

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Beverly Waugh Kunkel was born October 27, 1881, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He went to the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey and graduated in 1898. After high school he attended Yale University where he received a Ph.B. in 1901 and then a Ph.D. in 1905.

After graduating from Yale, he taught there for the next seven years as an instructor in the science department. In 1912 he moved to Wisconsin, and taught at Beloit College until 1915 when he was offered the position of professor of biology at Lafayette College.

Beverly Kunkel taught at Lafayette College for the next thirty-seven years. Although an active scholar, Kunkel's main interest was teaching. He is probably most widely known as being the undergraduate mentor to two Nobel Prize winners in medicine: Philip Hench (1950 Prize winner) and H. Keffer Hartline (1967 Prize winner). He published a number of articles in the field of biology (14 between 1910 and 1933). He wrote many letters, articles and book reviews on the origins of World War I that can be found in publications such as The New York Times, Saturday Review of Literature, and the Scientific Monthly. He also conducted a number of detailed statistical studies concerning personalities listed in Who's Who in America and other directories.

Throughout the years at Lafayette Kunkel was active in college activities. He was advisor to the Biology Club and assisted in running the YMCA office at "Camp Lafayette" during World War I.

Following his retirement Dr. Kunkel became interested in local public health facilities. He organized a study of the facilities available in Northampton County, Pennsylvania, and then aided in establishing a county health department. In 1967 he published a book on the history of public health work in Pennsylvania called Milestones to Health in Pennsylvania.

In 1962, ten years after Kunkel had retired from teaching, Lafayette awarded him an honorary Doctor of Science degree. In September 1969, six months after his death, Lafayette College dedicated its new biology building "Beverly Waugh Kunkel Hall" in his honor.

Beverly Kunkel was married to Caroline Jennings and had two daughters: Mary Treat in 1911 and Sally Waugh in 1915. He died at the age of 87 on March 6, 1969.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Beverly Waugh Kunkel Letters (1915-1919) consist of ninety-five letters Kunkel wrote to his parents (Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Kunkel) of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, during his first four years as a Lafayette College professor. In addition to these letters there are two letters written to his father by his wife, Caroline Jennings Kunkel. The letters discuss a number of the interesting topics of the day, especially the beginnings of World War I and the United States' eventual involvement in the war. These letters also contain detailed descriptions of college life at Lafayette and provide a good source of information about the campus during the war years. Kunkel's affection for his father and the closeness they shared can be seen in these letters.

**KUNKEL, BEVERLY WAUGH
LETTERS, 1915-1919**

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Throughout them he makes detailed analyses of his surroundings, taking special care to describe and interpret them for his father.

He describes the events leading up to the college's transformation into an army camp as well as the campus reaction to this. He writes that passes were needed to cross the campus and that sentries had been posted to guard the buildings. By the summer of 1918 four hundred soldiers were on campus at "Camp Lafayette" studying mechanical operations in the college railroad and forge shops. Kunkel discusses how the aims of the army differed from that of academia. He mentions that drill was more important than studying and that getting into Officers Training School was not based on grades but rather drill and that, as a result, the students' studies were declining. After Camp Lafayette was set up, Kunkel worked with the YMCA, helping the soldiers write letters and keep busy during their free hours. It is during his late night hours at the camp that many of these letters to his father were written.

Perhaps his greatest wartime contribution was raising an ambulance unit composed of college men. After the unit was finally assembled it was sent to Allentown to be trained. After the completion of its training in January 1918, the ambulance unit was sent to France where it was assigned to Section 643 of the 20th Division of the French Army.

Kunkel's general observations derive for the most part from his personal experiences in and around Easton, Pennsylvania. He describes his house on the corner of McCartney and Chestnut Streets, his domestic arrangements and family life.

In his letter of January 26, 1916 Kunkel expresses his mixed feelings about the movie "Birth of a Nation" which he considers to be "extremely realistic and strongly educational." He ponders whether reconstruction was as bad as it was depicted in the movie and if it was necessary "to open up the old sore caused by the eminently foolish and unwise procedure of reconstruction." In reaction to the movie he "feels a regard" for the blacks who mobbed the Philadelphia theater in which it was shown. Other newsworthy items he mentions are the Harrisburg trolley line and the New York City street rail strikes of 1916. He also notes the National Railroad strike of that same year and President Wilson's approach to its reconciliation.

The first few letters written by Kunkel are from Beloit, Wisconsin and describe his concerns about moving to Easton to teach at Lafayette. Here he describes the good and bad points about both colleges and the areas in which they are situated. Throughout the rest of the letters he mentions the college frequently, describing the students and faculty in great detail. Kunkel occasionally wrote on the quality of students at Lafayette. Once he questioned the use of the honor system in class after he found out students had cheated on a test. In another instance he mentioned that professors and students were leaving college to join the army. He describes counseling students who were indecisive about leaving school, noting that one-half of his students had already left school to join the army.

The war in Europe is mentioned in almost every letter to his father whether it is to discuss an article he had just read or to note the movements of the front. Early in the war he discusses his vacillation about United States involvement, basing most of his opinions on what he had read in magazines and newspapers. He vows that if there is a time that the United States would enter the war he would join. He even went as far as getting information on officer training in Plattsburgh, New York but is eventually dissuaded by his wife and President

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MacCracken as to his importance at home. During the war Dr. Kunkel worked for the Intelligence Bureau researching daily nutrition requirements for families in the United States in case there was a need for rationing. He created a number of displays to describe his findings, which he displayed at fairs.

INVENTORY

Box 1

Contains photocopies of the 97 letters and an additional acid-free copy.

PROVENANCE

Received as a gift from Sally Kunkel Stafford in 1981.