An address to Prof. A. L. Nelson before the students of W. L. University at one of the weekly Morning Lectures in the Chapel of the University, Lexington, Ky. (Delivered in 1900)

I had the honor one day last session, in giving from this platform some account of the earlier history of Washington College, as it came under my observation.

These reminiscences came down to the time when Gen. Robert E. Lee rode into Lexington to assume the duties of President of Washington College.

He had ridden all the way from Rockingham County on his famous war horse Traveller.

It was on the 18th day of September, 1860, that Gen. Lee arrived in town. It was near sunset, a pleasant autumnal day, and a few of the citizens, not distinguished for great business activity, were standing in scattered groups, strolling along the main street of the town.

It was fast known when Gen. Lee would arrive, and he was not expected on that
particular day, and he was not observed as he rode up the street until he was opposite the Court House. As soon as he was recognized, every head was bared, and in return the See gratefully lifted his hat, but there was no cheering. No sound expressed the deep feeling of respect which filled the hearts of the spectators. That feeling was more akin to reverence and restrain, and the fever stood in silent admiration.

The See drew rein in front of the Livingston Hotel as if about to dismount. Prof. White happened to be on the street, nearly opposite the hotel, and he promptly went to meet the See as he sat upon his horse. After a brief conference they moved on to Col. Reid's residence, where Prof. White now resides, and his son-in-law, Prof. White, lived with him. The See remained a guest in that house, in some days, until his college time was made ready for return.
reception of his family. The President's house at that time was the house recently occupied by Prof. Grimes and now partly filled by Prof. Cross. The morning of the day preceding Prof. Lee's arrival was spent in receiving calls of respect from members of the Board of Trustees and faculty and other citizens of the town. Later in the day he made his first visit to College. For the benefit, chiefly of the new students present, let us go with him and view him the buildings and premises. The buildings were old and unprepossessing in appearance. They consisted of the freshest structures which have columns in front with the two intervening buildings, and a one-story row of six rooms on either side, while beyond Hall and Tucker Memorial building stood. Two professors' houses stood on either side of the Campus. In small yards embled in cedar hedges.

The chemical and philosophical apparatus had been destroyed by Sherman's army during the invasion in 1864.
Libraries scattered and torn. The buildings damaged. The campus was a rectangle limited on the lower side by an avenue running from the S. M. I. gate to Barrington Street and passing immediately in front of his chapel. The ground before the avenue was divided into lots for the use of the professors. The gate gave no sign of disappointment, but no doubt his quick eye took in at once the needs and the possibilities of the location. The session was to open on Sept. 2nd. Airing to the straightened condition of the Southern people at the close of the war, it could not be expected that all the young men who desired to come to college could come. One hundred and forty-six found means in various ways to defray expenses. Some brought slaves in salt or exchange for board and tuition. One young man, who afterwards became a distinguished Massey of Arts, brought a lot of home-made blankets for hire with its pay expenses.
At length the day for the session to be held arrived, and Gen. Lee was to be formally inducted into the office. He declined a public inauguration, and the oath of office was taken before Justice from White in the present Lapse Lecture Room, in the presence of the members of the Board of Trustees and Faculty. Gen. Lee stood on the front side of the room, midway between the two windows.

The faculty then consisted of the President and the four Professors of Latin, Greek, Mathematics, and Chemistry, aided by a few assistants. There were only five class rooms, and about forty-five students in the college. The first office was the room adjoining the present Lapse Lecture Room. He spent the morning hours until 2 P.M. chiefly in his office or in visiting the class rooms.

His correspondence was extensive, and he had no private secretary and the writing of manuscript letters occupied
much time and labor. He called for weekly reports from the faculty and the assistants and he was particular that these reports should be neatly and carefully prepared. These weekly reports were not forwarded to parents but were required in order that the President might be accurately informed in regard to the attendance and progress of the students.

They were carefully examined and diligent students were invited to list office for conference. I have heard students say that while Gen. Lee was extremely polite in these interviews, they were anxious to avoid another conference. Gen. Lee made it a point to become acquainted with each of the students. He would find out where they were from, how they had been employed, what opportunities they had for making preparation for college—submitting of their homes and family, and what was the condition of their people since
the war, and he made them feel that he was interested in them. Many of the young men in attendance were fully prepared for college, owing to the fact that the schools had been broken up during the war, and it became necessary to establish preparatory classes.

At the session of 1865-6 advanced money began to come from friends in the North, and Gen. Lee was encouraged to feel that a brighter future was opening for the college. A meeting of the Board of Trustees was called on April 26th, 1866, and on the recommendation of the faculty, the old curriculum as well as the Saturday holiday was abolished, and the following independent schools were established:

5. Natural Philosophy; 6. Aet. Philosophy;
7. Affiliated Mathematics; 8. Practical Chemistry;
9. Modern Languages.

At that meeting four new professors were elected: Col. Richard S. Fr. Gudlock became
C. M. Allan was appointed to the chair of Applied Mathematics, and Prof. Edward S. Perry to the chair of Modern Languages.

Rev. J. A. LeFevre D. D., of Baltimore, was elected Professor of Moral Philosophy and, having accepted his name appeared in the forthcoming catalogue, but he afterwards declined before entering upon the duties of his professorship, and Rev. John P. KeelPatrick D. D., President of Lander College, was made Prof. of Moral Philosophy.

These were all eminently wise appointments and added much to the attractions of the college. During the summer of 1866 steps were taken to improve the premises. The arbor was removed and the campus was enlarged to its present dimensions, and trees were planted. It was determined to build a chapel and a new house for the President, and all these matters were placed in the hands of the President, who...
became a linus man than ever. He saw
watched the progress of these buildings with
keen and critical interest. It was said that
he saw every stone in the basement of the
chapel placed in position. He was anxious
in regard to the acoustics properties of the room
and it was at his suggestion that the
wooden beams were placed across the
ceiling so as to prevent a resonance of sound.
As the building of the chapel neared com-
pletion a lady of Forbes happened
to visit Lexington and she asked that the
ladies' be at to be allowed the privilege of
placing an organ in the chapel. Of course
the privilege was granted with thanks,
and in due time the organ was now there
was placed in position.
When the chapel was complete. Gen. Lee's
wife was transferred to the front corner
of the basement.
The session of 1866 opened with the influx
of a large number of students - there were
1799 enrolled. They came in numbers from
every southern state and they were all fine... a body of young men as I have heard... and many of them for after life became distinguished men... Most of these were quartered in the houses of families in town... Several dormitories could be furnished in the college buildings as the rooms were needed for other purposes... Each subsequent year... few new administrations large... numbers of students were in attendance... the largest number was 710... during these years there was no railroad... to Lexington... and students came in old-fashioned stage coaches from the upper and lower valley... and packet boats on the rivers from Philomont and Lynchburg... it was interesting to see the arrival of crowds at the opening of the sessions... Dr. Lee was an earnest Christian... he was an active member of the vestry of the Episcopal church... but he was liberal in his Christian sentiments... he was...
decisions I hearing the various churches represented in the faculty. He exerted the influence in a quiet way to induce the students to attend divine worship in the church of their choice. He invited the pastors of the various churches in turn to conduct, in turn, the regular morning services in the chapel. While he was opposed to compulsory attendance on the part of the students, all were invited to attend these services. He was prompt and regular in attendance himself. He invariably took a seat near the front in the chapel, and he humbly knelt during the prayers.

In Nov. 1866 Col. Jno. Preston Johnston was elected Prof. of History and Literature. He had been a member of President Stanis' staff and was then a prominent lawyer in Louisville. He was an accomplished gentleman and scholar, and became an ornament to the faculty. His home was
at Clifton beyond the river where he
discharged a gracious kind and literal
hospitality. At that time every member
of the faculty except Col. Allan was a married
man. Mr. John S. Hill, who at one time
was a Cadet at the I. M. D. in a recent
racy article descriptive of Clifton in his
day said, among other things, that
visiting a Presbyterian girl at Clifton, was
like sitting on an iceberg, cracking
hailstones with one's teeth. Col. Allan
did not find it so. but with that capital
good sense which he manifested on all
subjects and on all occasions, thought
and non the least and hand. I the p
the most cultivated and charming of
Clifton's Presbyterian girls, and it is
there was no bachelors in the faculty.
Judge Brockenbrough's private law school,
which had been conducted successfully
for many years by that eminent jurist
was incorporated in the college and the
last addition to the faculty during Gen.
lee's administration was made by the election
of the Hon. John Randolph of Suckey, as one of
the professors of law. In words of mine and
needed to express the admiration in which
he was held by all who knew him, the
stately building now nearing completion
attest the steadfast national life and the devoted
lost of his numerous admirers.

Hill was set the morning hours of
each day in Cadet College, with his
afternoon were usually devoted to recreation.
he enjoyed taking long rides in trains
and sometimes the ride as far as the
Rockbridge Baites.

On one occasion as he was returning from
the Baites, he was met by an old soldier
named Sisson in the woods on the
further side of Poor House Hill. Sisson
expressed great delight in seeing the
Gen. and expressed to him that the
Gen. protected but Sisson insisted, and
taking of his hat, he turned it over his
head and gave three cheers for Gen. Lee.
the General much amused, rode away leaving Clinton briefly cheering, alone, in stiff mood. When the weather was unfavorable for horseback exercise, Lee paid visits to the families of the college community and of the town. Where he was always of welcome visitors, and he really enjoyed it. He had a store of anecdotes which he related remarkably well, and he listened with interest and pleasure to stories who had something worth saying. He was a good laugher, which had left him short of speech. It did set his teeth. Lee made felt by the children where he visited, and especially the little girls, and made them love him.

It would be a mistake to suppose that all of the fire had gone out of Lee less life. Out a few rare occasions, under sudden and just provocation, I have seen his eyes flash, and his face flush, and the well-known muscle on the right side of his neck start out a quirk.
motion, a sure indication of hot feeling of mind, but he never lost his self-control.

It was my good fortune to be thrown in almost daily touch with him for five years, which gave me the opportunity of knowing him as well as almost any living man, and I feel that he filled the measure of an ideal, perfect character more fully than any one I ever knew. His life was a quiet and happy one, and on the whole he seemed content, and yet there were times when he seemed defeated by the failure of the cause so dear to his heart, but no one ever heard him blame anyone as the cause of that failure. Every poor Confederate soldier secured his sympathy, and no old Confederate ever failed to turn in vain for assistance. He freely accepted invitations to spend the evening with company at private houses, and he was the life and soul as well as the lion of such companies. He usually spent about 1/2 month of his
summer vacations either at the Farm Springs or at the White Sulphur. And summers he met Mr. George Peabody at the White Sulphur Springs or at other places.

He made a fine impression. In the early months of the following session he received an important letter from Mr. Peabody which excited his profound interest. It implied several visits of the faculty to meet him in his office. When they came he carefully closed the door and read the letter from Mr. Peabody announcing the gift to Washington College of several thousand dollars in Government bonds. As he read the letter his hand trembled with excitement. It was not the excitement of action, as when mounted on his charger he led his devoted army to victory, but the excitement due to its reception by a great benefactor to the college. He flouted so well - the sum of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars was realized from
This gift.

Then, when he became president of the college, his health seemed to be firm, and he devoted himself unstintingly to the duties of his office. In the spring of 1868, however, he found it necessary to take a trip south to recuperate his health. He was absent from the middle of April to the middle of May and returned improved in health. In March, 1870, the faculty began again to feel anxious about his health and addressed to him a letter expressing their concern, and advised him to take a furlough and rest from the cares and anxieties of his office, and he consented to take their advice and went south.

When the session of 1870-71 opened, Gen. Lee was not absolutely sick, but he began to show signs of decreasing health. The last meeting of the faculty which he attended was on Sunday, Sept. 27th, 1870. The next after from he attended a summer heat fro.
tralid meeting & the resting of the Episcopal Church. Then that meeting adjourned he went home and supper was immediately announced. The family took their places standing at the table and Gen. Lee stood a little hear him at the foot of the table and was about to ask the blessing, but he could not utter a word. Some students were present by invitation and they with Gen. Custis Lee, laid the table up for a luncheon. Mrs. Barton and Madison were quickly in attendance. A small bed was brought to the dining-room and the General was placed upon it and he remained upon it until his death. He never spoke coherently after his attack. He several times tried to speak but he could not be understood. A fumigating and fader was given him and he tried to write but the writing was illegible. He was ill ever hurried what his last wishes were. He continued in this condition two weeks.
and died on the morning of Wednesday, Oct. 12. It was a sad day for Kenmore College. I was holding a recitation when Gl. Allan came into my classroom and quietly whispered that Gen. Lee was dead. I announced the sad fact to the class and dismissed it. All of the church bells in town were tolled for Gen. Lee in the following order.

First a single stroke of the Kenmore bell, and when the sound died out it was followed by a stroke of the Presbyterian bell, then the Methodist, and lastly the Baptist, and they were repeated in this order for an hour.

Soon after Gen. Lee's death, his body was moved from the dining room to the front room, and prepared for burial. A barber trimmed his hair, which fell in locks upon the floor. I took up a small parcel from the floor, and some of it is here in an old-fashioned breast box in my family, showing her last illness, her head, one of the heaviest rain storms, ever known.
in this section. It raised in torrents for three days. Drift wires became a surging stream which washed away the bridge at the point, and the raft lines on the river banks destroyed the canal and broke up freight traffic with the cities.

A suitable casket could not be found in Lexington for Gen. Lee's burial. It was learned, however, that several caskets had been received at Alexandria. Three, just before the flood in the river, but they had been washed away. One was found lodged on an island a few miles below Lee's, and was brought and put into condition and Gen. Lee's body was placed in it. It was found to be rather small, and Gen. Lee had to be buried without his shoes.

On Thursday (Oct. 13th) his body was brought to the Chapel followed by a long procession. His horse, Traveller, with empty saddle was led behind the hire. The horse taken was along Washington-Jefferson.
struct to the front entrance to the college grounds, and thence to the chapel. The body lay in state in this room until Friday, and it was guarded through the day and night by a selected body of students. The funeral services were conducted by Rev. Dr. J. L. Pendleton, D.D., rector of the parish, and previously chief artillery in the army of the Union. After the usual services the body was removed from the platform to the south-west side of the chapel and entering the basement was deposited in a grave made under the floor in the center of the room. Then the body was lowered into the grave at the request of Mrs. Lee, the grand old lady. The hymn, "Hosanna in the Highest," was sung by the immense crowd, which stood outside the door, and Mrs. Lee, an invalid, confined at home with rheumatism, bared her head and listened. Mrs. Lee and her daughter Miss Agnes, sat turned in the chapel, beseeching the grave to see that they remained until the monument was built, and that all those were fortified to it.
May the soul as well as the body of this great soldier and college president rest forever in peace. His fame is immortal.