dying. It seems doubtful whether there can ever be more than a partial success in interesting our students, as a whole, in any one thing. Witness the apathy so obvious about electing class officers or about voting or about a Homecoming Queen. But witness, among outsiders, what a small percentage of the registered voters in Bowling Green voted in the primary for commissioners. One out of six voters in my own precinct turned out, according to one of the officers of the election.

Some of the seeming lack of interest in whole-school affairs is due, I suspect, to a determination on the part of students to choose their own ways of doing things. If they want to go home rather than to some cultural program, home they go, and a cordon of police would have difficulty in restraining them. Some of them are encouraged in this narrowness by teachers, either directly or indirectly, for it would be revealing to count teachers' noses at any given whole-school program, in the day or at night. Part of this is just natural, as we often say for things that we cannot explain. Certainly our size and our widely-varying interests have had much to do with it, and we may have to content ourselves with it. Ages ago, when Indiana University was just becoming big, a few good-sized trucks could have hauled the crowds attending such big things as lectures by Friedjof Nansen or some internationally famous Shakespearean actor.