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Chapter Six

THE SENIOR SOCIETIES AND THE REVOLT OF YOUNG YALE (1866-1872)

The Alumni who are fortunate enough to belong to “these Yale secret societies” know why it is that they are still active members of the same, no matter how many years have passed away since they ceased to be undergraduates.

William Walter Phelps, Class of 1860,
August 1870

In the decades after the Civil War, the American college was being redefined. Responding to a variety of forces, the professors took firm charge of the classroom, expanding it with such devices as the elective curriculum and new courses of study. As this happened, the students, who would soon be alumni, remained in charge of college life, if not the college proper. In consequence, there was created “among the professors the belief that the young men who passed through their classrooms became graduates of the curriculum, while among the young men themselves the belief developed that they would become graduates of their fraternities, their clubs, their teams—all the aspects of college that really mattered. . . . The college alumnus who, as a student, had . . . developed an emotional investment in the preservation of institutions that one day might not be recognized by everyone as best serving an institution of learning. Thus, one consequence of the college student as a college reformer has been the college alumnus as perpetual sophomore”¹—or in Yale’s case, perpetual senior.

At Yale College, the graduate members of Bones and Keys were now men of prominence and substance, and believed that their university would need a broader base than had the Congregational college. If the institution were to explore new interests, appeal to a wider clientele, and require great increases in resources, it needed to invite new partners into its management. Such growth and change would be retarded, if not impossible, under the religious control of ministers of the gospel thought to be too narrow and dogmatic, or no longer capable of raising the necessary funds. Yale President Noah Porter’s great rival, Harvard President Charles Eliot, noted crisply: “A University can not be built upon a sect,” at the inauguration as President of Johns Hopkins of Daniel Coit Gilman (1852 and Bones), who in 1871, when Porter became president, had been favored by many alumni and faculty members to break the ministerial tradition and become the first lay leader of Yale.²

Nevertheless, Yale had been so founded and built: in the words of Reverend Leonard Bacon, of the class of 1820 and a member of the college's board, writing in the thick of what came to be known as the "Young Yale" controversy: "It was intended to have, and it has had until now, 'a vital connection' with the churches of Connecticut—especially the Congregational churches, by whom, through the agency of their pastors, it was called into being before any other church existed in the colony."³ After the founding of Harvard, the Congregationalists who established Yale and the New Light Presbyterians who created Princeton contributed a new purpose to the life of the colonial college: the carrying on of sectarian controversy, the pursuit of denominational survival in an environment of religious diversity.

In New Haven, for the state authorities to place control of the college entirely in the hands of Connecticut clergymen forty years or more of age had sound religious and political purposes. Laymen may also have been excluded from their number because there were really so few active educated men then in Connecticut outside of the clergy and so few laymen who would endure labor and sacrifice for the ideal of higher education in service on a non-resident board.⁴ Remember too that at Yale's founding in 1701 and for decades thereafter, the only systematic professional training in America was for the ministry: lawyers and doctors learned their trade as apprentices, and scientists practically trained themselves.

The ministers who served as Yale trustees also may be said to have represented most of the leading towns in the colony (throughout the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth century, the clerical fellows were distributed evenly over the nine counties of the colonial and succeeding state governments), and were never chosen simply for their educational talents or fervor. In the words of Yale President Theodore Dwight Woolsey, in his *Historical Discourse* of 1850: "Selected by the ministers and churches of Connecticut, at a time when all were of one way of thinking as to dogma and ecclesiastical order, they were in fact *representatives* of the colony, and carried with them the confidence of all intelligent persons."⁵

They were also formidably cohesive as a group: trained together at Harvard or Yale (thus having shared an intensive common socialization), they were often sons of clergymen themselves (thus having continuity through kinship), and presided over a social institution, the church, whose interests they had a vital interest in preserving. Still, when the Yale founders refused to create a board of overseers comparable to Harvard's, they necessarily shifted the struggle for control into the political realm, so that the increasingly ascendant merchants had to exert their influence over the institution through local battles in the election of ministers to the pulpits of particular churches, and through partisan efforts in the General Assembly to affect the policies of the college through the grant or denial of state contributions. Further, the disestablishment of the Congregational Church in Connecticut in 1818 meant that the clerical members of the college's governing board no longer enjoyed any official status, having become, as a self-perpetuating body of trustees with no official standing in the state, mere representatives of privately-supported, voluntarily gathered congregations.⁶

With passage by the Connecticut General Court in 1745 of "An Act for the more full and complete Establishment of YALE COLLEGE in New-Haven and for enlarging the Powers and

Privileges thereof,” the president and fellows—*Praeses et Socii Collegii Yalensis*, as the rector and trustees of the college were now titled—became an “Incorporate Society,” a corporation, to whose governing members fell the sole right of appointing future (“successor”) trustees. The Yale Corporation had become a self-perpetuating agency, although the trustees could displace any of their number, for any default or incapacity. By this date, all the learned professions were respectably represented in Connecticut, but the clerical qualifications were still in practical force. Under the “Act for Liberty to erect a Collegiate School” of 1701, they had to be “ministers of the gospel, inhabiting within this Colony and above the Age of forty years,” even though they served by virtue of a civil appointment, and there was no act in their office which a layman might not perform. For most of Yale’s first two centuries, of all the nine colonial colleges, the board in New Haven was the *only* one composed entirely of clergymen.⁷

Inevitably, these clerical fellows were much of a muchness. Of the one hundred twenty-four Connecticut ministers serving as Successor Trustees from the school’s founding in 1701 through 1901, all but eight were born in Connecticut or Massachusetts. By temperament and financial capacity, they were not significant donors to their school. The appointment in practice was virtually for life, with no voluntary retirement age: only deafness, the call to a new parish, or death (fully half died in office) separated the ministers from their Corporation seats. Turnover was thus rare, and of the eleven Yale presidents working with all-clerical boards, only three had at their own retirements a board with no fellows who had been serving upon their respective appointments.⁸ Wisdom is a function of experience, which is a function of age, but the same equation also ends in conservatism.

The first alteration in the college’s board composition of the president and ten other clerics occurred near the end of Yale’s first century. As part of making a financial grant in 1792, Connecticut required and received eight *ex officio* seats on the Yale Corporation: the state’s governor, lieutenant governor, and six senior assistants, who would be civilian members. The old phrase for the successor trustees, *Socii Reverendi*, was enlarged into the more magniloquent *Socii Reverendi et Honorandi*. While the board was thus enlarged to nineteen members including the president, the eight “civilians” (as they came to be known) were to take no part in elections to replace vacancies among the “ecclesiastics,” and there was no “civilian” majority which could prevail, if the president and his ten fellow clerics voted as a block, although all eighteen trustees voted at the election of a college president. Four of the eight civilians, as well as six of the eleven clerics, had to be present at a corporation meeting, or there was no quorum.⁹

Surprised at the politicians’ generous balancing of financial grant and political representation, Ezra Stiles concluded happily in his diary for 25-28 June 1792 “that there was no prospect perhaps for another century that the Civilians would feel disposed to try another Demand upon the Corporation for augmenting the No. of Civilians into a Majority—& that before that Time probably Moses & Aaron would be so cemented, harmonized & connected & consolidated in Union, that the very Civilians themselves would not be disposed to enterprize such a project: that on the whole the Prospect was that this Proportion of Civilians & Ministers would be lasting—and that as the latter have the Majority & power of Self-Perpetuation, it must

be their own Unfaithfulness if Religion and every Sacerdotal Interest should not be permanently secured.”¹⁰ As the leading historian of early American college-state relations has said: “In 1792 the way by which a college could be linked to the world outside its institutional walls or beyond the confines of a band of clerics was through legislative visitation or representation. The idea of a confederation of alumni as the extra institutional balance had yet to be conceived.”¹¹ Stiles’s fond hope of the future union of Moses and Aaron did not envision Aaron as an alumnus.

Nevertheless, after Stiles’ time, even Moses became unreliable. At Yale, public contributions had comprised seventy percent of total donations between 1701 and 1800, fifteen percent between 1801 and 1825, and nothing at all after that last year. The clerics and their Federalist allies in Connecticut became increasingly aware that state aid could bring with it further strictures of unwelcome public accountability. With Jacksonianism growing as the stronger public mood by the late 1820’s, Yale turned away from the state in favor of cultivating private support. (Endowment income did not constitute a significant part of institutional resources until the late nineteenth century.)¹²

Yale College had been the first of American colleges to form a general alumni funding organization, providing membership to graduates and non-graduates.¹³ The constitution of the Society of Yale Alumni, drafted at the commencement of 1827, declared its purpose to be “to sustain and advance the interests of Yale College,”¹⁴ “interests” brought to the alumni’s attention due to a recent New Haven bank failure where Yale’s investment in its stock (amounting to almost half the college endowment) had depleted a fund for a professorship. The fund-raising which ensued became the Centum Millia Fund, the nation’s first “alumni fund,” and sixty-five percent of donors giving more than \$100 were graduates. Although the effort to raise \$100,000 took four years to complete (1831-35), and five percent of its subscribers gave forty percent of the total, its success demonstrated that Yale no longer had to depend on the government for financial support and could look to a new constituency, its nationally dispersed body of alumni.¹⁵

In this transformation of the relationship of Yale to its alumni, and funding of their alma mater, the change in the corporate structure of the senior societies was to have significant effect. The Bones and Keys senior class societies in New Haven, with the formation of the parent trust associations, had also become graduate organizations, publishing catalogues and holding annual conventions at commencement. Moreover, for those not fortunate enough to be selected by the societies, and tying the interests of society men to those of the institution as a whole, the graduating classes themselves became formal organizations by the 1840s, holding reunions, electing officers, publishing regularly appearing class books, and raising funds.¹⁶ By just after the Civil War, Yale had become possessed through the societies of hubs of nationally extensive graduate networks which maintained regular communications with one another. In time, regional alumni clubs were formed, the first in Cincinnati in November, 1864, with Alphonso Taft in the forefront of its organization as its founding president, followed within five years by local Yale Associations in Boston (1866), Chicago (1867), Philadelphia (1867), St. Louis (1868), and New York (1868), the last in this series but, with five hundred members enrolled, by far the largest. By 1888, there were to be thirty-six of them, out to Wyoming.¹⁷

Inevitably, the close observation of the college officers which such alumni groups generated was reflected in a number of diverse criticisms aimed at the Yale Corporation. The “Successor Trustees” to the founding trustees were not always alumni, but they were certainly all ordained ministers. When constitutional changes in Connecticut caused the state senators to serve only a year and to appear less frequently (President Woolsey’s own census of thirty-five board meetings found their average attendance to be “ $2\frac{26}{35}$, or less than one-half” the time), the quorum requirement was changed in 1838 to a simple majority of the corporation, “provided there be present a majority of those who are by election successors of the original trustees” —which meant that, from the mid-nineteenth century on, the ecclesiastics were more firmly in control than ever. Nor were the board meetings frequent: the regular annual meeting was held during commencement week, and for the rest of the year, except in cases of special importance, the Corporation acted through executive committee.¹⁸

It had been necessary to ordain Jeremiah Day in 1817 to permit his election then by the Successor Trustees as college president. In 1846 the trustees were still unwilling to relinquish this requirement when their choice for president was once more a layman, Theodore Dwight Woolsey, the professor of Greek language and literature, who had studied theology and was licensed to preach, but had never been ordained. Only in 1902 had the clerical Successor Trustees elected the first clergyman (a New Yorker) from outside Connecticut, so it was not until after the turn of the twentieth century that they were persuaded that custom rather than legislation had determined their election, and that they had the legal power to fill their own number from outside the state of Connecticut, and from outside the clergy.¹⁹

Woolsey after the Civil War had begun to change Yale, but had been unable to alter it enough in directions desired by what became known as the “Young Yale” movement, based largely in New York and spearheaded by nationally prominent business and professional leaders, many of whom were graduate members of Bones and Keys. Among them were the ever-opinionated William Maxwell Evarts of New York (Bones, class of 1837) and the forthright Calvin Goddard Child of Connecticut (Keys, 1855), the Reverend William Graham Sumner (not yet a Yale professor, Bones, 1863), and on the campus itself, geography professor Daniel Coit Gilman (Bones, 1852). Young Yale was stalwartly opposed by no less well known clergymen and academics. Both factions produced dozens of articles in the leading New York newspapers. Letters for and against the proposed reforms dominated the correspondence columns in such national periodicals as *The Nation* for months, and weighty journals such as *The New Englander* and the *North American Review* printed essays arguing for one view or the other.²⁰

According to Professor Hadley’s diary, Woolsey early in his presidential term had regarded alumni influence with trepidation, remarking in 1852 that it was better to “shut their mouths with long addresses” than to allow alumni to discuss the affairs of the college. Still, he himself had first suggested in 1866 that alumni representatives fill the six state-held seats on the Yale Corporation, reacting to legislative change in Massachusetts in 1865 which permitted alumni to be elected to the Harvard Board of Overseers which governed the Harvard corporation. “Will they not, if well elected, be a new strength of their Alma Mater; will they not bring with

them views at once enlightened and conservative?”²¹ In inviting the alumni to assume the state-apportioned seats before they formulated proposals of their own, Woolsey may have wanted to divert the graduates’ attention from the positions held by the clergy,²² but still no value was seen in this proposition by the solidly clerical board.

The controversy over the corporation’s composition would not go away, particularly among the thrusting, business-conscious alumni of New York City. The first dinner meeting of the Yale Alumni Association was held at Delmonico’s restaurant on 29 January 1869, attended by such notables as President Woolsey; Professors Noah Porter, Thomas Thacher, Daniel Coit Gilman, and eight other faculty members; the inventor Samuel F. B. Morse and the writer Charles Astor Bristed, both Association vice-presidents; and about 250 other wealthy and successful alumni, including delegates from Boston, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Because of the size of the gathering and the renown of the guests, the evening’s speeches and toasts were reported in detail in the following day’s *New York Times* and *New York Daily Tribune*.

Association President Evarts was to cite Woolsey’s proposal of 1866 (redescribed to the assembly by the president himself in his speech following Evarts’ remarks) in saying, “How are we to keep alive this idea that this is a College of the whole Union, that the Alumni make up the College, but by following the wise suggestion of the head of the University that the Alumni associations throughout the land should have an opportunity of being represented in the working Corporation of the College. [Applause.] Nothing but benefit can grow from this, and everything that is good may be expected. There are no dangers and no evils. To keep alive the interest of the graduates different alumni associations must be represented in the college government, as the President has suggested. [Cheers]. Nothing is required but a statute of the State of Connecticut.”

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At the Commencement meeting in New Haven six months later on 21 July 1869, a five-member committee of the “Associated Alumni” was appointed to enquire into the Woolsey plan’s feasibility, finely balanced between two clergymen and three laymen. Issued at the next commencement, its report proposed to substitute (with the consent of both the legislature and the corporation) “for the six senators, six other persons to be in some way designated or chosen by the graduates.” Eligible voters would be bachelor’s degree holders of at least five years’ standing and “any person who has received from Yale College the degree of Master of Arts in any course, or any honorary, and shall have attained the age of 35 years....provided that he is not an officer of instruction in Yale College, or in any similar institutions.” But the committee, finding that the current relation with Connecticut “has been generally regarded as a wise and beneficial arrangement,” merely proposed the change, and did not recommend it, “for the reasons they [the committee members] are not agreed in opinion.”²⁴ Reasons for disagreement, and the identities of the two primary proponents of the opposing positions, soon became known.

One of the five committee members was the Reverend Noah Porter, professor of moral philosophy and metaphysics: he, for one—and one thought possibly to be Yale’s next president—was decidedly hostile to alumni representation. In a six-part series entitled *American*

Colleges and the American Public, appearing in the *New Englander* from January through October 1869 and then published as a book under that title in June 1870, Porter opined that the clergy constituted the only cultured class in America. Laymen as college trustees were inherently dangerous because “many college graduates are not aware of the extent of the advantages which they have derived from their education,” while [a]lumni...retain and somewhat liberally exercise the traditional privileges of all children, freely to criticize the ways of the household.”

Responding to the suggestion that each of the “Associations of Alumni in the various larger cities of the country” be permitted to elect members of the corporation, Porter declared that “these bodies, being much smaller than the one which assembles at the College at Commencement, would be even more likely to be hurried or engineered into the adoption of ill-judged measures, or the election of unsuitable men...Moreover they, all together, include only a section, and even a small section of the whole Alumni.” Surely the Successor Trustees were paying attention: “A self-perpetuating board of trustees, resting on some historic basis, with a traditional spirit acting in relations of confidence and free communication with the board of instructors, cannot be ignorant of the wishes and feelings of the alumni, and cannot, if they would, refuse to be affected by them.”²⁵

Evarts was another of the five committeemen, and clearly disputed the twin Porter propositions that the Corporation knew the wishes of the alumni, and allowed its decisions to be positively affected thereby. The third member was Alphonso Taft (class of 1833, and a founding member of Skull and Bones), now a prominent judge in Cincinnati and clearly appointed as a representative for what the New Haveners called the West. A fourth was Charles J. Stillé (class of 1839 and Bones), Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, which since its founding as the College of Philadelphia, in order not to alienate the Quakers in that colony, had always had a non-sectarian board composed only of laymen. The final committee member was Professor Franklin W. Fisk (the class of 1856’s valedictorian and Bones), then Professor of Sacred Rhetoric at the Chicago Theological Seminary, and later to serve as its president. Although its members lived in widely separated cities, they held at least two formal meetings during the next year.²⁶

The presence on the committee of Evarts, president of the Yale Alumni Association of New York, of the Cincinnati club’s vice-president Taft, and of the Chicago club’s Fisk, shortly to be its president, demonstrates the importance on the local Yale clubs in this essentially political process. At the Chicago Association’s third annual banquet held in December 1869, presided over by Carter Harrison (class of 1845 and Keys), a resolution was introduced by Henry Thornton Steel (1846 and Bones), replying to the toast to the “Alumni of Yale”: “*Resolved*, that it is the opinion of the Chicago Yale Association, the interest of Yale College would be greatly promoted, her means of influence widely extended, and her material resources enlarged and strengthened by admitting the Alumni to some participation in the management of her affairs, through the choice of a part of her corporation.”

This motion was seconded by Franklin MacVeagh (1862 and Bones, later to be Secretary of the Treasury in the William Howard Taft administration), and unanimously adopted. A

committee of three—Steel, MacVeagh, and the Association’s new president Fisk (Bonesmen all)—were charged to present this resolution to the general committee appointed at the alumni meeting at commencement six months before, on which Fisk was serving. Since the scattered municipal Yale Associations sent fraternal greetings to one another, it seems highly likely that the Chicago resolution was shared with the other local clubs, including the Cincinnati Yale Alumni Association, presided over by William J. Scarborough, Evarts’s classmate and Bones clubmate of 1837; the Boston Yale Alumni Association, whose president this year was Massachusetts Superior Court Judge Dwight Foster (class of 1845 and Bones); and the St. Louis Yale Alumni Association, whose annual meeting for 1870 was led by Melville Cox Day (1862 and Bones).²⁷

At the succeeding commencement alumni meeting on 21 July 1870, Professor Porter read the report of the committee of 1869 charged to examine the governance question, and his fellow committee member Evarts was called upon to speak further about it. Evarts, whose call for reform had been so clear at the New York dinner at Delmonico’s seventeen months before, now temporized: he said that the committee was as equally divided as a committee could be: “two [unidentified, but Fisk and Taft] wished a change, and two [Porter and Stillé] did not, and the third (himself) was on both sides of the question,” reported *The College Courant*. “On the whole, [Evarts] seemed to think it best not to make any change,” although noting that there was no legal impediment—a response to those suggesting that the question might have to go to the United States Supreme Court as in the famous Dartmouth College case of 1819, which had left uncertain the status of the older corporations such as Yale and Harvard. (President Woolsey was unpleasantly surprised at Evarts’ seeming reversal.) “Judge Taft followed with a few remarks, mildly favoring a change,” and Professor Fisk’s speech was “a ray of hope to the younger Alumni, who were impatient and in earnest, as was made manifest later in the day.”

Others speaking to the question included Professor Thacher, Dr. Leonard Bacon (Successor Trustee, 1820 classmate of Woolsey’s, and New Haven minister), and Simeon Baldwin (1861 and Bones, soon to join the law faculty, and later, in the next century, be Chief Justice and then Governor of Connecticut). Baldwin even widened the discussion to where Woolsey had not wanted it to go, calling upon the committee to report at the next alumni meeting on the feasibility of putting “better men in the ministers’ place.”²⁸ The newspaper summarized the conclusion of the whole matter as being “that it was not best to give up any of the present members of the Corporation, but, if any change was to be made, to form a more compact association of the Alumni, from which an advisory board or committee should be appointed, to act in concert with the Alumni Association.”²⁹

A further resolution of the standing committee simply postponed action for another year. As *The College Courant* concluded of the outcome, “For many to hesitate about attempting to dislodge the ‘six state senators,’—in view of the objections against the course, and then not effectively to dislodge anyone,—was a thing not especially surprising, but for ‘Old Yale’ to coldly vote down the very innocent propositions about forming a mere ‘board of advisors’ was an act so gratuitous and impolite that nothing could be said in its defense.”³⁰ The result was

reminiscent of the ending of secrecy in Phi Beta Kappa several decades before: in further deferring the question to a resident alumni committee, dominated by professors, the old men had once more prevailed.³¹ This time, however, the young men spoke out and struck back immediately. During the alumni banquet that evening, following the meeting at which their desire had been balked, the customary saccharine tenor of the speeches was broken by two in attendance who were to lead the band of Young Yale brothers in the contest which ensued.

The first was Calvin Goddard Child, class of 1855, once president of Linonia and a member of Keys, and by this date the U.S. District Attorney for Connecticut. The second was William Walter Phelps, chair of the class of 1860, once president of Brothers in Unity, a member of Bones, and soon to be elected to Congress for New Jersey. Child took the lead in establishing the changed public mood of discontent, by criticizing the faculty for being aloof from the student body. “We know you to be genial gentlemen,” he said, “full of kind sympathy, but we do not find it out in college, and I hail it as an auspicious omen that two members of the faculty have come down from the platform to smoke cigars and that President Woolsey offers the pipe of peace.”³²

A successful corporate lawyer, politician, and only son of John Jay Phelps, the co-founder of the Phelps-Dodge copper fortune, William Phelps was also a son-in-law of the Yale scientific school donor Joseph Sheffield, Yale’s single greatest benefactor at that date—in time, Phelps’s own family was to donate Phelps Gate in his name. Scathing about Yale being out of touch with the world, he was specific about who also thought so. “We have a message,” he declared, “the message of young Yale to old Yale, it is what the graduates of the last fifteen years think and say to each other; what they have not yet had opportunity nor courage to say to you. The younger alumni are not satisfied with the management of the college. They do not think that in anything except scholarship, does it keep progress with the age. They find no fault with the *men*; they find much fault with the *spirit* of the management. It is too conservative and narrow. . . . The college wants a living connection with the world without—an infusion of some of the new blood which throbs in every vein of this mighty Republic—a knowledge of what is wanted in the scenes for which Yale educates her children—this living connection with the outer world—this knowledge of people’s needs that can be acquired only from those who are in the people and of the people. This great want can only be supplied by the alumni. Put them in your government. Get them from some other state than Connecticut, from some other profession than the ministry. Call them and they will gladly and eagerly come—call them and with the reform will pass away every appearance of alumni indifference.”

Yale College, Phelps fulminated, should not be governed—here taking shots at both the board’s clerical and political members—by “Rev. Mr. Pickering of Squashville, who is exhausted with keeping a few sheep in the wilderness, or Hon. Mr. Domuch, of Oldport, who seeks to annul the chapter on the only railway that benefits his constituency.”³³ As has been shrewdly observed by historian Lawrence Vesey, “The minister, not the educational theory, became the common denominator of all these varied arguments [about the curriculum, the classics, and the college administration]. What the orthodox college president would not concede, in effect, was that a

minister was simply one kind of careerist and an engineer another.” In truth, the position of the Young Yale’s businessmen and professionals was broader than the alleged insufficiencies of clergymen (or state politicians): they felt there were “certain elements in the make-up of a Yale education which men who are carrying that education into the heat and dust of the day, and making steady, trying use of it there, will appreciate perhaps better than those who live constantly in the quiet of the academic atmosphere, and before whose eyes are constantly held the ideal of the University’s development on the lines of pure learning.”³⁴

Phelps’s remedy was radical, proposing in substance, to abolish the existing board and to place the legislative and appointing power of the university, and the custody of its endowments, in the hands of a board or council chosen by the annual mass meetings of the alumni (embodying Porter’s election nightmare), because, as one of his supporters wrote *The Nation*, in language considerably more intemperate than Phelps’s, but with which he became identified by party, “We think ministers are, as a class, men of second-rate ability, and that there are few of them who are not inefficient in thought, narrow-minded, and in the true sense of the word, uncultivated. . . Ministers are, as a rule, inferior men—that, sir, broadly stated, is the position of young Yale, and it is just as well that the real root of trouble should be pointed out.”³⁵

With this open challenge to the conservatives, civility largely disappeared: the debate over Yale’s governance became a national one. Readers in the twenty-first century might be surprised by the attention devoted to the issue, but the stakes involved nothing less than the question of who should control American culture—the ministers who had reigned basically unchallenged ever since the establishment of the first colleges, or the emergent class of businessmen and professionals who, as alumni, felt closely tied to the colleges and, as the individuals being asked to support them, felt that they were owed a voice. Furthermore, Yale held a particularly important place in the American institutional imagination, because so many Southern and Western colleges had been founded by Yale graduates, and its widely dispersed alumni were leaders of a variety of benevolent ventures across the growing nation. The outcome of the struggle at Yale would serve as a paradigm for the control of higher education in America and, more broadly, for a redefinition of the boundaries between the public and private domains.³⁶

The Corporation’s current members did not of course appreciate Young Yale’s dismissive characterizations of their competence, and hard words were exchanged. The clergymen warned that any electoral system built around the local Yale clubs would be inherently parochial. Dr. Bacon took on Phelps directly in a scathing retort in *The New Englander* for October 1870, under the title, “A Voice from Squashville,” signing himself, “Rev. Mr. Pickering.” Bacon foresaw electioneering, the vulgar “tug of conflict” between the parties of administration and opposition. He wrote that the clerical trustees would not oppose some alumni representation “whenever the State is willing to give up its connection with the university,” but his tone indicated that he doubted the legislature would comply. The article reprised remarks he had made at the July alumni meeting, but did not include the minister’s direct complaint made then about alumni generosity to their secret societies. This was rebutted by his primary antagonist

even before “Pickering’s” article appeared, attributing Young Yale’s loyalty to the College to be a product of its members’ affection for those very societies.³⁷

Writing from the “United States of America,” *The College Courant* correspondent “Yalensis” (almost certainly Phelps, writing from New York City), composed a long reply to his antagonists, entitled “Why Do Not Yale Alumni Give Money to Yale College?” Raising “a few weeks ago” the question which gave this response its title, “The same ‘Rev. Mr. Pickering’ . . . also at the same time ‘wondered’ why it is that Yale Alumni give so liberally, so gladly, and so voluntarily, their money and time for the adornment, advancement, and perpetuation of what he termed ‘these Yale secret societies.’ If that ‘Rev. Mr. Pickering’ had only graduated at Yale after 1830 [as both Bacon and Porter had not], he could have answered that question himself, or rather he never would have asked it. ‘Where our treasure is, there our heart is also,’ is no more true, than that where our heart is, there also is our treasure.”

Warming to the theme, he asserted that “The Alumni who are fortunate enough to belong to ‘these Yale secret societies’ know why it is that they are still active members of the same, no matter how many years have passed away since they ceased to be ‘undergraduates.’ Does ‘Rev. Mr. Pickering’ ever ‘wonder’ why a sensible and affectionate son loves a kind and appreciative father, more than a surly, thoughtless, stupid, and forgetful father? . . . Can he not reason by analogy? Yes, if Yale to-morrow, or the next year, will use her Alumni or the representatives thereof, whom the Alumni may elect into the Corporation, I boldly prophesy that future appeals for aid and future attempts to use the money of Alumni will not be as futile or unsatisfactory as they have been in the past.”

He then identified eleven prominent alumni from across the country whom he thought worthy of positions on the Yale Corporation, and eight others who were Connecticut Congregationalists: “Why not take such men into the corporation, instead of Jones, Pickering, Smith, of Podunk, and Doolittle, of Buttonville, who, even if they chance to be alumni, are ‘wooden men,’ and second-rate among their colleagues?”³⁸ To the knowledgeable, “Yalensis” was rubbing it in, about the senior societies to which Porter and Bacon objected: of his nineteen named candidates, only six were *not* members of Bones or Keys (and his handicapping was good: five were in time to serve as members of the Yale Corporation, three elected by alumni as alumni fellows, and two as successor trustees by their fellow clerics).

Communications from both sides poured into *The Nation*, and using that publication as his platform, the Reverend William Graham Sumner weighed in with a major article published anonymously there on 8 September 1870. Serving as a tutor (and as secretary of the Russell Trust Association) between 1866 and 1869 while studying theology at Yale, he was ordained as an Episcopal priest, assisted at the Calvary Church in New York City, and was to return to Yale in 1872 to teach political economy. Here, in an early display of the type of reasoning that was to make him one of the founders of American social science, his perspective was an economist’s. Yale’s need was money: “The state of things can be improved only by the investment of capital, and the question is, how to raise the capital? It is simply a mercantile problem, neither more nor less, and as such it ought to be discussed.” Better teaching required more generously

compensated professors and more modern equipment (“If you will not pay the market price of the article you want, you must take the inferior article, which your money will buy. Professors or potatoes, the law is universal.”)

His answer was a business plan for an Alumni Fund with yearly contributions from those in the economic middle, who were neither those who could never pay their debt to Yale College, nor those who became munificent benefactors.³⁹ Implicit in his proposal was that adoption of this plan would mean a major concession on governance, because such alumni would otherwise feel like the Harvard benefactor who remarked of President Charles Eliot: “He comes to me for my money and my advice, and, like the two women in scripture, one is taken and the other is left.” Lyman Bagg was more candid, writing explicitly in 1871 of the contentious 1869 alumni commencement meeting, before the controversy was to resolve itself: whether through substitution for the state senators, or resignation of clerics and politicians alike with alumni election of all trustees to follow, or the creation of a separate advisory council, “everyone clamors for alumni representation in the management of the college, and the institution is likely to suffer serious injury if in some form or another this representation is not granted.”⁴⁰

Keysman Calvin Child came vigorously to Bonesman Phelps’s defense with an article in *The Nation* in October. “The evil exists that in Yale College, the first institution (as we say) in the country, a suitable and property pecuniary support is wanting. Young Yale thinks that a participation in the active business affairs of the college will interest the alumni in her welfare. Old Yale shrugs its shoulders at the innovation and suggests nothing.” He asked *The Nation*’s critics to “do justice to Young Yale’s motives, even if they stick pins in its representatives,” and argued that “It is not quite fair that either Young Yale or the representative of the class of 1860 [Phelps] should be classed as antagonists to clergymen. . . , that the claims of Young Yale should be ignored for the purpose of criticizing the phraseology of our after dinner speech, or the letter of a correspondent. It simply asks that practical businessmen, who manage their own affairs well, should be equally eligible with ministers to a voice in the management of the affairs of the corporation. It is not with their cloth we differ, and if at times we think them, as a class, a little slow, they must bear in mind that as a rule the laity serve better as a committee on ways and means, and to look to their own parishes for proof. . . . [S]hould a few white cravats give place to more gaudy neck-ties in uniting the views of the alumni, the college will, in our opinion, be none the worse for the change.”⁴¹

The relationship between alumni affection and alumni largess was subject to an immediate test. Porter had argued that the past history of the institution gave little reason to believe that the alumni could be relied upon to follow through on their promise to support the college generously, because there existed no robust history of charitable giving, but also because few laymen had experience in “raising money by contributions.” Believing that Young Yale represented only a handful of self-seeking troublemakers, the college administration in 1871 sought to raise \$500,000 for the Woolsey Fund, a new general university fund; the effort failed abysmally, with only \$172,452 subscribed. Outraged by the conservatives’ maneuvers, Young Yale had closed their pocketbooks.⁴²

Edward Gay “Ned” Mason, a member of the class of 1860 and Keys, sounding much like his New York classmate Phelps, demanded of those assembled at the Chicago Yale Alumni Association at its December 1870 meeting “whether it is better that the villages of Putnam, Colchester, Southington and Squashville should be represented in [the Corporation], while the cities of New York, Philadelphia, St. Louis and Chicago are unrepresented. Whether, in short, the Republic of Letters is larger than the Republic of Connecticut?” (Mason was later to be elected to the Corporation as an alumni fellow in 1891, taking Evarts’s seat, as it happened, and was to be hailed by President Timothy Dwight in his memoirs as “the first candidate who was presented as a representative of the graduates residing in the northwestern states.”) Resolutions supporting change came that same month from the St. Louis Association, and the following month from the Philadelphia Association. At the Cincinnati Association meeting in April, after taking notice of letters of regret for inability to attend from the New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Detroit and St. Louis clubs, “the discussion of the representation of the alumni in the corporation was quite lively,” and under the presiding gavel of Judge Taft, a resolution was passed for presentation to the Corporation: “*Resolved*, That it be the sense of this Association that the Alumni of Yale College should be represented in the corporation with members of their own election.” In its issue of 6 May 1871, *The College Courant* concluded that, given these formal and informal expressions of alumni opinion, “the verdict of last July [at the New Haven alumni meeting] has been utterly repudiated.”⁴³

The *Courant*’s weekly columnist “The Lounger” concluded that the debate on alumni representation had probably moved beyond any notion of an advisory council of the type suggested by Porter to the alumni meeting of 1871: “The more reasonable portion of the younger alumni, as well as a good share of the older ones, seem gradually giving in their adherence to the following platform: Let the ten clerical members continue to form a close corporation and elect their own successors; let the president of the college and the governor and lieutenant-governor of the State continue to be, by virtue of their offices, members of the board; but let the places of the six senior State senators be filled by six representatives of the alumni, elected by direct vote, under such regulations as may seem best.”⁴⁴

President Woolsey then stepped back into the fray, effecting a compromise to placate the factions. With the assistance of Professor Gilman, Woolsey personally drafted legislation, an “Act relating to Yale College,” which was heavily influenced by the Harvard reorganization of 1865 of which he cited in 1866: a six-year term for Alumni Fellows, their annually staggered replacement, and the commencement-time ballot for all bachelor’s degree holders “of five years’ standing.” He did not disenfranchise the professional schools’ graduates, whom Harvard had ignored; their inclusion at Yale was intended to bolster the Sheffield Scientific School which Woolsey had nurtured.

He and Gilman lobbied both the state legislature and Connecticut Governor Marshall Jewell (not a Yale graduate, but coming onto the board in 1869 in his gubernatorial capacity, and to receive an honorary M.A. in 1873),⁴⁵ and the governor in his opening address to the General Assembly in May 1871 announced that it would be “well for the state, the college, and the

alumni at large to surrender one-half of the state representation in its Board of Corporation—the new members to be elected by the alumni to serve for four years, one to go out at each year.”⁴⁶ This proportion proved to be more conservative than the final bill emerging from the judiciary committee, which gave up three-quarters of the state block, allowing the alumni to elect all six positions formerly held by the senators, with only the governor and lieutenant governor remaining as *ex officio* officers.

Professor Gilman then joined Reverend Sumner in the public conversation with an article in *The Nation* for 25 May 1871, entitled “Proposed Change in the Corporation of Yale College.” He wrote that “it must be admitted that the Corporation has lost the moral support of large numbers of the graduates, who are clamorous for changes. These graduates are not the younger graduates only. Some of the best men in the land are among the number.” Recalling that, in first proposing a change in 1866, Woolsey’s views, “which were met at first with distrust, dissent, and opposition, have at least been very generally accepted by the friends and graduates of the institution, and his administration seems likely to close with the achievement of this crowning glory.” (As an alumnus on campus, Gilman may also have been aware that the seniors were about to elect the college president’s eldest son, Theodore Salisbury Woolsey, but this was not an act of policy directed by the graduates, rather a reward of merit on the seniors’ part for a man later to be professor of international law at Yale for a half century.)

Gilman closed his piece with discussion of alternatives to the governor’s proposed legislation, by urging the current clerical trustees to “elect other persons than Congregational ministers to the empty fellowships” (which was not to happen for thirty-four years) and to invite faculty and lay auditors to their meetings (a practice never to be instituted). Supporting the governor’s call for the six senators to be replaced by an equal number of graduates, he formulated a specific plan, that all persons with Yale degrees “should be electors of the graduate fellows, and should be eligible to fellowships [replacing those held by the state senators], with this proviso, that bachelors should be of five years’ standing before beginning to exercise the privilege. The term for which a fellowship may be held should be of considerable duration—say a period of six years, and the details of arrangements in respect to the methods of nomination and election should be left to the president and fellows, who may be trusted to act in good faith.”⁴⁷

The assembly passed the bill for which Jewell had called on 6 July 1871, to be accepted by the Corporation a few days later⁴⁸; on that same day of passage in Hartford, almost certainly with knowledge of the probable outcome of the legislature’s vote, President Woolsey resigned and the trustees elected Porter to replace him, not the contentious long shot Gilman (who had already turned down offers to head the University of Wisconsin and the University of California). The best historian of the controversy has wryly observed: “Twenty-five years earlier Woolsey had accepted ordination in order to become President. Porter accepted the alumni for the same privilege. Which man made the greater sacrifice?”⁴⁹ The conservatives secured the presidency, over the competing candidacy of Gilman, while still holding the original trusteeships, and the progressives secured the six seats on the Corporation formerly held by the six senior state senators.

The alumni were invited by notice from the Corporation's secretary to send in the names of six nominees. President Porter attended the spring 1872 meeting of the New York Yale Alumni and, referring "to the college and the demands of Young Yale in reference to its management... expressed the hope that all the advantages of the new ideas and the progressive thought of the age might be attained, while at the same time preserving all the good of the old and tried systems." Lists of candidates were circulated by the local Yale clubs, and named by *The College Courant* (among others, senior society graduate members Gilman in New Haven, Sumner in New Jersey, Foster in Massachusetts, Young and Phelps in New York City, and Collier in St. Louis, while noting that Hartford's Twichell would probably in due course become a clerical fellow). Professor Timothy Dwight published a piece arguing that no Yale professor should be elected, and his fellow Bonesman William Whitney (a classmate of Sumner's) rebutted with the observation that "the law under which the election is held declares that the persons chosen by the graduates shall be Fellows, and confers no power to restrict their choice."

Cincinnati, oldest of the municipal Yale clubs, took "great pleasure in presenting as our first choice from among all the western candidates the name of Alphonso Taft," who after some urging accepted the nomination, while the St. Louis club, advocating for fellows from "the West and the South," nominated Taft, Collier, Ned Mason of Chicago, and New Yorker Mason Young, while Taft appeared among the nominees of the Chicago club with Fisk of Chicago and nominees from Milwaukee and Iowa City. The fame of Joseph Sheffield's benefactions earned him mention on the slates of the St. Louis and Boston associations, although before the election he was to write the Corporation, protesting his candidacy.⁵⁰

In the end, the senior society alumni were as prominent, when the nominations of those receiving more than twenty-five votes were announced, as they had been in agitating for reform in the media and in their municipal clubs. Elections for Alumni Fellows were held at the afternoon session of the annual meeting of the alumni on the Wednesday of Commencement Week, 10 July 1872; about 1,500 votes were cast, with nearly 1,000 coming by mail. At the dinner, Governor Jewell spoke in jest of "the danger to the college and community, in years to come from the heat and corruption of contested elections to the corporation, and of the probability of hordes of graduates from New York and an institution up the river with a musical name [Sing Sing] to stuff the ballot boxes." The results were more decorous, and *The College Courant* probably represented a consensus in concluding that it was "pleasing to see how harmoniously the change has been wrought and the numberless obstacles to it, real and prophesied have vanished."⁵¹

Thirty-one candidates in all were nominated, including Young Yale's obstreperous tribunes Phelps, Child, and Mason. Fourteen of them had graduated before 1846, and fourteen after that date (three were honorary degree holders, including Sheffield); ten were from New York City, while Connecticut had eight, the states of Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Missouri and Illinois, two each, and Ohio and Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia, one, so the desired geographical spread for choice was achieved. Not surprisingly, only three were

clergyman, two Episcopalians and one Congregationalist.⁵² Fourteen of the twenty-one nominees from the senior society classes of 1833 onward were members of Bones and Keys.⁵³

First past the post in the initial class of Alumni Fellows were New York's Evarts of the class of 1837, with 894 votes (he was to serve for nineteen years, the whole of Noah Porter's presidency and five years of Timothy Dwight's), and New Jersey's—and Young Yale's—William Walter Phelps, only a dozen years on from his own graduation, with 489 votes, to be re-elected through 1892, when he refused renomination (from 1874 until his death in 1894, Phelps personally contributed half of the money used to purchase books for the college library). The other four elected were Phelps's father-in-law Joseph Sheffield, a sentimental favorite for his Scientific School donations, with 417 votes; William Barrett Washburn, class of 1844 and Bones, then governor of Massachusetts, 412; Henry Baldwin Harrison, the class of 1846's valedictorian and Bones, later Governor of Connecticut, 401; and, with 382 votes, the paladin of the west, Judge Alphonso Taft, member of the first Bones club of 1832-33, serving during his Alumni Fellow term as President Grant's secretary of war and attorney general, and then leaving the Corporation after a decade when appointed minister to Austria-Hungary by President Chester Arthur.

Finishing thirteenth in this first balloting, but elected the following year in 1873 when Joseph Sheffield resigned from the board after attendance at one meeting, was Phelps's 1860 classmate and Keysman Ned Mason, who from 1872 through 1884 served as president of Keys's corporate parent, the Kingsley Trust Association.⁵⁴ Sumner was also nominated, and received 148 votes, but when the election was held the minister had become a Yale College professor, which under the eligibility rules voided the result. With new fellows from metropolitan New York, Boston, and Cincinnati winning four of the six positions, and men from Chicago and St. Louis finishing well up in the count, Evarts's vision that alumni associations "throughout the land" be represented on the "working corporation" had been largely realized.

So too, in time, was Sumner's business plan, when combined with alumni representation on the corporation, which initially and for years to come was comprised almost exclusively of graduate members of the two senior societies. After the stuttering start of the Woolsey Fund, Yale's permanent funds increased in Porter's fifteen year tenure (1871-1886) by almost one million dollars, with a like amount contributed for ten new buildings.⁵⁵ Young Yale's prediction of the increase in generosity of alumni following the reform proved true: permanent funds increased from \$181,700 in 1875 (four years into the Porter era), to \$484,594 in 1895 (at the beginning of the regime of the younger Timothy Dwight, Bones, class of 1849), to \$1.8 million at the beginning of the presidential term of Arthur Twining Hadley in 1899 (Yale's first non-clerical president, Bones, 1876).⁵⁶ The point was made, and evidenced in the first year of Hadley's administration, when he expanded the title of his annual report to read: "President's Report. Presented to the Corporation *and to the Alumni* at Commencement." To celebrate the Yale bicentennial in 1901, a fund of \$1.1 million was raised, under the Yale Alumni Fund chaired by Payson Merrill (Bones, 1865)—the first layman to be chosen by the clergymen to be their fellow Successor Trustee, in 1905.

The dominance of the Yale Corporation's alumni component by senior society graduates thus began, with five of the original six Alumni Fellows being members of Bones, joined shortly by a Keysman replacing the only original Alumni Fellow (Sheffield) who was not a former undergraduate at Yale College. The committee established by the Corporation in the fall of 1871 to organize the election rules to govern at the first alumni voting at the 1872 commencement was comprised of former president Woolsey, another clerical fellow, and two recent graduates, the Hartford clergyman Twichell, class of 1859 and President of Keys's Kingsley Trust Association from 1866 to 1872, and Francis Edward Kernochan, class of 1861, Bones, and founder of the University Club in New York City in 1861.⁵⁷ Twichell was himself to be elected as a clerical Successor Trustee in 1874, to serve for thirty-nine years, and was joined in 1875 by a Bonesman as Successor Trustee, the Reverend Joseph Wills Backus of the class of 1846, who then served for twenty-four years. Thus, only three years after the Alumni Fellows were created as a new board class, the sixteen members included six graduates of Bones and two of Keys, serving both as Successor Trustees and Alumni Fellows. (Nonetheless, laymen were not to succeed in achieving a majority on the board until 1910.)

Of course, none of these individuals ran for Alumni Fellow, or served on committees instituting the election process, in their capacities as graduate members of the two senior societies. While communicating directly and indirectly across the nation during the controversy, at alumni meetings or through the newspapers, even members of the same society were in different places on the political spectrum in this reform campaign: Sumner's approach was very different from that of Phelps and the cautious Stillé, as well as Keysmen Child and Mason, although all were finally happy to follow the leadership of Fisk, Taft, and (once he stopped vacillating) Evarts. Still, none would have been indifferent to their senior society associations, which is evidenced most touchingly in the alumni election, eleven years on, in 1883, in which Bones's founder Major General Russell, back for his fiftieth reunion at the age of 73, received 253 votes to finish third in the balloting for Alumni Fellow that year.⁵⁸

The separation of college and state—which few noticed as such at the time—had come about largely from an internal struggle over the control of Yale, rather than from a contest between legislators and trustees; by surrendering a major portion of its control, the state effectively refereed an argument within the college. Yet, as the background of the spokesmen for Young Yale shows, this was an argument developed and pushed through to success largely by senior society graduates, whose student leadership habits and affection for their alma mater, joined to their belief that the college must endure and would with their input, inspired them to fight this fight.

Structurally, this inclusion of graduates in the governance of Yale College formalized a new kind of accountability. Eliminating most public officials from the Corporation, and counterbalancing the clerics thereon, was not simply turning over the college's institutional affairs to those with the means—or to the elected representatives of those with means—to finance operations: the alumni were not stockholders, symbolically or legally, of the institution. On the contrary, the inclusion of fellows with major wealth means, and of those less wealthy

professionals and businessmen, more fundamentally brought a broader group with collective wisdom and oversight which would stop Yale from becoming merely private (as happened, for example, with the pet charities of the emerging plutocracy).

Even more than Harvard, Yale had graduated students who not only expanded professionally well beyond the ministry, but settled throughout the growing nation. If, as the manifestos of its local alumni associations repeatedly pronounced, Yale hoped and planned always to be a university of national consequence, its alumni had to devise structural means to reflect and perpetuate discussion and resolution of the visions and desires of these far-flung constituencies. That Yale's alumni, led by the senior society members in the municipal associations and the classes, did not seek to eliminate all clerical and political representation on the Corporation—did not, in other words, make their governing board entirely private and self-perpetuating—suggests a concern for the broader issue of accountability.

Yale would come to see its primary function not as a servitor of the church, or as a guardian of the perquisites of the wealthy, but as a generator of a new elite, in which wealth and knowledge were made subservient to a collective but virtuous will. The public interest was to be perceived and defined by a nationally-based cultural, technical, and administrative elite, the Corporation, its members themselves trained in an elite-controlled private institution.⁵⁹ Evarts had said it: “How are we to keep alive this idea that this is a College of the whole Union, that the Alumni make up the College,” but by creating the Alumni Fellows?

In his 1947 memoirs, Yale English Professor Henry Seidel Canby reflected archly, as a faculty member, on the ascendancy of alumni in American college history, using his own university as the unspoken model: “The alumni were the saved and the blest, still testifying to the vigor and the virtue of the college; they were like the saints and martyrs of the hierarchies, translated but still powerful. To them [the college] owed a part, usually the most sumptuous part, of the visible body of the buildings; from them came great draughts of financial nourishment; and their opinions, their prejudices, their ideals, and their romanticism were strong and sometimes determining factors in the academic atmosphere.”

Beyond the sarcasm, however, he was able to identify a strain which united them, and which has special resonance in the history of Yale's senior societies. Alumni “shared a common memory of a vivid and homogeneous experience intelligible to all of them, which, in the restless haphazard life of an America constantly on the move, gave a point of rest and departure. Subtly combined with this was an expectation of success acquired in an institution made up from the select. And outweighing all of these useful assets of the alumni was one result of college life which only psychologists have appreciated. For with rare exceptions the alumni had been happy in their colleges. Whatever their later disillusion, for the best part of four years they had been content and had, at the very least, learned to believe in the possibility of happiness.”

It was the memory of this happiness concentrated in their senior year and their secret societies that impelled William Walter Phelps and Young Yale to campaign for institutional change in their college's governance, citing that very combination of warmth and loyalty in their

quest in the nineteenth century. The same feeling demonstrably drew society graduates John Sterling and Edward Harkness in the twentieth century to make their munificent gifts that were to transform the “bare and nondescript college” of Canby’s youth in the class of 1899 “into a romantic alumnus’s dream of a proper setting for college life.”⁶⁰

1. Rudolph, Frederick, "Neglect of Students as a Historical Tradition," *The College and the Student* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1966), p. 56.
2. Pierson, George Wilson, *Yale College 1871-1921* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 61. Yale Dean William DeVane wrote regretfully in 1953: "Yale had failed to become America's first university when the opportunity arose in the last third of the 19th century...Had Yale appointed Daniel Coit Gilman, the first president of Johns Hopkins, or Andrew D. White, co-founder and first president of Cornell, both men closely associated with Yale, the future in New Haven would have been very different." *Seventy-Five: A Study of A Generation in Transition* (New Haven: Yale Daily News, 1953), p. 5.
3. Bacon, Leonard, "A Voice from 'Squashville': A Letter to the New Englander from the 'Rev. Mr. Pickering'," *The New Englander*, Vol. XXIX (October 1870), p. 699.
4. 1745 Charter in Dexter, Franklin Bowditch, *Documentary History of Yale University* (New York: Arno Press & The New York Times, 1969), p. 22; Dexter, Franklin Bowditch, "The Founding of Yale College," *A Selection*, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
5. Woolsey, Theodore Dwight, *An Historical Discourse Pronounced Before the Graduates of Yale College, August 14, 1850* (New Haven: B. L. Hamley, 1850), p. 10.
6. Hall, *Organization*, *op. cit.*, pp. 47, 106, 108.
7. Dexter, *Documentary History*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21; *Historical Register*, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
8. Richards, David Alan, *The Making of the Corporation 1969*, pp. 35-41, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.
9. Bacon, Leonard, "The Corporation," in Kingsley, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 180.
10. Dexter, *Literary Diary*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 462, reprinted in Hofstadter and Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 166. Only days before, on 31 May 1792, he had written: "[Yale] is and doubtless always will be the only Amer. College in the Hands of Ecclesiastics."
11. Whitehead, John, *The Separation of College and State: Columbia, Dartmouth, Harvard and Yale, 1776-1876* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), p. 41-42; Richards, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-78.
12. Sears, J. B., *Philanthropy in the Shaping of Higher Education* (Washington, D.C.: 1922), pp. 23-24; Baldwin, *op. cit.*, 2d ed., 1838, pp. 327-342; Deming, *op. cit.*, "Yale's Larger Gifts," *Yale Alumni Weekly* (1910), pp. 634-637; Betts, S. R., "General Alumni Gifts to Yale," in Nettleton, George Henry, *The Book of the Yale Pageant 1716-196 - 21 October 1916* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1916), p. 234.
13. Bagg, *op. cit.*, pp. 678-679; Whitehead, *op. cit.*, p. 194.
14. Baldwin, 2d ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 320-321.
15. Hall, Peter Dobkin, "Noah Porter Writ Large? Reflections on the Modernization of American Higher Education," in Roger Geiger, ed., *The American College in the Nineteenth Century* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2000), p. 201; Hall, *Organization*, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-171; Kelley, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-152; Whitehead, *op. cit.*, p. 195; Baldwin, 2d ed. *op. cit.*, pp. 327-342; Deming, *op. cit.*, p. 229.
16. Hall, *Organization*, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

17. Bagg, *op. cit.*, p. 685. The “Yale Alumni Association of New-York” was formed on 24 February 1868. *New York Times*, 25 February 1868. New York was home to about one tenth of Yale alumni, *The College Courant*, 4 May 1872.
18. Bacon, “The Corporation,” *op. cit.*, p. 181.
19. Statistics from Richards, David Alan, “The Yale Corporation,” bar chart, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.
20. Hall, “Noah Porter,” *op. cit.*, p. 202.
21. Moseley, *op. cit.*, p. 308, on Woolsey in 1852; Woolsey, Theodore Dwight, “Dr. Hedge’s Address to the Alumni of Harvard,” *The New Englander* (October 1866), pp. 700-701.
22. Whitehead, *op. cit.*, p. 210.
23. “Yale Alumni Dinner—A Pleasant Gathering at Delmonico’s—Speeches of Hon. Wm. M. Evarts and Others,” *New York Times*, 30 January 1869; “Dinner of Yale Alumni,” *New York Daily Tribune*, 30 January 1869.
24. *The College Courant*, 31 July 1869, p. 74, and the committee’s report as *At the annual meeting of the Associated Alumni of Yale College, July 21, 1869, it was resolved, that Prof. Noah Porter...William M. Evarts...Charles J. Stillé...Alphonso Taft...and Prof. Franklin W. Fisk...be appointed a committee, and be requested to consider whether any change...in the constitution of the corporation of Yale College is desirable...* (New Haven: s.n., 1870), College Pamphlets 1914 8, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
25. Porter, *American Colleges*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 247-248, 283-284.
26. *The College Courant*, 22 October 1870, p. 244.
27. *The College Courant*, 31 December 1869, p. 395; 12 February 1870, p. 97; 7 May 1870, p. 29; 17 December 1870, p. 375; 17 January 1871, pp. 3-5; and 28 January 1871, p. 46.
28. *The College Courant*, 23 July 1879, p. 70, and 22 October 1870, p. 245. That Evarts did not name his fellow committeemen’s views is clear from *The College Courant* of 22 October 1870, p. 244, which attributes the same positions to each member as are attributed here. On Woolsey’s private dissatisfaction with Evarts’s seeming temporizing, *The College Courant*, 31 December 1870, p. 401.
29. *The College Courant*, 23 July 1870, p. 71.
30. *The College Courant*, 6 August 1870, p. 99. An Alumni Board, established to “meet the desires of Yale graduates in different sections of the country for representation on the councils of the University” was not to be created by the Yale Corporation until 19 February 1906.
31. *The College Courant*, 15 October 1870, p. 255, reprinted from *The Nation* of 4 August 1870.
32. *The College Courant*, 23 July 1870, p. 71.
33. *Ibid.* Perhaps remembering that President Zachary Taylor’s son had become a Bonesman, Phelps also criticized the clergy’s otherworldly resistance to change by pointing to the decisions by the sons of Lincoln and Grant to attend Harvard rather than Yale (Hall, “Noah Porter,” *op. cit.*, pp. 210-211)
34. Veysey, Lawrence, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 39; “certain elements,” Welch, Lewis Sheldon and Walter Camp, *Yale, Her Campus, Class-Rooms, and Athletics* (Boston: L. Page and Co., 1899), p. 144.

35. *The Nation*, 11 August 1869 and 1 September 1869, quoted in *The College Courant*, 15 October 1870, p. 228, and cited by Bacon, "Squashville," *op. cit.*, p. 684.
36. Hall, "Noah Porter," *op. cit.*, p. 211.
37. *The College Courant*, 27 August 1870, p. 113; Bacon, "Squashville," *op. cit.*, pp. 679-704. *The College Courant* for 19 November 1870 reviewed Bacon's article and noted that he had "shunned" addressing Phelps's main point, that the "worldliness" of the alumni, added to the corporation, would be beneficial (p. 313).
38. *The College Courant*, 27 August 1870, p. 113.
39. "The 'Ways and Means' For Our Colleges," 8 September 1870, *The Nation*, Vol. XI, pp. 152-154, reprinted in New Haven in *The College Courant*, 17 September 1870, pp. 159-160; Sumner's authorship is confirmed by Starr, Harris E., *William Graham Sumner* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1925), p. 84.
40. Bagg, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
41. *The College Courant*, 22 October 1870, p. 225.
42. Porter, *American Colleges*, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-290; Kelley, *op. cit.*, p. 271; subscription amount and failure, Hall, "Noah Porter," *op. cit.*, p. 213, noting (at 174) that twenty of the twenty-eight organizers of the fund drive, who probably gave the bulk of the contributions, were senior society graduates.
43. *The College Courant* for 17 December 1870, p. 375; 31 December 1870, p. 401; 17 January 1870, p. 3; 7 January 1871, p. 5; 28 January 1871, pp. 46-47; 6 May 1871, pp. 210, 214; 13 May 1871, p. 222; on Mason, Dwight, *op. cit.*, p. 452.
44. *The College Courant*, 4 February 1871, p. 54.
45. On Gilman, Franklin, Fabian, *The Life of Daniel Coit Gilman* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, pp. 99-101; on Jewell, *Historical Register*, *op. cit.*, p. 331.
46. *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Connecticut* (Hartford, 1871), p. 58.
47. Gilman, Daniel Coit, "Proposed Changes in the Corporation of Yale College," *The Nation*, Vol. 12, No. 308, 25 May 1871, pp. 354-356.
48. *Records of the Yale Corporation*, 11 July 1871, p. 291
49. Whitehead, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
50. On Dexter notice, *The College Courant*, 23 March 1872; Porter, *The College Courant* 13 April 1872; candidates and Whitney, *The College Courant*, 20 April 1872; three annual meetings, *The College Courant*, 11 May 1872; Taft, 27 April 1872; St. Louis and Chicago slates, *The College Courant*, 4 May 1872; Sheffield withdrawal, *The College Courant*, 22 June 1872.
51. *The College Courant*, 27 July 1872.
52. *The College Courant*, 11 May 1872. The ballot and voting rules are found in *The College Courant*, 15 June 1872, and number of votes, *The College Courant*, 13 July 1872.
53. Taft, Evarts, Washburn, Harrison, Foster, Fisk, Phelps, Kernochan, Sumner, Whitney, and Collier, of Bones; Child, Mason, and Young, of Keys.

54. *New Haven Register*, 11 and 12 July 1872; *Corporation Records*, July 1872, pp. 330-331; *The College Courant*, 13 July 1872; on Phelps's declining to be renominated, *Biographical Record Class of Sixty 1860-1906* (Boston: 1906), p. 150; on the Sheffield resignation, with no stated reason but a fulsome vote of thanks for his service, *Records of the Corporation*, July 1873, pp. 349-350. In Porter's *Sheffield*, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-21, he notes: "When elected a member of the Corporation by the votes of the graduates, he took his seat at a single session in acknowledgment of the complement, but forthwith resigned his place. He never attended the Commencement of the College or the Anniversary of the Scientific School."
55. Dwight, *op. cit.*, pp. 450-452.
56. Patton and Field, *op. cit.*, p. 102.
57. *Records of the Yale Corporation*, 11 October 1871, pp. 312-313.
58. *Records of the Yale Corporation*, June 1883, p. 114.
59. Hall, *Organization*, *op. cit.*, p. 113.
60. Canby, Henry Seidel, *American Memoir* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), pp. 233-237. In his reminiscence in Scroll and Key's *True Fellowship in All its Glory: Reminiscences of C.S.P.*, Stephen Gurney and Johan Zdanys, eds. (New Haven, CT: Published by the Society, 1992), p. 27, Manuel Alvarez of the club of 1973 wrote: "Every year, near the end, we all realize what a great and unique gift Scroll and Key was. We will never be as free again. We will never be as happy again."

