

# The Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library

## Oglethorpe University, Ga

The Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library aims to post, in the fullness of time, PDFs of all Berlin's uncollected and unpublished work, including lectures, interviews and broadcasts, so that it is conveniently readable and searchable online. The present PDF is part of this series.

The red page numbers in square brackets in this online text mark the beginning of the relevant page in the original publication, and are provided so that citations from that source and from the online PDF can use the same page numbering.

All enquiries, including those concerning rights, should be directed to the Legacy Fellow at [berlin@wolfson.ox.ac.uk](mailto:berlin@wolfson.ox.ac.uk)

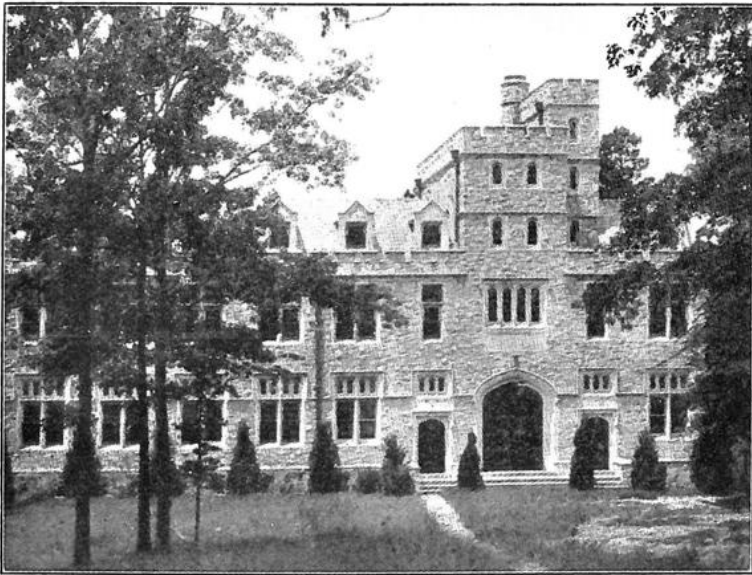
# Oglethorpe University, Ga

*Pelican Record 20 (1931), 34–40 (unattributed); the colour illustrations did not appear with the original article.*

*Copyright Isaiah Berlin 1931*

*First posted in the Isaiah Berlin Virtual Library 20 July 2017*

*Most recently revised 20 December 2020*



LOWRY HALL, OGLETHORPE.

HAVING HEARD that some of the new buildings of the revived Oglethorpe University at Atlanta, Georgia, USA, were modelled upon those of this College, we thought that it would be interesting to readers of the *Pelican Record* to have some particulars of them. In answer to our request for information, we have received from the President and re-founder of the University, Dr Thornwell Jacobs, LittD, LL.D, a sheaf of wonderfully interesting matter (including the photograph that forms our frontispiece), together with a kind

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

and cordial letter. Space forbids us to publish more than brief extracts of what Dr Jacobs has sent us, but we hope that even these will afford some idea of the history, aims and work of an academic institution that is, in some measure, related to us.



James Edward Oglethorpe, gentleman commoner of this College from 1714 to 1717, founded the colony of Georgia as a philanthropic experiment in 1733. He was a remarkable person in every respect and it was only fitting that the band [35] of earnest Presbyterians who founded the University at Milledgeville, the old capital of the State, in 1835 should have called it after his name. The Oglethorpe University with its fine buildings and distinguished staff of teachers fell a victim to the Civil War and was utterly destroyed.

‘My personal interest in this tragic romance’, writes Dr Jacobs, ‘originated in the stories told me when I was a little boy by my

## OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

grandfather, who used to visit his son in a little village of South Carolina, and tell us, among his grandfather's tales, of the days when he was a professor at this old school in Milledgeville. I remember I used to say to myself, "When I am grown up and ready for College, I am going to Oglethorpe." But his reply was "No, my boy, you will never stand on the Oglethorpe Campus." Years passed. Dr Jacobs went to Princeton, indeed, but he did not forget his youthful aspirations.



‘It has been said by one of old time’, he writes, ‘that he must go whom the devil drives. Much more so must his will be bent by that inner urge that men call duty. So it came to pass that, without authorisation save from above, on 13 September 1909, we came to Atlanta to re-found Oglethorpe University.’

## OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

Great, apparently insuperable, were the difficulties, but the burning enthusiasm of Dr Jacobs surmounted them all, and Oglethorpe, with its fine buildings of blue granite, its campus of 600 acres given by the well-known newspaper proprietor Mr W. R. Hearst, its lake of forty acres and its granite stadium capable of seating 45,000 spectators, is now the best-housed University in Georgia.

As a pretty compliment to General Oglethorpe's old College at Oxford, the central tower of the new Lowry Building has been designed on the lines of our own gateway tower. How closely it resembles it will be seen in the photograph [p. 1]. Over the gate swings a lantern modelled on that which used to hang over our gate until replaced by a new one, and the curious will notice the arms of Bishop Oldham reproduced in facsimile. On the other side of the tower is a copy of our oriel window with its canopied niches on either side. The building is of granite with dressings of limestone and was given by those generous benefactors of Oglethorpe, Col. and Mrs R. Lowry. The other buildings are in keeping with it, and the whole group, [36] when completed, should be impressive. The style is intended to follow the Oxford Collegiate tradition.



OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

~

Oglethorpe University, like Corpus, appears always to have been as Dr Johnson described his College of Pembroke, ‘a nest of singing birds’. Its stones are cemented with poetry. Sidney Lanier, one of the best-known American poets, was a member of the old College at Milledgeville in 1857.



OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

How Oglethorpe cherishes his memory may be seen in this extract from ‘The Spirit of Lanier’ by Dr. Wightman F Melton:

Yon trim Shakespeare on the cope of Lupton Hall  
Calls through the sunny hours,  
    ‘Oglethorpe, Oglethorpe,  
    Where’s Lanier? Where’s Lanier?  
    Is he here? Is he here?  
    Here – Here – Here – Here?’  
And the solemn chimes give answer,  
    ‘Here he hath been, is, and will be.  
    Evermore, forevermore!’<sup>1</sup>

The poetic tradition is being maintained at Oglethorpe. The University Press has published a ‘book of Georgia Verse’<sup>2</sup> covering the entire field of Georgia poetry from the days of John and Charles Wesley, who accompanied General Oglethorpe to Georgia, down to ‘a brilliant contemporary group, seven or eight of whom have attained international renown’. We quote this from an account of the University specially written for us by Dr Mary Brent Whiteside, DLitt, herself a member of this group and the editor of the *Westminster Magazine*, a quarterly devoted to literature and science.

Ernest Hartsock, ‘the youngest and one of the most significant of the major poets of Georgia’, is also a member of the faculty as Professor of Poetics. Here is a quotation from his ‘April Mile’:

‘Stop!’ the maple said to me  
And don’t pull up infinity.  
So I sat upon some rocks  
To ponder Nature’s paradox.

<sup>1</sup> [As printed in Sara Sharpe and Thornwell Jacobs, Jr, (eds), *The 1934 Yamacraw of Oglethorpe University* [(Atlanta, Ga., 1934: Oglethorpe University Press)]

<sup>2</sup> Thornwell Jacobs, Mary Brent Whiteside and James Edward Routh (eds), *The Oglethorpe Book of Georgia Verse* (Atlanta, Ga, [1930]: Oglethorpe University Press).

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

A drunken tulip stumbled up, [37]  
Bearing a sacramental cup.  
A jonquil stretched its greedy mouth  
For golden liquor from the South.  
A robin with a sunset vest  
Ran past me like an anapest.

A critic adds: ‘Mr Hartsock appears to be a “wet” in his sentiments.’ We feel that the simile contained in the last line is as happy as it is neat.

Dr Anderson M. Scruggs is another poet of Georgia who, though usually confining himself to lyrical forms, was ‘moved by the humble poetry of a railway station’ to write his only example of *vers libre* entitled ‘Way Station’:

Even now the villagers are returning  
To their haunts of torpid complacency,  
Like languid cockroaches that have been  
Suddenly roused to activity  
By the snapping on  
Of an electric light.

‘And finally’, we are told, ‘it must be said that Dr Scruggs’s poems have the priceless quality of being interesting: not one of them is dull.’

We have been moved to give these quotations because they show some of the tendencies that mark the literary productions of our own younger poets in the College; a parallel development occurring spontaneously in the old world and the new.

The impressive ‘Oglethorpe Ode’ by Dr Robert Loveman is unfortunately too long to quote in full, but we give the stirring and unforgettable lines with which it opens:

By War’s red rage old Oglethorpe<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This refers of course, to the old university at Milledgeville and not to the General, who died in his bed. Eds.



OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

Was rudely overthrown;  
Today we dedicate with love  
A later cornerstone.

It is strange that not one of our Corpus poets has attempted to celebrate the foundation of the College in imperishable verse: for Widgery's alliterative hymn beginning 'O famous Fox, our Founder, Father, Friend' scarcely falls into the category of a Foundation Ode.

~ [38]

Oglethorpe University, though non-sectarian, is held firm for the Christian religion by a body of Presbyterian trustees. 'The most notable feature of Oglethorpe University', writes Dr Mary Brent Whiteside, DLitt, 'is the spirit of fraternity, of mutual helpfulness and tolerance, and of constructive vision that pervades the campus.' After a perusal of the literature before us we can well believe that this is no empty boast.

There are both men and women students at Oglethorpe; and the list of their names shows how thoroughly English in origin the people of Georgia must be. Take a group at random: Mildred Bradley, Gladys Bridges, Park Brinson, Harry Britt, Thelma Brogden, Earl Brooks, Georgia Brown, Parker Bryant, Pansy Bugg, Curry Burford, Louise Butler and George Byrd. This list might well belong to a village school in the Midland shires!

It is to the *Oglethorpe University Bulletin*, however, that we must go if we are to obtain an insight into the atmosphere in which the life of the students is passed, and more especially into those of their institutions which we in Oxford do not, as yet, possess, and from which we have so much to learn. We cannot do better than illustrate this by quotations from that fascinating publication. The keynote of the spirit which permeates the whole University is thus expressed:

The most important element in education is the creation in the student of an intense yearning for and delight in the Good, the True,

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

and the Beautiful, and the first essential for the creation of such a spirit is the example set before him by the Faculty. The object of an Oglethorpe education is to furnish the student with deeper thoughts, finer emotions and nobler purposes, to the end that he may more clearly understand, more fully enjoy and more excellently behave in the world.

It is a tradition of the University that a close association should be maintained between education and righteousness, a fixed alliance of morality with enlightenment. We feel that to furnish the highest intellectual training to liars, thieves, adulterers or crooks would be calamitous to society, whose leaders and examples they would be. [...] All Honor Students at Oglethorpe, therefore, are required to observe [...] the law of personal honesty, forbidding all cheating on examinations, all [39] thefts, [...] the law of personal truthfulness, [...] the law of personal purity, which commands perfect continence, [...] the law of self-control, which, while partly covered by the law of personal purity, also includes all forms of drunkenness, gambling and similar lapses from the highest ideals of the moral law. [...] No student who violates the above laws may continue as an Honor Student at Oglethorpe University.

These words make it plain that a standard has been set up in Georgia which an older University might do well to keep in sight.

~

The intellectual pursuits of Oglethorpe are remarkably wide in their ramifications. Besides studies common to all genuine universities, we find in its curriculum such original subjects as Cosmic History (the special province of Dr Jacobs), Marketing, Mythology, Paedagogy, Library Economics, Mimeography, Forecasting, Ethics of Business, Business Psychology and Dramatics. There is also a Pre-Dental Course, which is not, however, concerned (as the ignorant Oxonian might suppose) with the study of new-born infants.

But we should be entirely wrong if we concluded from this that the interests of Oglethorpe are exclusively intellectual:

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

It is presumed [says the *Bulletin*] that a matter of such overwhelming importance to College life as athletics [...] is a matter worth studying seriously and deserving to be ranked with Greek and Poultry-Keeping. Therefore Oglethorpe University has founded her School of Physical Culture. Football is a powerful means in its development. American college football is the most interesting, most exciting, most manly, most instructive and most profitable game ever played by men. It, more than any other, furnishes to its devotees something of the moral equivalent of war [...].

So Oglethorpe has its Stadium to seat 45,000 spectators! More than this, the President has secured the collaboration of many distinguished scholars and of some of the most brilliant athletes in the United States. With their help he has succeeded in realising the dream of his youth. Oglethorpe has risen again to take her worthy place among the academic institutions of the world.

In conclusion we should like to thank Dr Jacobs and Dr [40] Mary Whiteside for their kindness in sending us the interesting information that is found in this article. We conclude with a message of welcome to our new-found sister from the pen of one of our younger poets, based on the rhythm of the Chapel Bell. We print it as a specimen of the good-natured humour that prevails among our young men, and hope that this humorous touch at the tail end of a serious article will not seem out of place.

In all his acts the opposite of Caesar Borgia  
Was the General Oglethorpe who founded Georgia.  
'But all we know of Oglethorpe is misty knowledge,'  
Complain the lads of Corpus Christi College.  
Now from a green and spacious Georgia campus  
Echoes a roaring like a mighty grampus,<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Not being aware of the exact nature of this animal we have consulted the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* and find the following. '**Grampus**, *n.* Kinds of blunt-headed delphinoid cetacean.' We think the comparison inept, but our poet refused to alter his line unless we provided him with

OGLETHORPE UNIVERSITY, GA.

‘Oglethorpe! Oglethorpe!  
Spreading the fame of that illustrious man,  
Our greatest commoner since this place began.  
Oglethorpe! Oglethorpe!’

another rhyme for ‘campus’. We much regret to announce our complete failure to do so. Eds.