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UA37/44 Diary to Kelly

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August 9, 1969

Last night you rose to the occasion in every way. I sat and reviewed many previous occasions and rejoiced that Western has had for fourteen eventful years so avid a seeker after true values as you have always shown yourself to be. People who feel that we have grown faster in buildings and equipment than in spirit have always been wrong; I hope some of them changed their points of view last night.

All around Lancaster and me, as we sat away up in the grand stand, were generations of our people; and a great many of them, of all ages, greeted us warmly. Old-timers, who had come to see their children or neighbors' children graduate, sought us out and often introduced to us younger members of their families, who very plainly were envious of Big Brother or Big Sister as the very impressive procession and the awarding of the diplomas proceeded. Florence Schneider and I represented the earliest times of Western: she had first been employed here in early 1910; I took my first salary check to be deposited at the end of February, 1912. I had preceded Florence, however, in another way, for I enrolled as a student four full years before I taught my first class. She served Western a few months longer than I did, making a total of forty-eight years; I had only forty-seven and a half. My, what a lifetime for each of us! I told her last night that I wanted to parody the name of a popular picture and produce one called "The Unsinkable Florence Schneider."

The able handling of the huge group to be awarded diplomas showed capable planning; I still believe that every person's name should be called, just as it has always been, and that each one could thus be, ever so briefly, the center of attraction. I had many a thrill as I sat and watched and remembered.