



University of California *1908-13*

On August 26, 1908, I registered at the University of California in the College of Commerce. Although my father and grandfather had encouraged me to study mining engineering, I knew I did not want to be an engineer, but then again I didn't know what I wanted to be or do. Commerce looked good, as it covered many lines of activity, and my high school courses fit the college curriculum in that field.

Of course, I had to find work. My father could only spare twenty-five dollars a month for my board and room, and even this had to be discontinued all too soon. I had to earn money for everything else, including books and uniforms for the military. I worked for the real estate firm of Mason-McDuffie putting up rental and "for sale" signs, digging pestholes, and erecting billboards. (I have hated billboards ever since.) I was a mailman at Christmas and a logger in the summer. Occasionally I worked in a bookstore, which I liked very much, and sometimes even earned \$2.00 or \$2.50 a day. I had to watch myself because I saw too many books I wanted to buy.

I was never much at athletics. After toying with football, track, and rowing, I came to the conclusion that there were too many fellows far better than I and I really didn't have the time, as I had to work whenever and wherever I could. Anyway, in those days, being a successful athlete brought you only local fame and could get you flunked out. I decided to limit my activities to military science, which I really liked.

The military was a good experience for me, for I was really a very shy fellow, inclined to hold back, and found it hard to get acquainted with strangers—especially women. Military work gave me confidence, most particularly when I had the duty to command even a squad.

I became a cadet in the University of California Cadet Regiment and, by graduation, rose to the rank of captain, I commanded a company of one hundred men and served as an instructor to freshmen cadets. I added to my interest in military tactics by joining the First Company Field Artillery, California National Guard, at the Presidio. I was made a second lieutenant and could now wear a sword at drill time.

I went home for the summer of 1909 and again worked for my father doing carpentry work, shingling, and nailing clapboard on buildings. My father came to realize during the summer that I was not interested in engineering, contracting, and especially undertaking. My brother Leslie was even more of a student than I and would certainly become some sort of a professional man. Our father needed us, as he was nearly sixty years old, had suffered back trouble for years, and had lost an eye while making a windlass for a mine about the time I was finishing high school.

Before I left to go back to Berkeley, my dad and I had a talk, and he, in his gentle way, said he knew he could not count on me and did not blame me for wanting to follow a different path in life. He also understood that Leslie had great promise in the academic field. He smiled and wryly added, "I guess that leaves me with Dewey." And then we grinned at each other, for Dewey was the least likely to try for a higher education. Girls were more his pursuit. As it turned out, he was the one who took over Dad's business—at least the undertaking side of it.

In the spring of my freshman year, I had been "rushed" by Del Rey, a local fraternity or club. Its fun-loving, hard-joshing, rough-and-tumble living and fellow poverty-stricken members brought out the hidden qualities of a mixer in me. I agreed to join, but stated that I couldn't live in the house until my finances improved. My summer paychecks made this possible.

On returning to the university in August 1909, I went to live at the Del Rey Club at 2203 Atherton. There I was more the exception than the rule. There was much time wasted and too little attention to studies. The rating of Del Rey among the fraternities was low, not far from the bottom of the list. Also, the Dellers resented compulsory military courses, which the Morrill Act governing Land Grant Colleges required. Consequently, those of us who enjoyed them were tormented to some extent and our

uniforms were kicked around. Of course, the dissidents treated their own uniforms much worse.

In the second semester of my sophomore year, the most memorable event of my entire life occurred, although I didn't recognize it at the time and nothing came of it for a few more years. One day a girl I had met once or twice, Ethel McConnell, telephoned to ask me to come to "a little party" at her home a few nights hence. There would be dancing and refreshments. She said she also needed two more boys and asked if I could bring a couple from my house. I accepted with thanks and promised the two boys. When we arrived, we were admitted to a spacious parlor with folding doors opening to a large dining room, both cleared for dancing. There were about two dozen couples by the time everyone arrived.

I was no more inside the door of the McConnell house than I spied a beautiful girl, the most attractive girl I had ever seen. She was a brunette—lovely, genial—and wore a red dress with flowers on it. Above all, she had the most beautiful brown eyes I had ever seen. When introduced to her, I found she was a classmate and her name was Grace Noble. She was with another classmate, Elton Charvoz, a premedical student.

Now this girl was obviously popular, for she was dancing all the time with different men. What a beautiful dancer she was, too. I somehow got a couple of dances with her, but she was constantly worried about Charvoz, who was suffering from asthma. Although I admired her concern, I felt it unlikely that a college sophomore would be overly worried about another classmate unless he was badly injured or dying. Each time I managed a dance with her, I became more uneasy. Her compassion for Charvoz, although admirable, began to make me think she might be engaged to him. And already I did not want her engaged to anybody. Something had happened to me. I had fallen in love almost instantly. Grace Noble, this striking brunette with her big brown eyes, taller than an average woman, seemed to be my ideal girl.

The following Monday afternoon, I was walking with Beverly Clendenin across the campus when Grace Noble approached us. She smiled and spoke to Bev, but never even noticed me. What a blow! Anyway, I felt snubbed and did not again approach her until I was a graduate student. Then I found Grace Noble again, and I never looked at another woman for the rest of my life.

At the end of the 1910 spring semester, elections had been held for vice-president and manager of the Del Rey Club. One group, who felt that alcohol should be limited to banquets and more attention should be paid to scholastic achieve-

ment, nominated me and labeled me the "dry" candidate. The "wet" candidate, Bill Janicke, saw no reason to put any limitations on anything (especially beer). I won by one vote. My term was for one year (later affirmed for another), and I was to receive free room and board.

Because our old clubhouse needed repairs, I decided that I had better stay in Berkeley that summer of 1910 to oversee the work. I also took a few typing and stenography courses and got a job as a dishwasher in a restaurant.

The year 1910-11 at the University of California began on August 30 and marked quite a change in my life. My mother, pleading a heart condition, which was a panacea for having things her way, rented a house in Berkeley for herself and my two brothers. Leslie was now enrolled at the university and Dewey in Berkeley High School. Although he joined Del Rey, Leslie remained with my mother until he graduated, finished his master's degree, and left for Spain in 1916. I often used to wonder how my dad got along in Bishop, alone and with the extra financial burden of two homes to keep up. No one volunteered this information, and I never dared inquire.

When the new semester started, I was pretty sure that I wanted to be a lawyer, so I loaded up on three jurisprudence courses as well as Latin, economics, history, and the military. Being house manager of Del Rey was a tough job because the limit for room and board payments was twenty-five dollars per member per month. Right in the middle of the semester the boys would decide to have an extra dance without additional levies. Some fellow would invariably shout, "Aw, pay it out of the deficit." This would overrun the budget. Then I had to use my imagination to reduce the debt by having the butcher throw in a liver or two for a customer's dog. I told him we had six dogs, so I received a lot of extra liver for the boys.

I had taken a great interest in the 1910 campaign for governor of California. My granddad Marden was happy when Hiram Johnson won the governorship and invited me to go with him to Sacramento to see Johnson inaugurated at noon on January 1, 1911.

Shortly after this, I celebrated my twenty-first birthday and could vote for the first time, in a special election to determine whether women should be allowed to vote. I believed that my mother and the other women of my acquaintance knew just as much about political affairs as most men I knew (and a lot more than a mighty lot of them). I have always been proud of the fact that I cast my first vote for women's suffrage.

In the spring of 1911 ex-president Theodore Roosevelt, back from his safari in Africa, came to Berkeley to give the Charter Day address and the Earl Lectures at the university. I was in the Greek Theater to hear him

deliver his Charter Day address. The next afternoon he was Colonel Roosevelt the Rough Rider when he reviewed the cadets. I also attended the Earl Lectures and was honored by being one of the undergraduates introduced to Roosevelt and given the chance to shake his hand.

Accompanied by brother Dewey and a fellow Deller, I spent the summer at my granddad Marden's lumber camp in northern California. My job as a loader of Big Wheels was back-breaking work during the day, but most evenings I went over to my granddad's cabin. We spent these evenings together, talking about logging, the waste of it, the economics of the timber industry, and politics. I especially soaked up his yarns of the early days in California and Nevada. They were music to my ears, and I never got enough of them.

I left the logging camp a little early, as it was quite a job to organize the new house before registration on August 29, 1911, I settled into my career choice of jurisprudence by taking six courses in that field.

In my senior year there were all kinds of splendid balls and fraternity dances. The most glamorous one was the military ball, to which I took a lovely Copa de Oro girl, all the time wishing I could have asked Grace Noble. I did see her there, and she was beautiful. In 1912 the ladies had fancy cards that were filled out by writing in the name of a partner for each of the dances. I tried to get a dance with her, but she referred me to her escort. I never did approach him, as we had crossed swords at a drill exhibit once. I knew he'd never let me have a dance with her anyway.

In my last semester, I heard that Professor Adolph Miller, the head of the Department of Economics, was seeking a reader for the following year. A reader was usually a graduate student assigned to a professor to monitor classes, check attendance, run errands, give examinations, and correct papers—a "man Friday." I went to see Miller, a most unpopular professor, and asked for the reader job. He reminded me that he usually went through two or three readers a semester, as they always quit in short order. I assured him I would stay. He scowled and sternly asked why I thought I would stay when others never did. My reply was: "Because I need the job badly and I'll just have to stay. And I assure you I will do the work no matter how hard it is—or you are." Miller hired me at fifty dollars a month, which was big money for me.

May 15, 1912, was graduation day at the University of California. My whole family, including Granddad Marden, was in the audience. Instead of a cap and gown, I proudly wore my ROTC uniform and was given my diploma by the university's president and my commission by Governor Hiram Johnson. Sadly, I knew I might have been the colonel of the regiment instead of second in command

had I not been hospitalized for mumps in the spring. Not only did I lose out on this honor, but my eyes had been damaged to the extent that I had to wear glasses for the rest of my life.

After a miserable summer in Chico, working as a carpenter's helper in a shop with a tin roof and a temperature of around 120 degrees each day, I came back to Berkeley a week or so before the university opened on August 28, 1912, to take up my duties as reader for Professor Miller. I worked for him my whole graduate year, although I knew he was imposing on me at times. Then a lecturer or assistant professor, Sol Blum, was stricken with tuberculosis, and Miller assigned his sections to me. It was extremely hard to manage these extra chores and keep up with the difficult law course and all my other responsibilities. In the long run, it paid off and changed my life.

Among other courses, I studied the law of mines and waters under Professor William E. Colby. This subject was right down my alley, for my family background had given me a good knowledge of the technical features of mines and mining. Colby and I became great friends because of our mutual interest in mining and our love of the Sierra Nevada. He was the best friend and right-hand man of John Muir, then president of the Sierra Club. One night I accompanied Colby to a meeting of the Sierra Club in San Francisco and had the opportunity to meet and talk with Muir, who died shortly afterward. The old man, who looked like a disreputable shaggy dog, made an enormous impression on me with his discussion of the Hetch Hetchy problem in Yosemite.

And again there was politics. Shortly before we graduated in the spring of 1912, Woodrow Wilson, governor of New Jersey, came to the campus to deliver the annual Phi Beta Kappa lecture. I attended the lecture and was so fascinated by it that I went to the library and began reading up on the man and the issues he had raised.

The time came to vote in November. Hating myself for abandoning "TR," I cast my first presidential vote for Wilson. Being young, I wanted that first vote to be for a winner.

Of course, I worked hard on my Republican relatives to vote as I did. My parents refused as well as my old granddad Marden. He had never voted for a Democrat since 1852, when he was only twenty years old. If a man had a mustache or beard, no one prevented him from voting in California gold rush days. All he needed was a signature and an address, so he couldn't vote twice. In 1852 Granddad voted for Franklin Pierce, which he said proved that he was incompetent to vote.

To save money this year, I lived with my mother and brothers and walked the mile to my classes four times a day. Going across the northwest corner of the campus, I often passed Grace Noble, who was in the graduate School of Education. By now I was getting some smiles and a word of greeting. She even invited me to a party at her home. When I had to refuse because of an engagement with a law group, I wrote her a formal letter on Del Rey engraved paper. She regarded it as a real insult to her attempt to be friendly.

Woodrow Wilson was elected president of the United States and appointed Franklin K. Lane of California as his secretary of the interior. Although Wilson had never met him, it was known that Lane would promote San Francisco's interests in construction of the Hetch Hetchy dam, a project uppermost in Democratic Party objectives. Lane asked Adolph Miller, a close friend from JJC Berkeley days, to be one of his assistants in Washington. Miller agreed, as he was wealthy and tired of university work, and the challenge of the new administration was enticing. His only request was that he wanted to bring a young assistant along with him. Lane agreed to that, and Miller threw the proposition to me. I agonized between his offer of twelve hundred dollars a year as his confidential clerk and giving up my goal of finishing law school. But my family and Will Colby convinced me I should grab this opportunity.

Miller advanced me the fare to Washington and added: "You'll need formal attire back there. You can have an old outfit I don't use anymore, and if you need some alterations, go to my tailor and I'll foot the bill." His gift was nineteenth-century sartorial elegance. I used it time and again in Washington and wore it when I got married.

Just before I was going to leave for the staff of Secretary of the Interior Franklin K. Lane, I was walking across campus and met Pearl Lutz, the sister of a club brother. Who should be with her but Grace Noble. Pearl stopped me and said, "We heard you are going to Washington. We'd like you to come over and have dinner with us."

Before I could say anything, Grace spoke up: "Pearl, it's not any use trying to get him, he's always too busy." Pearl laughed and repeated her invitation, and I accepted. We agreed on a date for that. Then she threw out a dare to me by asking, "Aren't you going to see Grace before you leave?"

She really shocked me with that, and, not looking at Grace, I answered, "I have no date with her, but I wish I had one." And I astonished myself even more when I turned to her and asked, "Can I see you some evening before I go?" I was stunned when she replied that she would be glad to see me, and we agreed on a night for me to come to her home.

With this encouragement and my newly found self-assurance with the Washington position, I thought I was cool and calm as I walked up to her front door to keep our date just two nights before I was to leave Berkeley. There was only one problem. I was so excited that I showed up on her doorstep almost a half-hour early. I must have run part of the way or I was very nervous, for she later told me that I was perspiring so profusely that I took the varnish off the chair I sat on all evening.

I met her parents and sister, and then, almost on cue, they quietly withdrew, leaving us alone in the parlor. Grace was genuinely friendly and cordial. I was hardly myself, I was so thrilled just to be with her. I felt as if I either babbled or sat as silent as the sphinx and gaped at her. For me, it was an enchanted evening. All my dreams were coming true. Grace Noble was more beautiful than ever. She was even more charming, intelligent, and delightful than I had imagined. The hours flew by. It was after midnight when her mother appeared to suggest that I might be getting too tired, what with my long trip ahead.

As I left Grace, she expressed hopes for my success and added, "Drop me a line sometime, Mr. Albright."

I managed to blurt out, "Thanks for a lovely evening and good-bye, Miss Noble." I cursed myself all the way home for being such a clod, I knew I was already deeply in love with Grace, and here I had probably wrecked any hope I had to make a good impression on her.

Several days later, at 9:00 A.M. on Tuesday, May 27, 1913, as I was about to leave for Washington from the Oakland Sixteenth Street Station, I discovered that my train was late, so I used the time to phone Grace and asked once again if she really meant it when she asked me to write her. She assured me she did. When my train stopped in Ogden, I mailed my first postcard to her, and when I changed trains in Chicago, I sent her another one. After I arrived in Washington, I wrote a sixteen-page letter postmarked June 1, 1913, 11:00 P.M.