
*Leland Dewitt Baldwin:
The Evolution of a Historian, 1897-1981*

By Edward W. Chester

LELAND DeWitt Baldwin (1897-1981), a long-time Professor at the University of Pittsburgh, was perhaps the most brilliant and prolific historian that Western Pennsylvania has ever produced. If only because of his important contributions to the study of Pennsylvania history, Baldwin should be of interest to many citizens of the Keystone State. His early writings, all published by the University of Pittsburgh Press, include *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City 1750-1865* (1937); *Whiskey Rebels: The Story of a Frontier Uprising* (1939); and *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters* (1941). These volumes were part of a series put out by the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey, sponsored jointly by the Buhl Foundation, the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, and the University of Pittsburgh. Collectively they mark the first real explosion of scholarly interest in Pittsburgh and the neighboring region.

Had Baldwin only written these three volumes, he would still be remembered today. All three books are still available as paperbacks, and librarians in charge of Western Pennsylvania collections are inevitably familiar with his writings. These three monographs remain popular not just because they have enjoyed a long monopoly in their respective fields; they are appealing because, like much of Baldwin's writings, they provide at times colorful treatment of historical episodes described in a solid narrative framework. Even in his earliest published works Baldwin

Edward W. Chester is a professor of History at the University of Texas at Arlington who has written about Leland Baldwin for other publications.

showed the ability to make history come alive.

This Western Pennsylvania historical trilogy, though, only constitutes part of Baldwin's vast output. The pivotal work in the Baldwinian bibliography is the two-volume *The Stream of American History* (New York: 1952). The distinguished historian Allan Nevins reviewed the original unpublished manuscript for the American Book Company in 1951 and observed: "This is a truly remarkable achievement," adding that "more than any previous writer — more even than Beards, whose strength lay in fresh and courageous interpretation — he has lifted American history to a philosophical plane."¹ At one time these two volumes were in widespread use as textbooks at U.S. colleges and universities. During the next decades Baldwin continued to bring out revisions of *The Stream*, working with three publishers and two collaborators in preparing the various editions of his *magnum opus*.

To properly understand Baldwin as a historian, one must be aware that philosophically he belonged to the consensus school of historians, the dominant historiographical faction in the profession in the United States after World War II. This group included such prominent figures as Richard Hofstadter, Daniel Boorstin, Louis Hartz and Ralph Gabriel. Collectively they manifested a faith in democracy and pragmatism, and viewed the future of the United States optimistically, both for its citizens' well-being and for its role as a world power.

Baldwin clearly stood closer to the mainstream of this consensus school than to the fringes. His early *Whiskey Rebels* manifested his concern with a serious challenge to the democratic process during the Washington Administration, while his late *Reframing the Constitution: An Imperative for Modern America* (Santa Barbara: 1972), offers some pragmatic readjustments of our fundamental law. But by the middle of this century, events in America (including urban riots and campus disorders) and events outside of America (especially the Vietnam War) had begun to undermine both popular and scholarly faith in the global democratic mission of the United States. During the 1960s the consensus school began to lose its ascendant position, with Baldwin's own growing disillusionment revealed in his last published book, *The American Quest for the City of God* (Macon: 1981). To Baldwin, the Vietnamese conflict dealt a fatal blow to the American mission, a mission which had played such an important role three decades earlier in his highly optimistic

1 Allan Nevins, "Report on 'An Unfinished History of American Democracy,'" 1951, 7, Leland Baldwin Papers (hereafter "Baldwin papers"), in possession of his wife, Ruth Baldwin, Santa Barbara, Calif. The author would like to thank Mrs. Baldwin for making these papers available.

textbook, *The Stream of American History*.

What, then, sets Baldwin apart from the other consensus historians? Baldwin was quite brilliant, but so were some of the others; he probably wrote better than most, and he unquestionably wrote more. How is one to explain his "greatness" or "genius" — that something extra which perceptive historians and publishers have noticed about his writings?

Baldwin stands apart from the consensus school in that he investigated the evolution of democracy not only in the United States but elsewhere, in such works as *God's Englishman: The Evolution of the Anglo-Saxon Spirit* (Boston: 1944), and *Best Hope of Earth: A Grammar of Democracy* (University of Pittsburgh Press: 1948). Both of these works predate *The Stream*, and unquestionably influenced it. Among the other members of the consensus school who also took a global approach to history, only Louis Hartz comes immediately to mind. Thanks to Baldwin's extended trips abroad to such places as South Africa and India, he had also begun to entertain doubts about the universal applicability of the American democratic model even before the outbreak of the Vietnam War. Certainly this is a major reason he was unable to complete a manuscript he worked on for many years called the *The Tides of Modern Civilization*, which investigated the political and cultural interactions in modern times between Western and Eastern civilizations.

To survey the life and career of this most unusual man, we might begin by asking what factors contributed to the emergence of this individual described by long-time University of Pittsburgh History Professor James Kehl as "one of the most prolific and provocative scholars in the history of the University."² Such characteristics are not always easy to ascertain, since in writing about a historian a biographer does not always have access to the personal letters and diary — if indeed there is a diary — and especially for that individual's formative years. Leland Baldwin, though, is an exception. Not only did he keep a diary from 1915 to 1927, the year of his marriage to Ruth Glosser, he also wrote many letters to Ruth when he was a graduate student at the University of Michigan from 1922 to 1932. The diaries and letters make it possible to study closely the most important decade in his intellectual development.

Later in life he kept a diary while serving in the military during World War II, and he also described his experiences abroad during the 1950s and 1960s in Great Britain, India, Pakistan and South Africa in numerous letters to his friends and in various reports. The last important record

2 James A. Kehl, "The Continuing Search of a Historian: A Memorial to Leland D. Baldwin," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, July 1981, 304.

available are some of his manuscripts, now in the Archives at the Historical Society in Pittsburgh.

Baldwin was born in Fairchance, Pennsylvania, on November 23, 1897, the son of Reverend Harmon Allen Baldwin and Etta Weatherly Baldwin. The Reverend Baldwin belonged to the Free Methodist Church, and was a well-known figure who evangelized at conferences all over the upper Ohio Valley area.³ He was also considered at one time a vice presidential possibility on the Prohibition Party ticket.⁴

Ruth Baldwin, Leland's wife, said that he regarded his father as one of the most brilliant men he ever knew. Harmon Baldwin wrote books on the doctrine of holiness, or sanctification, sometimes known as the "second work of grace"; this was a distinguishing doctrine of the Free Methodist Church, when it seceded from the mother church near the middle of the nineteenth century. Books which the Reverend Baldwin published, mostly during the 1910s and the 1920s, include *Spiritual Maxims on Walking in the Spirit; Holiness and the Human Element; Objections to Entire Sanctification Considered; The Indwelling Christ; The Fisherman of Galilee; Lessons for Seekers of Holiness; The Carnal Mind; and The Coming Judgment*.⁵ He died in 1936,⁶ four years after Leland had obtained his Ph.D. in history from the University of Michigan.

Leland's literary genius clearly was learned, at least in part, from his father. At 22 Leland confided to his diary about life when he was 10 years old: "Papa used to write on a chair while sitting on the floor, so I fixed myself in the same manner and began writing along with him in an old copy book."⁷ In 1916, at age 19, Leland sent an English theme off to the *Pictorial Review* after his father had corrected it.⁸ By 1920 Leland was reporting: "Papa gave me a talking to the other nite and told me I would have to reach a higher spiritual plane and to do it I must cut out fiction, etc. I believe he is partly right but it seems to me some fiction is alrite — it portrays the human as no other type of literature can do."⁹

By now Leland was finding it increasingly difficult to subscribe to the quite rigid and narrow religious beliefs of his father, although as late as November 19, 1916, he wrote in his diary, "I have just about decided to

3 Ruth Baldwin in Santa Barbara to Edward Chester, May 14, 1986. This and other letters are in the author's possession.

4 Ruth Baldwin letter, September 21, 1986.

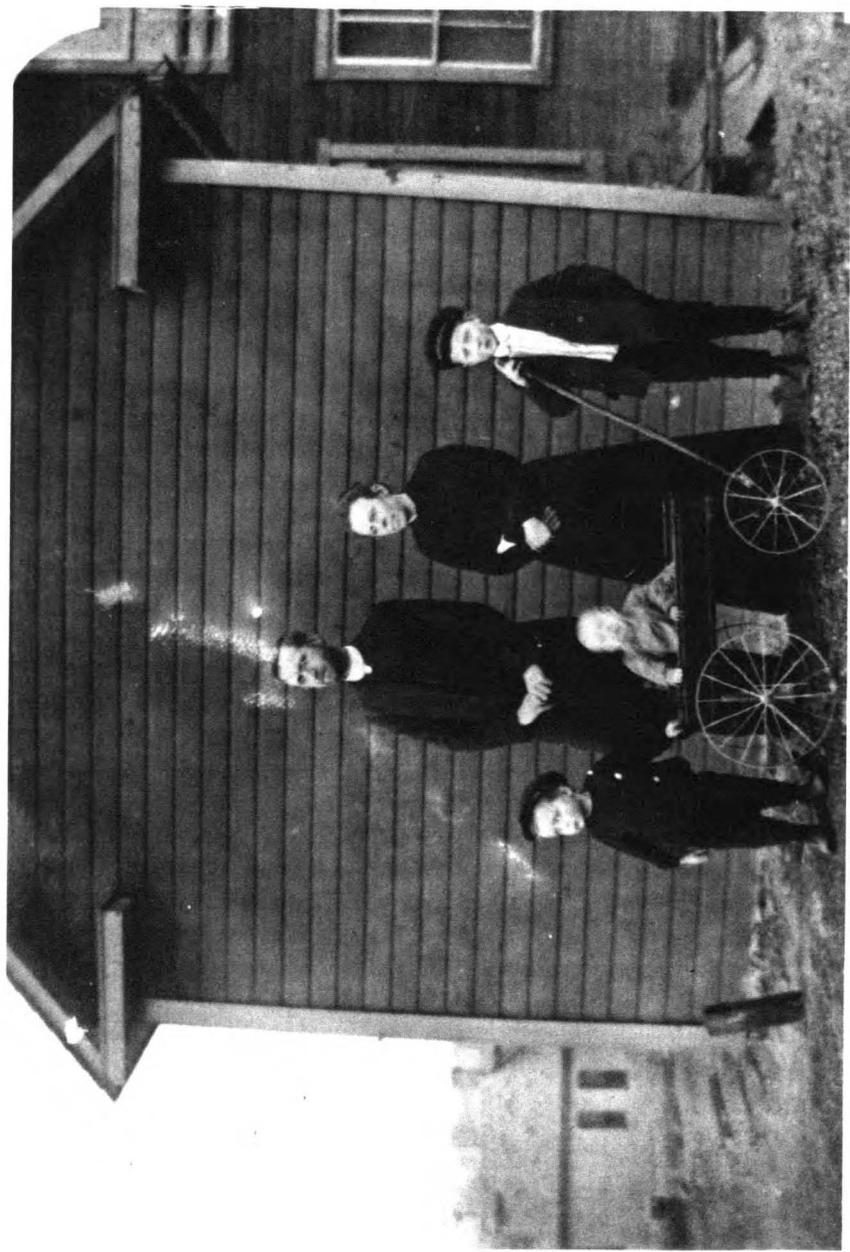
5 Ruth Baldwin letter, April 29, 1986.

6 Ruth Baldwin letter, May 14, 1986.

7 Leland Baldwin diary (hereafter "diary"), December 11, 1919, Baldwin Papers.

8 Diary, May 20, 22, 1916.

9 Diary, September 17, 1920.



Leland, age 7 or 8, with his parents, brother Wayland, 3, and sister Evelyn I, in the little red wagon his father made for him.

be a missionary. I can't think of any better way of spending my life."¹⁰ Still, 10 years later he noted in his diary that he had "worked some at the chapters on the Renaissance for Papa's History of the Doctrine of Christian Perfection."¹¹ Clearly his religious beliefs at that time remained strong, although they no longer coincided with his father's. Representative of Leland's thinking on religion at this time was his reaction to an article in the *World's Work* on the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism:

...you remember how Milton in his sonnet on his blindness and his consequent inability to serve, took comfort in the thought that 'they also serve who only stand and wait.' You know how in that waiting time he performed a work which is remembered more than all he accomplished in his seeing years. Perhaps these waiting years of mine in which I seem to do nothing save mark time will prove beneficial, maybe indispensable, in the mosaic of my life work.¹²

The body of Baldwin's work made him more a spokesman for democracy than a writer on religion, but books like *God's Englishman* and *The American Quest for the City of God* clearly reflect his Free Methodist Church upbringing.

It is not uncommon for a scholar to obtain the idea for a book or an article and to develop it as quickly as possible. Baldwin, however, started some of his writing projects a quarter of a century or more before their final version. A case in point is *The Stream of American History*, which first appeared in 1952. Sixteen years before, Leland observed in his diary: "I can remember when I was about 10 years old how American history didn't suit me, so I announced that I was going to write a good history. I think I got beyond the Icelanders before I got tired of my job and quit."¹³ Then in Summer 1926, as a graduate student at Michigan, he complained to one of the history professors that American history textbooks as a rule were poorly organized.¹⁴

A similarly long gestation was involved in *Reframing the Constitution*, published in 1972. Shortly after his arrival at Michigan for graduate

10 Diary, November 11, 1916.

11 Diary, August 20, 1926.

12 Leland Baldwin to Ruth Baldwin in Pittsburgh, April 28, 1927, Baldwin Papers.

13 Diary, December 7, 1919.

14 Diary, June 25, 1926.

studies, Leland wrote, "...had quite a discussion the other day in (my) American History Seminar as to the decrepitude of the Constitution. We finally decided that it was woefully out of date, but our ancestors had saddled it on us in such a way that the only way out is revolution."¹⁵ By the end of the year Leland was able to report: "...remodeled the Constitution of the U.S. to suit myself. (I am) much better satisfied now, as the federal government has the residuary powers, and it is all amenable to the people much after the British plan."¹⁶ But he was not finished with this project yet; he was at work again on it in Fall 1923. In February 1924 he sent Macmillan publishing house a copy of his book manuscript that proposed revising the Constitution.¹⁷ Baldwin was 24 at the time!

Then there is *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters*, which was to reach print in 1941. This had its origins in a paper on "Old Steamboat Days on the Lower Mississippi," or "Life on the Mississippi Steamboats from about 1850 to about 1865,"¹⁸ which Baldwin wrote for a 1926 seminar on American social history. This project was to evolve into his Ph.D. dissertation. Significantly, Baldwin had an ulterior motive in selecting this topic. He observed to Ruth, "I chose the topic myself so (I) will have no one else to blame if I don't like it. In fact it appealed to me because I have a plot for a historical novel laid at about that time at that place. So I'll try to kill two birds with one stone."¹⁹

Throughout his early years, Baldwin showed interest in writing fiction as well as history. Although he is by far better known as a historian, in 1939 he published a novel, *The Delectable Country*, which made the best-seller lists.²⁰ It is set in the Trans-Appalachian West during the 1790s. When the Popular Library published the paperback edition of this novel in 1966, it featured a quote on the cover from the author of *Jurgen*, James Branch Cabell, that *The Delectable Country* was as good as *Gone With the Wind*.

During the first 30 years of his life Leland Baldwin experimented with poetry and plays as well as with novels. In many ways Baldwin fit the

15 Diary, March 25, 1922.

16 Diary, December 19, 1922.

17 Diary, February 13, 1924.

18 Diary, June 29, 1927.

19 Leland to Ruth Baldwin in Ann Arbor, Mich., June 24, 1926, Baldwin Papers.

20 This 715-page historical novel was published by Lee Furman, Inc., of New York City. In the Foreword Baldwin noted: "Many of the incidents used in *The Delectable Country* are based upon fact. To give the devil his due, this novel is based upon materials gleaned by the author in the last decade and set forth in three monographs...."

model of the European man of letters, with diverse intellectual preoccupations rather than narrow research interests. Although few prominent American historians write fiction, Baldwin saw a direct relationship between history and fiction. In late 1931 he attended a lecture at Michigan by the famous novelist Rafael Sabatini (*Captain Blood*, *Scaramouche*, *The Sea-hawk*), many of whose books Baldwin purchased for his personal library. His reaction was highly positive: "Well I'm back from Sabatini's lecture, and it was certainly worth the one dollar admission. He spoke on 'Fiction in history and history in fiction.' In the course of the evening he dealt with propaganda and a number of such things in relation to certain historical mysteries and misconceptions."²¹

In examining Baldwin's early attempts to write fiction — some of which apparently no longer exist — the novel *Erita*, which he wrote in late 1921 just before enrolling at Michigan, deserves mention. As briefly described by Baldwin, "It purports to be written by a man from Mars who experiences life on a planet 'Erita,' a disguised name for the earth."²² He was still working on this a year later when it was rejected. His reaction: "(I) had a letter from *Harper's*, saying they had read *Erita* and expressing regrets, etc. I'm inclined to agree with them. I had not expected for them to take it, but one can't help dreaming, so I was somewhat punctured."²³

At the same time Leland was writing poetry on terrestrial topics. In Fall 1923 he confided to his diary that the editor of a new journal "honored me by asking for one of my poems. When I pled not guilty he said he would be satisfied with free verse, so I have been hatching out some of the very free kind based on Prairie Sunset and post-Plains history, and on the move west into Kentucky."²⁴ Astoundingly, at the same time he was waxing poetic he was working on his revised Constitution.

By early 1925, Baldwin was just about through with the first draft of *High Adventure*, a romance set in the Civil War era.²⁵ But by year's end he had diverted his attention to sketching the outline of a new novel of the Middle Ages.²⁶ And as pointed out earlier, by mid 1926 Baldwin was thinking in terms of still another historical novel set in the pre- and Civil War years to parallel his historical study of life on the Mississippi River steamboats.

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- 21 Leland to Ruth Baldwin in Ann Arbor, November 23, 1931, Baldwin papers.
 22 Diary, October 16, 1921.
 23 Diary, March 1, 1923.
 24 Diary, September 19, 1923.
 25 Diary, January 26, 1925.
 26 Diary, October 21, 1925.

Throughout this period Baldwin continued to attend plays: Shakespeare, "Cyrano," Shaw, etc. Around 1930 he wrote a four-act play about George Washington entitled "The Votary of Love." It focused on the relationship between Washington and Sally Fairfax. Still another play — this one undated — was called "The Drums of Death." Based on a story from Joseph Hergesheimer's *Quiet Cities*, it dealt with the quite different world of post-Civil War voodoo in Charleston, South Carolina.²⁷

It would be easy to dismiss these novels (aside from *The Delectable Country*), poems, and plays as meaningless juvenilia in Baldwin's development as a historian. Nothing, though, could be further from the truth. Anyone who surveys the textbooks and monographs on American history being written today is often confronted with a lack of style. In contrast, Baldwin's historical writings invariably are distinguished by a style developed through his experimentation with many different types of writing during his formative years. To quote James U. Rundle, Vice President and College Manager of the American Book Company, "(Richard) Hofstadter is a distinguished scholar and so are those on the (Richard) Current book. I have read enough of both these books to know that the writing as compared with Leland's writing is as of that of a child compared with that of a man."²⁸

Another factor which may well have influenced Baldwin's intellectual development, as well as his psychological makeup, was his constant moving about and traveling around the United States from his earliest years onward. In Fall 1916 he made a list of the places he had lived since his birth.²⁹ He rarely spent more than a year or two in the same place. The breakdown:

Pennsylvania: Fairchance, Rochester, Mt. Washington, Pittsburgh, Vandergrift, Kittanning and Uniontown;

West Virginia: Fairmont, Phillipi, Davis, Elkins and Wellsburg;

New York: Falconer and Gerry;

plus Bridgeport, Ohio; Tuscola, Illinois; and Atlanta, Georgia.

While attending Michigan in early 1922, Baldwin went to an illustrated lecture on Sicily. His comment was, "It was fine — old temples, views, etc. Makes me want to spend ten years in travel."³⁰ Later that year Baldwin and his brother Wayland made a "grand tour" of the United

27 Copies of these two plays are in the Baldwin Papers.

28 James Rundle in New York City to Robert Kelley and Leland Baldwin, February 28, 1963, Baldwin Papers.

29 Diary, September 23, 1916.

30 Diary, March 31, 1922.

States (Pike's Peak, Fort Worth, New Orleans, Montgomery and Nashville) with special attention to the battlefields and other historical sights.³¹ Then in July 1928 Baldwin drove with Ruth and her sister on a sightseeing tour of the Northeast, which included such places as Mt. Vernon, Washington, Annapolis, Dover, New York City, Princeton, Trenton, Philadelphia, Valley Forge and Gettysburg. Included on this expedition was a flight over the nation's capital.³²

The constant moving about and traveling around as a young man established a pattern which Baldwin continued in his extended trips abroad in later life. He spent a great deal of time in North Africa and Western Europe while in the military during World War II, and he lectured as a professor in the United Kingdom during 1952-53, in India and Pakistan later in 1953, and in South Africa during 1962-63. Aside from these extended absences from university life, he also made numerous shorter trips, both at home and abroad.

Although one invariably links someone with Baldwin's massive literary output to an ivory tower type of existence, he did not seclude himself in the intellectual world as a young man. He held a variety of blue-collar jobs, which doubtless furnished him a broader perspective on life. A typewritten vita and bibliography which he prepared in 1980 stated that he worked in factories between 1917 and 1919 (age 20 to 22). On January 6, 1918, he was hired as a clerk in a hammer shop, where his main responsibility was to keep the books. By that August, though, the hammer shop helpers had struck twice for higher wages, a controversy that Baldwin attempted to resolve.³³

As of June 1920, Baldwin was involved in a quite different vocation. He noted in his diary: "started our last paperhanging job today. It is a Finnish house. They are a good deal like Swedes. I always had an idea they were like Tartars."³⁴ Then two years later, in June 1922, he went to work in a basket factory, where he put handles on fancy baskets and loaded trucks.³⁵ A quite different type of opportunity presented itself in Summer 1924, when a banker offered Baldwin a position which could have paid him as much as \$5,000 annually after two years. Realizing this would require a permanent change of career, he turned down the offer, admitting, "It was the chance of a lifetime. Probably I shall never have

31 Ruth Baldwin has provided the author a summary of the trip.

32 Ruth Baldwin is the source.

33 Diary, August 5, 1918.

34 Diary, June 11, 1920.

35 Diary, June 14, 1922.

such another one, but I did not feel clear to take it. I feel that I should spend my life in some kind of service, teaching, journalism, or politics."³⁶

Let us now examine the formal education of Leland Baldwin. As an undergraduate student he attended Greenville College, a small school in Illinois. Greenville, located about 50 miles northeast of St. Louis, was a Free Methodist school, with a small preparatory school which mainly enrolled the children of missionaries. Feeling very green and bewildered, and especially homesick, Leland arrived on the campus in September, 1915. But, already at the age of 17 he had a fairly clear picture of his future: "I intend to specialize in languages and history. I think my undergraduate work will be largely languages and my upper graduate and post graduate work in history."³⁷ (As a matter of fact, Leland failed to develop a real enthusiasm, or flair, for such foreign languages as French.)

At Greenville Leland soon became involved with the debate team, and during his freshman year he spoke on such topics as "Resolved: Military and Naval Preparedness Insures National Security,"³⁸ and "Resolved: That the Monroe Doctrine is Untenable."³⁹ But everything did not go smoothly. So rigid was the curriculum that when Leland attempted to drop a math course which he detested, it was necessary for the president of the college to bring the matter before a faculty meeting!⁴⁰ (He was finally allowed to graduate without taking this course.) Leland was not always an "A" student, although he consistently demonstrated superior abilities.

Several years after his arrival at Greenville Leland concluded that the college was indeed divided into cliques: "There is the ultra fast clique — the want-to-be-fast clique — the old maids clique — the lady faculty clique — the pseudo-intellectual clique — the small fry clique etc. ad infinitum. As for me, I circulate and gather local color."⁴¹

Leland's stay at Greenville College was not spent entirely in the library, writing papers on such themes as "Blockade Runners and Commerce Destroyers of the Civil War," when he was not attending classes. During his second year he participated in a costume party for the dormitory folks, dressed up as Shylock, while others came dressed as

36 Diary, July 9, 1924.

37 Diary, September 30, 1915.

38 Diary, October 20, 1915.

39 Diary, February 11, 1916.

40 Diary, March 13, 1916.

41 Diary, March 27, 1920.

Charlie Chaplin, "Teeth-adore" (Theodore Roosevelt), and John Alden and Priscilla.⁴² He also made time for the basketball court: "Myself and several other fellows played the Intermediates. I surprised myself by making six baskets."⁴³ He also displayed his musical talents by singing "Beduoin Love Song" and "In the Garden of my Heart" at a Vocal Department program.⁴⁴ At times he even engaged in innocent pranks, such as rigging up an alarm clock and having a friend smuggle it under the seniors' table, where it went off during their dinner.⁴⁵ This was two years *after* the highly self-critical Leland Baldwin had admitted in his diary: "I have been looking over my Greenville album and it reminds me of what a downright ass I was. I hope that I have better control of myself now."⁴⁶

While much of Baldwin's diary during this period is that of a typical college student, some passages are quite distinctive. At age 22 he confided his desire to become an intellectual giant:

I have been reading tonite about the retreat of the 10,000 Greeks and their many trials and vicissitudes. This study of history and allied branches is certainly wonderful. To my mind it beats Math and Science all over, tho there may be some excuse for the latter. What a wonderful field there is in the study of comparative civilizations in sociology, in philosophy, in all of it. I wish I had a Carnegie library without the fiction and 10,000 years. Maybe wisdom is the best, but next I think comes knowledge, and I don't see how a person can be satisfied to go to the machine shop day after day with only an occasional lackadaisical reference to the big world outside both past and present. There are so many things I want to learn. I think some time when I get time and money I will get together a connected library of all history, theology, philosophy, letters, etc., and retreat to a hut in the mountains to study God and nature and books.⁴⁷

Such fantasies had to give way to reality after his graduation from college in 1921. Baldwin arrived on the campus of the University of Michigan early in 1922 after his family had renewed the mortgage on their farm.⁴⁸ He attended school there in the summers and began his career teaching during the regular school year at Miltonvale College in Kansas. He received his Master of Arts from Michigan in 1923 and

42 Diary, December 27, 1916.

43 Diary, February 25, 1916.

44 Diary, April 28, 1920.

45 Diary, April 21, 1920.

46 Diary, July 1918 (date not clear).

47 Diary, December 7, 1919.

48 Diary, January 20, 1922.

continued to work on his Ph.D. while teaching school. He taught first in Kansas (1922-24), and then at Har-brack High School in Pennsylvania (1924-26) and Crafton High School in the same state (1926-31). During the summer of 1926 and 1927 he still attended classes at Michigan; later he took isolated courses at the University of Pittsburgh while teaching at Crafton, earning his doctorate in History in 1932. He lived in Ann Arbor in 1931-32 while completing his work there.

As for his stay in Kansas, to Baldwin in the summer it was "a dry hot treeless desert: 106 degrees." Miltonvale College, 40 miles north of Salina, consisted of approximately 100 students and two red brick buildings;⁴⁹ he taught American and modern History and English literature,⁵⁰ but he also performed such tasks as washing the dormitory annex kitchen wall and painting it.⁵¹ Leland returned to Miltonvale the second year without a great enthusiasm. Upon his arrival he was "elected (the) coach of (the) no. 1 athletic division." He wrote, "(I) can scarcely imagine myself more unfitted for any job..."⁵² Later that fall he organized a Halloween party.⁵³ "Such is life in a small college," he observed in his diary. "The next time they get me to come to a place like this, I'll not merely suspect, I'll know I'm crazy."⁵⁴ When Baldwin did accept employment again as a teacher, it was in more familiar surroundings at the two aforementioned schools in his native Pennsylvania.

Moving from Greenville College in Illinois to the University of Michigan was another very big change for Baldwin. The difference between this institution of higher education and Greenville College was like night and day. He quickly perceived that he was indeed in an entirely new academic world: "I reckon U.M. is alrite as universities go; however, I prefer the small college. Living is too high for one thing; frats and society are too prevalent; and the impersonal dominates."⁵⁵ Upon his arrival, Dean Lloyd of the Graduate School informed him that he had compiled a good record as an undergraduate, and that with one or two exceptions Greenville graduates had made good at Ann Arbor.⁵⁶

Among the first courses which Leland took at Michigan was Ulrich Phillips' American History seminar, in which he wrote a paper on

49 Diary, September 4, 1922.

50 Diary, September 7, 1922.

51 Diary, September 4, 1922.

52 Diary, September 20, 1923.

53 Diary, October 30, 1923.

54 Diary, January 22, 1924.

55 Diary, February 12, 1922.

56 *Ibid.*

"British Sentiment towards the Civil War." Phillips was a well-known authority on the South, and the author of several important books. In this seminar Phillips took the position that unless the United States was split, there was a real danger that the next generation would menace the liberty of the world! Leland, however, was skeptical of this interpretation, since he felt that this underrated the difficulty of naval domination over continents, and the power of Oriental people.⁵⁷ The following year (1923) he enrolled in another American History seminar, again under Phillips, where he wrote a paper on the "Newspaper as a Party Organ in the Jacksonian Era."⁵⁸ Leland noted in his diary that he could not help but like his professor, but that they disagreed on a number of topics, including evolution. According to the former, Phillips was indifferent to religion, being of the opinion that real tolerance could only be based on indifference.⁵⁹

In his writings Phillips developed the thesis that the institution of slavery was basically outmoded, uneconomical, and would have faded away in due course without the South and the nation having to undergo the trauma of the Civil War. This became the standard interpretation of slavery for many years, although Phillips tended to overuse the manuscript records of the more substantial planters in reaching his conclusions, and operated under the racist assumption that black slaves were inherently inferior.

In volume one of *The Stream of American History* Baldwin cited both Phillips' *American Negro Slavery* (1918) and his *Life and Labor in the Old South* (1929), as well as his earlier biography *The Life of Robert Toombs* (1913).⁶⁰ As for the narrative proper of *The Stream*, Baldwin reiterated Phillips' claim of a generation earlier that slavery was not an unalloyed economic success, especially in the Old South. He added that both social and economic climbers throughout Dixie nevertheless tried to develop and maintain large plantations based on slavery, and that the element of inertia also contributed to the enduring of this peculiar institution. Baldwin did not describe the antebellum North as being under the control of the abolitionists: "At no time either before or since the Civil War has any appreciable number of white Americans, Northern or Southern, been willing to yield white supremacy."⁶¹ Historians of the

57 Diary, May 22, 1922.

58 Diary, August 8, 1923.

59 Diary, August 13, 1923.

60 *The Stream of American History*, I, 171, 140.

61 *Ibid.*, 650.

most recent generation of scholars, though, portray slavery in somewhat different terms than those of either Phillips or Baldwin. Lewis C. Gray, Thomas P. Govern, Robert R. Russel, and Robert Worthington Smith have concluded independently that slavery was profitable, as do Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman in their revisionist computerized study, *Time on the Cross* (1974).

His seminars with Phillips aside, Baldwin took a wide variety of history courses prior to obtaining his M.A. degree. Among these were Medieval Europe, The British Empire, an English History seminar, National Politics, International Law, Money and Banking, Hispanic America, Medieval Civilizations, an Anglo-French Relations seminar, Ancient Civilizations, England 1815-1830, and Political Parties. During the summer of 1926 he read student papers for Professor Charles Chapman, who taught Latin American History⁶² and who eventually offered to help Baldwin obtain a teaching fellowship at the University of California.⁶³ (This never materialized.) Baldwin regarded Chapman as one of the leading men in his field, but was less kind in his assessment of another history professor whose course he took at Michigan and who I will identify as Professor X: "He is certainly a rotten lecturer, with no system whatsoever. He is insufferable. With him history is a matter of facts, not of application."⁶⁴ Baldwin was also offended by the fact that Professor X had assigned him seven "immense" volumes to read for half credit. The examination for this course, according to Leland, was "general and imbecile as usual."⁶⁵

During Summer 1926 Baldwin took a seminar on U.S. Social History 1850-1865 under Professor Arthur C. Cole, for which he wrote a paper, "Life on a Mississippi Steamer." Baldwin emphasized the social side of the topic, whereupon Cole took him to task for not devoting enough attention to economic factors. Having gradually lost his personal liking for his professor, Baldwin's reaction to Cole's critique was: "Of course a prof has to do something to show he knows more than the rest of us."⁶⁶ The following summer Baldwin presented Ulrich Phillips with his proposed dissertation topic: "Old Steamboat Days on the Lower Mississippi." Professor Charles Van Tyne, then the chairman of the History Department, had objected to his doing a dissertation on social history,

62 Diary, June 23, 1926.

63 Diary, June 30, 1926.

64 Diary, March 25, 1922.

65 Diary, May 8, 1922.

66 Diary, July 29, 1926.

but Phillips stated that he would probably be made the permanent chairman of his dissertation board anyway.⁶⁷ Baldwin experienced a scare when he encountered a published book on his topic, but this turned out to be a popular rather than a scholarly account.⁶⁸

A more permanent shock occurred when Phillips resigned from Michigan and went to Harvard. The noted Western historian Ray Billington, a friend of Baldwin's from Michigan, left for Harvard, but the expense of the Ivy League school deterred Baldwin from following suit. As a result, he remained at Ann Arbor, where he became the first graduate student of Dwight Dumond.⁶⁹ Dumond, who established a scholarly reputation by writing on such topics as anti-slaveryism, was only two years older than Baldwin. According to Ruth Baldwin, Leland concealed his disappointment that Phillips had left, and worked on his dissertation rather independently. In Leland's opinion, it had been his dissertation rather than his orals which was the key factor in getting him through the Ph.D. ordeal.⁷⁰

Thus far we have examined Leland Baldwin's attitudes toward his father, his writing, his jobs (both academic and non-academic), and his experiences at Greenville College and the University of Michigan. We have yet to consider his reactions to what was going on around him, both in the United States and the rest of the world. What did he think about the events surrounding World War I? An examination of this broad topic throws some light on the writings of his post-Michigan years, as expressed in such volumes as *The Stream of American History*.

Baldwin was to observe of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1944 that "unless he slips during the next four years (he) will probably emerge as the greatest American figure of the Twentieth Century,"⁷¹ but as he reached voting age his sympathies were more with the Republicans. Baldwin's father was politically conservative, and Leland cast his first presidential vote for Warren Harding in 1920.⁷² To Leland, however, the Ohio Republican was hardly a great leader: "He is a McKinleyesque man of very imposing presence, but reminds one of a mansion with nobody

67 Diary, June 29, 1927.

68 Diary, August 7, 1927.

69 Ruth Baldwin in Santa Barbara to Edward Chester, November 10, 1986.

70 *Ibid.*

71 *God's Englishman*, 76.

72 Diary, November 2, 1920.

living in it."⁷³ A generation later, when he published *The Stream of American History*, Baldwin concluded that Harding had been an incompetent president, with only U.S. Grant possibly a worse chief executive.

As for William Jennings Bryan, Baldwin was faced with a dilemma, in that Bryan was a liberal in politics and a fundamentalist in religion. When Baldwin heard Bryan speak in 1921, he seemed more concerned about his ideas regarding evolution than his political theories. To him Bryan appeared to be a farmer rather than a statesman.⁷⁴ When Bryan died in 1925 after the Scopes Evolution Trial in Dayton, Tennessee, Baldwin thought that his death may have dealt a fatal blow to fundamentalism and he wished that he was qualified to take Bryan's place as the leader of the fundamentalist cause.⁷⁵ (One might suggest that the fundamentalist cause must not have been very strong, if Baldwin was worried it could not survive the death of one leader.)

A quarter century later Baldwin was much less generous in his assessment of Bryan in *The Stream*. "There was brutal truth," he observed,"in (Joseph) Foraker's comment that like the Platte River he was 'six inches deep and six miles wide at the mouth.'"⁷⁶ (Bryan, of course, was a great orator, as evidenced by his "Cross of Gold" speech at the 1896 Democratic convention.) In addition, Baldwin wrote in 1952, "He was not even by temperament a liberal, as witness his later evangelical campaigns to limit personal freedom, notably in the use of alcohol and the teaching of evolution."⁷⁷

While Baldwin was reacting to these and other political figures during his college and university years, he was also speculating on global events. Near the end of World War I he did serve briefly as a clerk in the War Risk Insurance Department in the new National Museum Building.⁷⁸ Among the books which Baldwin read at this time was Hugo Munsterberg's *America and the War* (1914), which he labeled pro-German, but nevertheless "with a few grains of truth.... For instance, Russia undoubtedly had designs, and England wanted commercial supremacy, and France wanted to be the arbitrator of Europe."⁷⁹ Baldwin also read John Maynard Keynes' *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (1919),

73 Diary, October 28, 1920.

74 Diary, November 5, 1921.

75 Diary, August 15, 1925.

76 *The Stream*, II, 301.

77 *Ibid.*, 300-301.

78 Diary, August 5, 1918.

79 Diary, March 1, 1923.

which he described as being quite good and sensible in its analysis.⁸⁰ By 1924 Baldwin confided to his diary how far his thinking had changed about the war. His disillusion with this conflict, though, was by no means unique among Americans of that era:

It doth appear to me that I never was fooled as much as in the last war. Germany was cracked up to be the father of Satan and France etc. as perfect. Since I have been able to think a little for myself I have found out that the blame was about 50-50, and the best proof is in France's militaristic past and present. Wilson and Creel and Parker and others sold the war to us, and we bit like any suckers & receive nothing from Europe but blows, sneers and contempt.⁸¹

Not long after he made the above diary entry his father had a dream. As reported by Leland, his father visualized him in "Luther's place stirring up the whole country, and leading a great reformation." Baldwin continues, "He always has expected me to do great things."⁸² In the years which followed, Leland may have failed to follow the path which his father had set for him, but he was to become a brilliant leader in another profession, as the large body of published works which he left to posterity indicates.

When Baldwin obtained his Ph.D. from Michigan, he was in his 35th year. The nation was in the depths of the worst depression in its history. Yet armed with a doctoral degree, in an era when this was less common than it is today, he obtained a position that year as a Librarian and Research Associate with the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey. The Survey produced 10 books on regional history during the late 1920s and the 1930s. From 1935 to 1936 Baldwin was the Assistant Director in charge of research. The manuscripts he worked on during this period were published between 1937 and 1941.

The usual procedure for most Ph.D.s in History at that time was to begin teaching immediately at a university or college. While working at the Historical Survey, he also lectured in 1934 and 1935 at the University of Pittsburgh. While he did not become a full-time faculty member until after World War II, he worked in two different capacities for the university before the war.

80 *Ibid.*

81 Diary, February 13, 1924.

82 Diary, October 26, 1925.

He was the first Editor of the University of Pittsburgh Press, from 1936 to 1939. He supervised the publication of several books, including his own *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City* (1937) and *Whiskey Rebels: The Story of a Frontier Uprising* (1939). The first volume was designed for a wide audience. ("This book is not for historians," was Baldwin's first sentence in the Foreword.⁸³) Covering the period from the French and Indian War to the Civil War, the monograph stressed "feeling, drama, and atmosphere" at the expense of encyclopedic comprehensiveness. There are chapters on commerce, industry, and transportation, as well as politics, society and culture.

Foreshadowing his preoccupation with democracy as a subject, *Whiskey Rebels* is perhaps the most significant of his historical volumes from this period. It details this first major breakdown of the U.S. democratic process, with a later one being Dorr's Rebellion in Rhode Island in 1844. By the time *Whiskey Rebels* appeared Baldwin was beginning to attract the attention of leading American historians. Henry Steele Commager stated that the book "was informed with an understanding of the social psychology of the people and the region described, illuminated by a broad presentation of the whole historical background and presented with vigor and not without humor." Allan Nevins wrote that the book "has recounted the incidents of the (Whiskey) Rebellion with spirit and color and has painted an especially good portrait of that extraordinary figure Hugh Henry Brackenridge."⁸⁴

The third book to reach print was *The Delectable Country*, a historical novel, which also appeared in 1939. Based in part on *Whiskey Rebels* and his later book of history, *The Keelboat Age on Western Waters* (1941), it also drew on such works as Francis Bailey's *Journal of a Tour in Unsettled Parts of North America*, Zadok Cramer's *Navigator*, and Brackenridge's *Gazette Writings, Incidents of the Western Insurrection, and Modern Chivalry*. Baldwin did take liberties at times with names, dates, places and events, to make the resulting work one of fiction. (Another example of his efforts to combine fiction and history was his article, "Benjamin Franklin and the American Psyche,"⁸⁵ and an earlier unpublished novel, *The Lightning and the Sceptre*,⁸⁶ which had Franklin as its central character. I have recently compared and contrasted these two pieces of literature in an article, "Franklin in Fact and Fiction: The Double Perspective of Leland Bald-

83 *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City*, ix.

84 Endorsements on back cover of book.

85 *Pitt Newsletter*, Winter 1956, 17-21.

86 A copy of this manuscript is in the Baldwin Papers at the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania.

win."⁸⁷)

Usually the revised doctoral dissertation of a young historian is the scholar's first major piece to be published. Again, Baldwin broke from this mold with *The Keelboat Age*, his fourth published book. It covered the pre-steamboat age on the Ohio, Mississippi and other western rivers before 1820, and dealt with such topics as ship-building, navigation and river pirates. Baldwin showed the boatmen to be a colorful bunch, with the legendary Mike Fink perhaps the most famous.

From 1940 to 1942 Baldwin was Acting University Librarian. Annual reports from the library in 1940 and 1941 show Baldwin made various suggestions for reforms, including more personnel for the cataloguing department, construction of the proposed Science-Engineering Library, and a larger budget for the library in general.

As Baldwin built his professional life in Pittsburgh, the situation in Europe and Asia deteriorated. On the eve of World War II, he made his first trip to Europe...as a tourist. Among the countries he visited were Great Britain, Portugal, Spain, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Hungary and Switzerland. As his intellectual horizons broadened he turned his attention to a project far wider in scope than his first three historical monographs: *The Story of The Americas* (New York: 1943). Broader in coverage but shorter in length, this work lacked the penetrating insights which were the hallmark of the later two-volume *Stream of American History*. Baldwin came to feel that this was his weakest book; he believed the publisher, Simon and Schuster, took excessive liberties with his manuscript while he was serving in the military.

At the time of Pearl Harbor, Baldwin was 44. Younger people managed to escape the draft, but Baldwin knew he couldn't, and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. He entered military service with a Captain's commission on May 13, 1942; he was promoted to Major on December 17, 1943, and to Lieutenant Colonel on February 27, 1945. After attending service schools in Miami and Harrisburg, he left for Great Britain. He would be present at various battles and campaigns in the European Theater: Tunisia, Naples-Foggia, Rome-Arno, and the North Appennines. As a historical editor he did not take part in combat. Nevertheless, he received the EAME Theater Ribbon with four battle stars, the Legion of Merit, and five Overseas Service Bars.

There is strong evidence that Baldwin's overseas experiences in Great Britain, North Africa, the Gold Coast, Italy and the Levant during World War II not only broadened his interest in other countries, but also led to

a frequent international focus in his later writings. Proof of this is found in the voluminous letters he sent to his family and friends, a three-volume hand-written diary which he kept between August 1942 and August 1945,⁸⁸ and an unpublished 280-page memoir, *Staff Captains Never Die*, a series of sketches of life behind the lines in the Mediterranean.⁸⁹

Since a full understanding of Baldwin as a person and as a historian is not possible without examining his unpublished writings as well as his numerous books, a few comments about *Staff Captains Never Die* are in order. Parts of this volume resemble a travelogue, while elsewhere Baldwin devoted a great deal of space to various nationalities and ethnic groups that he encountered overseas: French, Italians, Arabs of North Africa, and blacks of West Africa. There are also such colorful characters as Chaplain Wesley Bare, disguised in the memoirs as "Parson Buff," who would be as much at home in a work of fiction as in a monograph on history. One of the more surprising aspects of *Staff Captains* is Baldwin's frank revelation that he was aware of the existence of the atomic bomb before it was tested — further proof of how difficult it is to keep a secret in the military.

The memoir yields some fascinating background about two events in the war: the Sicilian invasion glider fiasco of June 1943, and the transformation of Operation STRANGLE — the Italian bombing campaign in Spring 1944. Baldwin had journeyed to the Gold Coast city of Accra the previous spring, where he supervised the assembling of glider parts obtained from crates which had crossed the Atlantic Ocean lashed to the decks of vessels.⁹⁰ Some of the parts were damaged by the elements, and some were even missing when the planes were reassembled, which raises the possibility that these problems may have contributed to the poor performance of the gliders during the Sicilian invasion.

As for Operation STRANGLE, the original Allied plan was to bombard the Axis railroad marshalling lines.⁹¹ This worked in Sicily but proved less effective in central Italy, where the Germans and Italians had a large number of locomotives, flat cars and box cars. Baldwin relates that shortly after the Allied bombers began to attack the marshalling yards, Captain Warren Manhard presented evidence that it would be much

88 Both the letters and the diary are in the Baldwin Papers in Ruth Baldwin's possession.

89 A copy of this manuscript is in the Baldwin Papers at the Historical Society.

90 Chapter 6, 105-122.

91 Chapter 14, 262-280.

more effective to bomb the railroad lines, bridges and tunnels at one point across the Italian peninsula. Meeting with initial rejection, the emotionally deteriorating Captain Manhard took his own life, but those high level officials who were in charge of planning eventually adopted his ideas, and Operation STRANGLE proved a great success.

During the service Baldwin met a number of people who were already prominent, or were destined to become so. These included Lauris Norstad, the youthful general; Thornton Wilder, the novelist and playwright; Elliot Roosevelt, son of the president; and John Higham, later an American historian. One of his most fruitful contacts was with the noted art connoisseur Bernard Berenson, whom Baldwin met in Italy, and with whom he corresponded over the years. There is a letter from Baldwin in Pittsburgh to Berenson dated March 9, 1947, in which Baldwin set forth a psychoanalytical view of history, which he apparently did not pursue further in his writings: "...the typical civilized state has been made up of a docile mass directed by (a) class which can let its id go all but unrestrained, at least in its behavior towards the masses."⁹²

His stay in Great Britain inspired him to write a historical work published both there and in the United States, *God's Englishman: The Evolution of the Anglo-Saxon Spirit*. Baldwin began by quoting John Milton's *Areopagitica* on the title page: "God is decreeing to begin some new and great period...what does he then but reveal Himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his Englishmen."⁹³ In tracing the evolution of democracy in Great Britain Baldwin elevated himself to a level of profundity which surpassed that attained in his earlier writings, and also unleashed those creative forces within himself which were to produce later works on the evolution of democracy in the United States (*The Stream of American History*) and throughout the world (*Best Hope of Earth*). Collectively these works stand at the zenith of his accomplishments as a historian, and from the standpoint of style, content, and analysis, they read differently from many historical monographs written today, which are narrow in scope, based largely on archival materials, and devoid of style.

Baldwin left active duty January 5, 1946, and resumed his career at Pittsburgh, where he became an Associate Professor in the History Department. In 1955 he was promoted to Professor. He retired from Pitt in 1961. He taught courses not only on American history but also on the expansion of Western Civilization. A stimulating and far-ranging lec-

92 A copy of this letter is in the Baldwin Papers in Ruth Baldwin's possession.

93 See title page.

turer, Baldwin did not speak extemporaneously; he left behind literally thousands of pages of lecture notes. He was not actually present at the University during this entire 15 year span. He served as a Fulbright Lecturer at the University of Leeds in Great Britain during the 1952-53 academic year, and then as a State Department Lecturer in Pakistan, India, and Ceylon during 1953-54. Baldwin was also a Visiting Professor at the University of California at Los Angeles in 1955.

Baldwin's first post-World-War II book was the above-mentioned *Best Hope of Earth: A Grammar of Democracy*. After a revised edition was published in 1956, this volume was translated into Portuguese and Arabic. (*God's Englishman* had appeared in a French version in 1945.) Although it is the shortest of his three books examining the progress of democracy, *Best Hope of Earth* nevertheless remains a major work in the Baldwinian canon. Not only did he discuss the growth of democracy in the modern world, but he traced its roots back to ancient Greece and Rome in examining the ideas of leading historical thinkers. Above all, he stressed that democracy is *process* as much as *content*: perhaps no single idea is as essential to understanding Leland Baldwin as a professional historian. In the section "Credo for Democracy," Baldwin wrote, "I believe that democracy is a positive political process for working toward liberty, equality, and fraternity, and that, though it bears in itself the means of improvement, it can never lay claim to perfection without destroying its essential nature."⁹⁴ Here Baldwin took an anti-Utopian stance, and expressed his intention of dealing with human nature as it actually is, not as it ideally might be.

In the first part of this essay I pointed out that as a young boy Baldwin was dissatisfied with the existing books on American history, and that one day he planned to write his own. Thirty-five years later he published *The Story of the Americas*, but was not totally satisfied with that, either. Nor was he satisfied with many of the current textbooks covering the history of the United States, despite the obvious literary superiority of Henry Steele Commager and Samuel Eliot Morison's volume, *The Growth of the Republic*, which went through several editions. In an unpublished paper he read at a meeting of the Mississippi Valley Historical Association in Madison, Wisconsin on April 15, 1949, Baldwin concluded his remarks on "The Textbook in the Approach to the Teaching of American History" with the observation:

This is a plea for college textbooks that stress not only facts but their meaning. It holds that history should become a dynamic factor in defending democracy, and



Leland Baldwin in middle age

training for democratic responsibility by enabling the student to see how the conflict of standards is a valid instrument for human change and a sound basis for democratic philosophy. The history of the United States should be presented as an integral and necessary part of the world pattern. There should be less emphasis on the superiority of the United States and more on what makes it *different*. Specifically we should try to analyze our original heritage and the borrowings we have made since, how they reacted on our national environment to produce a new phase of Western Civilization with its democratic and technological aspects, and how we have shared in making and solving world problems — in the rubbing and grinding of civilizations and cultures which will make the future. The political is significant because it is the battleground on which deep and conflicting issues meet and settle upon a compromise program; but we should seek to peer more deeply into character and causes and effect. This goes against the current demand for 1) a completely factual textbook, and 2) a one-volume college textbook at a juvenile level.⁹⁵

Three years later the two-volume *The Stream of American History* appeared. As could be expected, this intellectual *tour de force* implemented the objectives which Baldwin had set forth in his Madison paper. In the preface Baldwin commenced by pointing out that he had examined various American dilemmas, and how they had either been met or evaded. He stated that he was of the opinion that the historian has both a cultural and a moral duty, that he personally believed in democracy, and that he felt that history did possess a unity. Here he approvingly quoted the Dutch historian Johan Huizinga to the effect that: "History is the intellectual form in which a civilization renders account to itself of its past."⁹⁶ Truth is not the same thing as the sum of the facts. History, too, is far more than a collection of facts; it is also a series of insights explaining these facts.

Clearly *The Stream of American History* is no "pot boiler" designed to enrich the bank account of its author — although it did do that — without adding to the sum total of human knowledge. As Baldwin observed, "This book deliberately seeks to furnish something which the reader must stretch his mental powers to grasp...."⁹⁷ But this did not keep American history professors all over the United States from adopting *The Stream*; according to an American Book Company flyer, at one time the book was used in the classrooms of at least 92 universities and colleges. Aside from the positive evaluations of such prominent historians as Allan Nevins, *The Stream* also received numerous favorable newspaper reviews. The *Chicago Tribune* compared it to the major works of Charles

95 A copy of this paper is in the Baldwin Papers held by Ruth Baldwin.

96 *The Stream*, I, vii.

97 *The Stream*, I, ix.

A. Beard, while the *Des Moines Register* drew parallels with H.G. Wells' *Outline of History*. Publisher Richard R. Smith, who brought out the 786-page trade edition of *The Stream* in 1952, boldly observed: "After more than forty years of publishing books in the fields of history, politics and economics, many by authors of the highest rank, I offer in these volumes the work which I regard as the most outstanding contribution of them all."⁹⁸

Once a historian publishes a successful textbook, he must devote a great deal of attention to revising and updating it for later editions. This was especially true of *The Stream*, which underwent various reincarnations over the next two decades; the second edition appeared in 1957. In 1954 Baldwin also published a more detailed treatment of twentieth century events, his *Recent American History* (New York: 1954). Then there was his *The Meaning of America: Essays Towards an Understanding of the American Spirit* (University of Pittsburgh Press: 1955). Not designed as a textbook but nevertheless a companion to *The Stream*, the essays examined the American economic and political system, its strengths and weaknesses, in connection with the history and historical psychology of the United States.

When it appeared, Baldwin was 58. Short and bespectacled, he became heavier as he grew older. In middle age he looked like, talked like, and acted like the academician that he was. And almost all of his students, as well as many of his colleagues, saw him only in that role. Larry Irwin, the first director of the University of Pittsburgh Press, said those who enrolled in Baldwin's courses believed that he was tough but fair, and that "you can't pull anything over on ol' Baldwin."⁹⁹ Unquestionably he was a superb lecturer.

Irwin was among a few who got to know "Lee" better, the Baldwin who noted on an August 1957 faculty information form that his main hobbies were "cooking, reading, movies, (and) bull sessions."¹⁰⁰ Irwin added that "there was a stalwart quality about Leland and it was present when he was being truculent, as he could sometimes be. He was a dependable friend without making much of it. I think of Leland as a serious person, not given to light conversation or laughter, whose humor tended to be a bit acerbic."¹⁰¹

Among Baldwin's important non-professional activities was his

98 See the dust jacket of the trade edition, *The Adult's American History*, for this quotation.

99 Larry Irwin in Pittsburgh to Edward Chester, December 3, 1987.

100 Hilman Library, University of Pittsburgh, supplied a copy of this form.

101 Irwin to Chester.

charter membership in a discussion group formed in Autumn 1930 which became known as the Scorpions. At a luncheon held at Dimling's Restaurant on the old Market Square in downtown Pittsburgh, Robert Wilson of Bell Telephone suggested the creation of a group similar to the one he belonged to as a graduate student at Cambridge University. About 14 people were active in this group, which lasted 50 years. Meetings were held monthly in members' homes. A Scorpion was expected to possess a fertile mind, conviviality and a record of accomplishment.

According to John Malone, a businessman, amateur genealogist and world traveler, the political distribution of the group was "about 60 percent Republicans, 39 percent Democrats, and Leland."¹⁰² (Malone perceived that Baldwin did not have a very high opinion of politicians, since there were times when both parties disappointed him, especially in his final years.) Although Baldwin was no racist, one of his comments is indicative of his sometimes free-wheeling nature. Aware of the increasing Hispanic population in the American Southwest, he observed that the United States was in the process of becoming "a nation of coffee-colored Catholics."¹⁰³ In Malone's opinion, he did not pull any punches, and the heat from the "fireball" at the Scorpions' meetings was indeed intense sometimes.

After his retirement at 63 from Pittsburgh, Baldwin spent the next academic year, 1961-62, as a visiting professor at the University of California at Santa Barbara, where he had purchased a home in the mid-1950s. He spent the next academic year at the University of Natal in South Africa, and returned to UC-Santa Barbara during the 1964-65 academic year. This marked his last academic position.

By this time Baldwin was involved in preparing a new edition of *The Stream*, which appeared in 1965. This third edition was co-authored by Robert Kelley, a long-time professor at the UC-Santa Barbara who was identified with the Public History program there. Baldwin's collaboration with the much younger Kelley, who later published his own American history textbook,¹⁰⁴ was stormy at times, as evidenced by the correspondence between them and the publisher. In 1969 Van Nostrand

102 John Malone in Boca Raton, Florida, to Edward Chester, December 7, 1987.

103 Irwin to Chester.

104 Robert Kelley, *The Shaping of the American Past*, two volumes, (Englewood Cliffs: 1975).

published a fourth edition of *The Stream*. Then in 1973 Leland Baldwin collaborated with another historian, Erling Erickson, to produce *The American Quest*.¹⁰⁵ The fifth edition of *The Stream* was the result of more harmonious teamwork than the third edition (with Kelley) had been.

In the same year Van Nostrand published the fourth edition of *The Stream*, the publisher brought out two separate two-volume sets of readings. *Ideas in Action* consists of *Documentary and Interpretive Readings in American History*, while *The Flavor of the Past* is a collection of *Readings in American Social and Political Portraiture*. Scattered throughout all four volumes are interpretive essays, marking Baldwin's first excursion into this genre. These two different sets of readings are supplemental rather than competitive, with *Ideas in Action* emphasizing intellectual, cultural and political developments, and *The Flavor of the Past* being more anecdotal in nature. However, as Baldwin wrote, "Certainly it would be wrong to allow an implication that our ancestors lived lives of picturesque adventure, constant crisis, or whimsical repartee."¹⁰⁶

Two years after the fourth edition of *The Stream* and the two books of readings were released, the ABC-CLIO Press of Santa Barbara published one of Baldwin's most provocative books, *Reframing the Constitution: An Imperative for Modern America*. As noted earlier, this was a project which dated from the 1920s, when Baldwin was still a student. One is unable to determine how much of the 1971 book derives from the student project, but clearly much of the material is from the immediate past, and some of it comes from the literature of political science. In discussing the challenges then facing America, Baldwin wrote, "Solutions for these problems may demand not only that we give up some of our freedoms, but that we alter some of the moral precepts on which our present culture is founded."¹⁰⁷

As a solution to these problems Baldwin offered a revised national Constitution with a preamble and nine articles. He concluded that the division of powers between the states and the central government had become increasingly destructive, and that there should be fewer states than at present. The 48 contiguous states were to be consolidated into 14: Alleghenia, Appalachia, California, Chicago, Detroit, Erie, Mississippi, Missouri, New England, New York, Oregon, Savanna, Sierra, and Texas. Congress should become a unicameral body (like that of Nebraska) with the President sitting as a member. A separate and reconstructed Senate

105 *The American Quest*, (Belmont: 1973).

106 *The Flavor of the Past*, I, vi.

107 *Reframing the Constitution*, ix.

should act as a court of last resort, a board of censors, and a group of ombudsmen. As for the political parties, they should be made more responsible for the solution of problems, and more reflective of public opinion. Finally, the United States should strike a happy balance between impersonal centralization and runaway democracy.

Over the years, Baldwin had spent much energy comparing life and political organization in other countries with America. During the 1953-54 academic year, for instance, Baldwin lived in India and Pakistan. He observed that "the cities on the subcontinent are so different from those of the West that it is almost impossible to give an adequate idea of them."¹⁰⁸ The language Baldwin used in his other opinions documents his concepts of democracy and the challenge posed by cultures radically different than those he knew in the West. About the subcontinent's people, he said: "Facts have very little to do with their attitude. Emotions are everything."¹⁰⁹ Clearly Baldwin believed that democracy — as he defined it — was destined to make slow progress on the subcontinent: "Indeed it is this failure to recognize the utility and necessity of compromise which strikes me as the most menacing characteristic of these peoples."¹¹⁰ Even the tradition of Mahatma Gandhi left him cold: "The non-violence is destructive by its lack of positive ideals."¹¹¹

Nine years later, Baldwin spent six months in South Africa, where, in contrast to India with its relative lack of British residents, the Boers had settled in large numbers for a period of three centuries. (British immigration began in 1820.) No sacred cows wandered the streets, but a tribe of monkeys patrolled the rear of the Baldwin house in Durban. And social inequality was present. Instead of the caste system found on the subcontinent, a white minority dominated a black majority (and a lesser number of Indians). Clearly, then as now, South Africa was an authoritarian society. What the country's leaders had done in essence was to embrace the economic and scientific progress of the twentieth century without accepting its social and political liberalism. Yet Baldwin expressed concern about black self-rule: "Black democracy (in our sense of the word) is utter nonsense."¹¹² To Baldwin, South Africa was like a doomed

108 Leland Baldwin form letter from Dacca, East Pakistan, November 20, 1953, to various friends, Baldwin Papers in Ruth Baldwin's possession.

109 *Ibid.*

110 Notes from lectures at Punjab University, Lahore, Pakistan, October 1953, Baldwin Papers held by Ruth Baldwin.

111 Summary of activities in India, November-December 1953, Baldwin Papers held by Ruth Baldwin.

112 Supplement to "Report on Stay in South Africa," June 30, 1963, Baldwin Papers held by Ruth Baldwin.

character in a Greek tragedy.

While in South Africa, Baldwin was at work on *The Tides of Modern Civilization*.¹¹³ Although he never completed this projected two-volume study, the various chapters which he did finish offered a more detailed view of certain aspects of the topic than the 300 pages of lecture notes which he used in his two-semester course on the expansion of Western Civilization. Perhaps the two most significant chapters are the first, "The Brooding East," and the second, "The Western Impetus." It was Baldwin's conclusion that Western Civilization and Eastern Civilization — despite common ground in certain areas — were basically incompatible.

Each civilization reacts to conflicting forces differently, Baldwin said, adding that this factor was probably the most important consideration of all. He observed that the Easterner is more likely to look upon conflicting forces as complementary, as with the *yin* and the *yang* in China (or female and male, life and death, darkness and light, active and passive, negative and positive in our own culture). Therefore he may practice two or three religions at different times in his life. The Westerner, on the other hand, is much more likely to attempt to reconcile these conflicting forces in a new synthesis, Baldwin added, citing the writings of Georg Hegel and Karl Marx. The id and the superego, matter and energy, romantic and classic, evil and good, and passion and reason are not complementary, but antagonistic, Baldwin reasoned.

Will there ever be a supplanting concept which will make possible a synthesis of Western civilization and Eastern civilization? Throughout *The Tides* Baldwin observed that the impact of the West on the East has been greater than vice versa. Over the centuries the most superficial aspects of Eastern culture have been exported to the West: umbrellas and fans from the Orient, oranges and porcelain from China, sugar cane from India, etc. If Baldwin had finished this last book, however, he would have had to factor into his analysis the impact of at least a century of immigration by Oriental people, especially the Chinese and Japanese. They have often brought significant portions of their cultures with them, and established large communities in several major North American cities.

In the same year that *The American Quest* reached print Baldwin made a tour of Western Europe: France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, the Netherlands and Great Britain. He also visited Morocco, Algeria and

113 A copy of the manuscript is in the Baldwin Papers at the Historical Society. Also see my own "Leland Dewitt Baldwin and the Tides of Modern Civilization," *Social Science Perspectives Journal*, Fall 1987, 22-34.

Tunisia, because he wanted to see again various places where he was stationed 30 years earlier during World War II. He also spent four weeks in England and Scotland during 1975.

Despite these at time interesting and enjoyable trips abroad — along with other trips to Northern California, Oregon, Alaska and Canada — Baldwin loved to work and live in picturesque Santa Barbara. In 1970 he wrote to his brother Wayland that neither he nor Ruth “really wants to be away from this place for an extended period. The rose and camelias are beginning to appear and the mountains have never been more beautiful.”¹¹⁴ In addition, he had another major writing project which was to occupy his attention during the last decade of his life: the drafting of a series of five historical novels. These focused on life in Western Pennsylvania from the French and Indian War to the mid-1830s. *The Delectable Country*, published by itself in 1939, stood third in this projected series, which was known as *The Penburne Quintet*. As for why he shifted his attention to this genre, Baldwin commented that “...the historical novel, while entertaining in its own right, also offers an understanding of the texture of the past that can never be found in textbooks.”¹¹⁵

There is not enough space here to describe these five novels at length. Baldwin once summarized his project in a five-page, double-spaced synopsis, supplemented by three genealogical charts showing the interrelation among the Greenbay, Thessaly, Stirling, Delanoy, DeTroutville, Richardson and Penburne families. Gideon John Penburne, Jr. (1813-1901) is described as the editor of the first two volumes, and the author of the other three. One of the most interesting episodes in the quintet occurs in the *The Fourteenth Fire* (the second novel), in which “White Eyes, the Great Delaware statesman...sought to make his nation a Fourteenth Fire in the Great Council of the Thirteen Fires...the American Confederacy.”¹¹⁶ The other three unpublished novels are *The Drums Draw Near* (set during the French and Indian War in Pennsylvania); *Greenbay, or the Reivers* (which recounted the endemic warfare between the town and the lawless elements); and *A Gentleman of No Consequence* (the social, religious and political life of Pittsburgh from 1830 to 1834). Of these five

114 Leland Baldwin in Santa Barbara to Wayland Baldwin, March 10, 1970, in Baldwin Papers held by Ruth Baldwin.

115 Leland Baldwin, *The Penburne Quintet*, synopsis, plus three papers of genealogical charts, in Baldwin Papers held by Ruth Baldwin. See page 6 of the synopsis, which was published with my own brief introduction in *Pennsylvania Folklife*, Spring 1988, 140-41.

116 See page 2 of the synopsis.



Leland and Ruth Glosser Baldwin

novels, only *The Delectable Country* was published.

Failing to publish the four new Penburne novels was a major disappointment to Baldwin. It is possible to see his return to Western Pennsylvania for inspiration as retrogressive, and that it would have been more appropriate to have written a novel or novels with themes more closely representing his more recent historical interests and global travels. Nevertheless, there are many interesting aspects of the four unpublished Penburne novels, and perhaps one day some sympathetic and skillful editor may do for them what Maxwell Perkins did to prepare the sprawling novels of Thomas Wolfe for print.

During the latter part of his life a growing note of pessimism began to intrude into both the public and private comments of Baldwin. His eyesight was waning. Vietnam had disillusioned him about the U.S. role abroad, while Watergate merely confirmed his long-standing negative assessment of Richard Nixon. To Baldwin, Nixon and Lyndon Johnson were overbearing; Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan incompetent. After much soul-searching, he cast his final presidential vote for Independent John Anderson in 1980. Baldwin also became disenchanted with the activities of American business firms abroad.

One of Baldwin's most revealing letters from his latter years was a posting mentioned earlier, dated March 10, 1970, to his brother Wayland, a public school administrator: "Do you realize that we have lived thru what may well have been the hinge of history? Born in an age of optimism when men believed in perfect ability, we have descended — or is it risen? — to an awareness of tragedy and irony such as the world has not had since the decline of Greece. Every human triumph in this century has borne the seeds of its own destruction. Democracy has borne totalitarianism."

He was similarly pessimistic about America's young: "Though I have all my life had just about the same criticisms of society that are now current, I am alarmed by the illogical and anarchic mixture of permissiveness and intolerance that now seems to be taking over, and by the utterly mad behavior of a certain element among the young."

Yet in an unpublished essay dating from the Nixon era, "History Does Not Forgive Our National Mistakes," Baldwin assessed the young more positively: "Most of us see the good, but fail to recognize the bad. That our eyes are being opened to the latter is in no small degree to be credited to the youths whom so many of us fear and distrust."¹¹⁷ He added that the

young had pinpointed various problems facing America — environmental pollution, widespread poverty, racial prejudice, etc. — and demanded solutions.

Similarly, Baldwin was as disillusioned as many American youths with Vietnam. This is evidenced by the posthumously published *The American Quest for the City of God*. Here Baldwin wrote that "...a serious effort to extend the Great Society to South Vietnam by trying to give it much the same ideal and material values was a miserable failure; the Vietnamese simply did not have the background that would enable them to appreciate and profit by it, even had they had more time."¹¹⁸ Later Baldwin drew a parallel between modern America and ancient Athens, suggesting that "the Vietnam War was our Syracusan expedition, that Lyndon Johnson was our Alcibiades, and that hubris has brought us to the brink of national tragedy."¹¹⁹

Baldwin died March 6, 1981, at age 83. He failed to survive heart surgery. His extensive legacy to Pittsburgh and the surrounding area included his work with the Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey; his three books on Pittsburgh, *The Whiskey Rebellion* and *The Keelboat Age*; his various contributions to the University of Pittsburgh as a teacher, librarian, researcher and professor; his five-volume *Penburne Quintet* of historical fiction; and his various activities relating to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania. The last of these cover a span of four decades, from the article which he compiled in 1936 on "Charles Dickens in Western Pennsylvania" for the *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*,¹²⁰ to the bicentennial address on "The American Quest for the City of God," which he delivered before the Western Pennsylvania Historical Society in 1975. (This proved to be his last public lecture.)

But Leland Baldwin's contribution to Western Pennsylvania did not stop with the above list. According to the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*: "Mr. Baldwin's history project helped motivate the interest of Pittsburgh's leaders in the development of the historic Point, which in turn was the foundation stone for Renaissance I. If for no other reason, that would have insured Mr. Baldwin's place in the history of the city about which

118 *The American Quest*, 301.

119 *Ibid.*, 360.

120 "Charles Dickens in Western Pennsylvania," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, March 1936, 27-46. Baldwin's compilation drew heavily from Dickens' *American Notes*.

he wrote so much and knew so well.”¹²¹ Clearly Leland D. Baldwin, whose writings looked to the past, manifested a vital interest in the future as well. ■

121 “He spurred local history,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 11, 1981.

BEST OF WPHM

"To the Select and common councils of the City of Pittsburgh

The memorialists citizens and taxable inhabitants of the city of Pittsburgh beg leave to address the councils and most respectfully to remonstrate against the erection of a Splendid new market house in the diamond agreeable to the plan Submitted for proposal: because of the expense of erection which would not in their opinion be less than 20.000 Dollars and would probably reach 25.000 Dollars, our city taxes on real estate are already burdensome, and withall the treasury is Scarcely adequate to meet the current demands against it, with a debt of over 100.000 Dollars; many of our Streets are unpaved and many of the most important Paved Streets are So much impaired as to be scarcely passable, our unlighted Streets have become proverbial, nor is there a town of the Same Population in the Union without a watch, both those latter requisites must soon be Supplied at public Expence and a further demand upon our treasury will add Still more to our taxes."

— Undated city petition, from the Society's Library and Archives, quoted in "Old Manuscripts Reveal Public Interest in Early Pittsburgh Markets, 1831-1836," ed. Anne Harriet Bowes, *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine* 43 (June 1960), 190. Supported by 32 prominent people or businesses, the petition was submitted in response to a controversial 1832 plan to build a new public market in the city.