

**THE FIRST HALF CENTURY OF  
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE: BEING  
HISTORICAL COLLECTIONS AND  
PERSONAL REMINISCENCES**

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The First Half Century of Dartmouth College: Being Historical Collections and Personal Reminiscences by Nathan Crosby

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**NATHAN CROSBY**

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THE FIRST HALF CENTURY  
OF  
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE:

BEING

*Historical Collections and Personal Reminiscences.*

BY NATHAN CROSBY,  
OF THE CLASS OF 1820.

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READ BEFORE THE ALUMNI AT THE  
COMMENCEMENT IN 1875.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST AND ORDER OF THE ALUMNI.

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*Gentlemen, Alumni of Dartmouth College:*

INTRODUCTION.

I do not regard this as a lecture, or history of the college, but simply historical data which I have gathered in my reading, and my own personal reminiscences of the origin and life of the college to the end of the first *fifty* years of its existence. The college charter was obtained in 1769. Six years ago we celebrated its first centennial. I am of the class of 1820, just midway its first one hundred years. I had personal acquaintance with the second President Wheelock, and met Mr. Gray, who visited the college in 1827. Both were graduates in the first class in 1771. I lived at one time near Rev. Mr. Miltimore, of Newbury, Mass., of the class of 1774, and was familiarly acquainted with Nathaniel Adams, Esquire, of the class of 1775, who was the author of the "Portsmouth Annals," and one of the founders of the New Hampshire Historical Society in 1823. Caleb Bingham, of the class of 1782, furnished my boyhood's satchel with his "Young Ladies' Accidence," "American Preceptor," and "Columbian Orator," and Daniel Adams, of the class of 1797, with his "Scholars' Arithmetic, or Federal Accountant." When I came to the study of Latin, I was introduced to the Latin Grammar of John Smith, A. M., of the class of 1773, and a professor of the college. When I entered in 1816, I found, as members of the faculty, Prof. Ebenezer Adams, of the class of 1791, and Prof. Roswell Shurtleff, class of 1799, with President Francis Brown, of the class of 1805. My childhood's pastor was Rev. Samuel Hidden, of the class of 1781, and the first lawyer I ever saw was James Otis Freeman, of the class of 1797. In fact, as I look over the catalogue, I find personal acquaint-

ances in almost all the classes of the first fifty years. My college life covered the period of the great legal controversy between the "University" and the "College," or, perhaps, rather, between the state and the college; and I have thought it well to give the Alumni the history of certain academical events of that period, lest evidence of them shall soon fail to exist.

The saying that "the world moves on," was never more impressively proven than in the history of Dartmouth college. We are here to-day, joyous in our goodly heritage. We take pride and pleasure in our distinguished faculty; in these college buildings; in this same old common; in the same old hills, river, and skies, with buoyant hope and expectation of future enlargement and glory; its days of poverty and struggles for life all past; its scant accommodations changed to elegant buildings, dormitories, observatory, library, and gymnasium; several department schools; large funds for scholarships, and donations changed in amount from a few days' labor in 1770, to half a million dollars in 1875.\* But this manhood had a wondrous birth and infancy,—an infancy fed from the paps of faith and prayer, and upheld by a Power stronger than fire, floods, or winter's frosts.

#### CHARTER.

The charter of Dartmouth college was granted by His Majesty King George the Third, at the solicitation of Gov.

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\* Hon. Tappan Wentworth, of Lowell, Mass., who died June 12, last, gave by will his whole estate to the college, subject to a few legacies and annuities, and to its accumulation to half a million before application to uses of the college. The property consists mostly of real estate of great present as well as prospective value, in the business centre of the city. It has been valued by appraisers at nearly \$300,000, having an income last year of about \$20,000. Mr. Wentworth was born in Dover, N. H., and belonged to the Wentworth family, of which Gov. John Wentworth, who granted the charter, was also a member, both uniting in William Wentworth, the emigrant to America, whose descent is traced, through a distinguished line of Westworths, to Rynold, in 1066. He was an eminent counsellor at law, and ex-member of congress. He received the honorary degree of Master of Arts here in 1830, where three of the Wentworth family have also received the degree of Doctor of Laws, Hon. John Wentworth, of Chicago, ex-member of congress, being one. Having lost his only child, a delightful son, twelve years old, twenty years ago, his love of learning, attachment to his native state, and pride in his eminent kindred who administered the government of the state in its early history for forty-six years, undoubtedly moved him to this great endowment—his "life work," as he said to a friend.



John Wentworth, royal governor of New Hampshire, December 13, 1769, who was moved thereto by Rev. Elcazer Wheelock, of Lebanon, Connecticut. Dr. Wheelock asked a charter for "Dartmouth *Academy*," but obtained a charter for "Dartmouth *College*." He had prepared his charter, and suggested trustees, but the governor changed the terms of it, and also the managing power. We cannot suppose these changes were made without courteous suggestion on the one part, and proper submission on the other. Governor Wentworth, who was a man of education and travel abroad, grasped fully Dr. Wheelock's views and labors, in the united forces of religion and education, to civilize the Indian as well as to elevate their own countrymen. Dr. Wheelock had a great plan for the enlargement of the borders of Zion, and the governor desired to turn it to the benefit of the people, and the honor of his administration. The charter was arranged, the trustees named, and the college established. The governor and four provincial officers were made trustees by the charter. Dr. Wheelock and six of his friends, mostly Connecticut clergymen, completed the board. Not a clergyman of New Hampshire was upon it.

#### CLERGYMEN THE TEACHERS OF THE TIME.

When this charter was granted there was only one *academy* (Byfield) in all New England, except perhaps the institution at Warren, R. I.,—which was afterwards removed to Providence and became a college,—and only two colleges, Harvard and Yale. From the settlement of the country, teachers of schools, and young men intending to go to college, were almost wholly instructed and prepared by clergymen. The ministers of that day were generally graduates, and some of them became distinguished teachers. Dr. Wheelock had been a most successful preacher in many parts of New England during the Great Awakening of 1740,—a preacher after Jonathan Edwards's own heart. He had become so universally known as a man of great power as well as of great piety, that he had no difficulty in obtaining students when he opened his house as a teacher.

Many of the clergymen of Dr. Wheelock's time were men of extraordinary culture and power. They came forth from

and had been trained in a long line of men of Puritan thought and opinion. They had devoted themselves to the two great twin doctrines, of freedom in faith and in government. The earliest ministers among the Pilgrim and Puritan emigrants had been driven from their native lands because they had made themselves obnoxious to both church and state by their independent and persistent discussion of the great gospel inherent right of man to believe for himself and to govern himself. They were men of learning, men of enthusiasm and courage, and fled hither, bearing the precious seed of their new and better way to rule and to live to this new and virgin soil, where time and space and a growing people would give them a home and a hearing. These men at once, as the first living breath of freedom, established schools along-side the pulpit, as the key-stone of the arch upon which their new temple of freedom could rest and abide. They prepared teachers for the schools, fitted young men for college, became professors and lecturers, and gave sentiment and tone to public opinion and thought in sermons, addresses, pamphlet discussions, and wide-spread correspondence. They visited the schools, catechised the children, and expounded the new gospel of freedom to the people, as next in importance to the gospel of grace—a gospel which gave “God his due, and Cæsar his, and the people theirs.” Having never been allowed to hold civil office or vote in the old country, they abstained from both for many years in the early history of the colonies. The future historian of our colonial life will find facts and influence enough to award to the clergymen, before the revolution, the maximum share in originating, building up, and sustaining the public sentiment and courage which accomplished our independence.

The same wonderful talent, learning, and consecration of the early clergy to the cause and growth of learning, religion, and freedom, continued down to the early years of the present century. Clergymen were as distinct from the people then, as Catholic priests are now from their adherents. There were half a dozen of such old clergymen in my neighborhood in my young years. They were grave men, in long coats and vests and small-clothes, with knee- and shoe-buckles, with the tri-

cornered or cocked-up hat, as it was called. They rode through the towns on horseback, carrying in one hand a long cane as a badge of office, and a reminder to Rosinante to be quiet at times as well as grave always. The children knew them, thought of their catechism, and gave them a wide berth—stood still and straight as soldiers, made obeisance, and stared them out of sight.

#### DR. WHEELOCK AND THE GREAT AWAKENING.

Dr. Wheelock was the great grandson of Rev. Ralph Wheelock, of Shropshire, who was one of those eminent non-conformist preachers, and, suffering persecution for dissenting from the established religion, came to New England in 1637, and settled in Dedham, Mass. The Doctor was the only son of Ralph and Ruth (Huntington) Wheelock, and was born in Windham, Conn., in May, 1711, was graduated at Yale in 1733, and was ordained and settled over the North Society in Lebanon, Conn., in 1735. His earnest and eloquent labors soon aroused great religious interest among his people. The "Great Awakening of 1740," as it is now historically called, soon followed, and the whole country became absorbed in the most wonderful religious excitement, perhaps phrensy, known in our history or the history of the church. Dr. Wheelock took a place in the very front rank of the preachers and agitators of this religious earthquake. He was a live man from the commencement of his ministry. He had heard the thunderings of Whitefield, and the mighty reasonings of Edwards at Northampton upon *justification by faith and not by works*—a living faith, and not dead works. Ministers had been settled by towns over parishes for life, and the churches were sunk in a lifeless orthodoxy. Pastors and peoples found themselves unequally yoked. Great minds became inactive for want of appreciative hearers; and, again, cultivated congregations starved for mental food. Dull formality and spiritual pride were fast removing the Puritan landmark of salvation by faith in the Son of God. The half-way covenant by baptism was taking the place of the new birth as a qualification for church membership, and, if a baptized person was refused the communion, although leading an