

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Cluster 40 years old??

It's hard to believe. Matter of fact, I have a feeling the campus clarion is just as young as the youthful antics and activities it reports, commends, chides, evaluates.

For all practical purposes, The Cluster is as fresh as the frosh and sage as the seniors. Nonetheless, 40 years of publication have brought some records to the paper.

Unless I'm mistaken the end of puddle hazing at Mercer dates back to a Cluster campaign in 1938. Also, a Commie scare which made national headlines and aggravated faculty ulcers exploded out of a Cluster presidential poll two years before.

It seems that a couple of student pranksters, to make things interesting, cast votes for the Communist presidential candidate, FDR won the poll, later the U.S. election. But the fact that Earl Browder received two ballots on a Southern campus started tongues wagging about Red infiltration of our Alma Mater—until the cold truth was revealed.

Despite some of the editors it has had in the past, The Cluster remains a fine paper.

My congratulations to you!

Bert Struby  
(General Mgr., Macon Telegraph & News)  
Cluster Editor, '38

Editor, The Mercer Cluster  
Dear Sir:

Your publication certainly deserves the esteem of each member of the student government on its 40th anniversary. As long as I have known of **The Cluster**, it has nearly always been responsive to student opinion. Moreover, your publication has ardently led or supported the major crusades toward securing better student services and extending self-government.

Best wishes to you and your staff on this landmark occasion.

Yours sincerely,  
Bey Bates, president  
Student Government Association



A Familiar Sight On The Local Scene.....



The Mercer Cluster, "somewhat of an innovation in college and school life," was first published at Mercer as an organ for the 14 schools in the Mercer system. The system, according to Dr. Spright Dowell's *History of Mercer University*, was abandoned after four or five years, but the Cluster has remained and is still flourishing.

The Cluster, in its first year of publication, was one of the few college papers publishing its news in a regular seven column format. It was edited by George M. Sparks, a practicing journalist and an alumnus of Mercer.

Taking its name from Jesse Mercer's Cluster, a hymnbook, the Mercer Cluster, was at first a collection of notes from the different colleges and schools in the system. For instance, under the heading "Shorter News" was this item: "There are rumors throughout the college that the Mercer Glee Club

will visit Shorter soon. We are wondering if this is true. A cordial welcome awaits them." This was before the days of co-education at Mercer, of course.

### First Issue

The big story for the first issue was headed, "Bessie Tift Girls Greet Each Other in Foreign Lands," and was, for the most part, the reproduction of a letter from Miss Alvada Gunn to the 'Bessie Tift Girls.' From such stories, the Cluster progressed to stories of Mercer men who were prisoners of the Germans during World War I.

Another story of interest to present Mercer freshmen, who still learn of the traditions around Mercer by word of mouth from the upperclassmen, is the story of the campus mound. This was "a vine-covered mound to the right of the steps of the main building." Freshmen in 1920 "were told that Jesse Mercer, was buried there and that his last request was that his remains be buried on the campus. The Cluster, however, sets minds at ease by getting the facts.

"The mound was placed there merely to beautify the campus. There was another on the opposite side of the steps." (Volume I, No. 15)

Inside the circle is former football coach Lake Russell. Across bottom, l. to r., Dr. Otis D. Knight, dean of education dept., Dr. J. D. Freeman, former head of Christianity dept. and Dr. B. P. Richardson, former head of chemistry dept.

### Ten Years Later

Ten years made a lot of difference to the Cluster. During its first decade of publication, it had shrunk to six columns and was some six inches shorter than its predecessors.

Movies had come to Mercer for the first time. The Jan. 10, 1930, issue relates that "Mercer's first moving pictures will be presented today when C. B. Wray, dean of the school of commerce, and his assistants will run the 'Island of Sugar' and 'The Queen of the Waves.'"

In this issue the Cluster, in its editorials, bewailed the fact that the clubs on campus could poll a quorum only three times in the school year. Once was at election time, when everybody hoped to be elected to office; once was when the pictures were taken for the annual; and once was when a party was given.

fiend, I have promised myself the rare pleasure of doing you in with my bare hands, and yet . . ." Top-hatted villain: "Choke away, Horace Gillingwater! Any throat protected by the constant use of Old Golds, the smoother and better queen-leaf cigarette, is beyond the power of your feeble strength! There's not a cough in a carload!"

### Football Active

Football, very much alive at this period, went into spring practice with over thirty men attending.

The Cluster, in these days before co-education, regularly featured a letter from the students at Wesleyan. A box on the front page of the March 28, 1930, issue asked the Mercer men: "How Do You Stand on Prohibition?" The results, announced in the next issue were that the Mercerians were almost 3 to 1 in favor of it.

## Cluster Files Show Panorama

By PATTY LITTLE

In its editorials, the Cluster was asking "Why not a week for spring holidays?" and the Mercer Players made their debut by presenting three one act plays at Bessie Tift and Wesleyan.

Another decade passed and the Cluster of Sept. 22, 1939, announced that the University would present flight courses for students. Taking note of the war activities, the Cluster also noted that its last year's sports editor, Charles Lee Hodges, had joined the Marines.

The Cluster had shrunk again and had reached its present tabloid size. Its masthead carried the slogan: "Mirror of Student Thought and Action." The paper had gained a photographer and was carrying pictures of current campus activities.

Lee Battle was in the news because of a recent illness. Lee, who had been suffering from high blood pressure and other ailments, told the Cluster that he planned to use a megaphone during the coming football season when he gave his famous bear growl.

During this year, the Cluster carried more and more notices of

The Cluster then challenged the various clubs to do something worthy of four paragraphs in the news.

Also in the editorials was a humorous comment about a Macon Telegraph editorial protesting the cutting of a musical number from a "recent Rialto attraction." The number was cut, according to the editorial, because "some few ladies objected to the show of legs in 'Turn on the Heat.'"

### Extended Holidays

"Registration was delayed because a large number of students voluntarily extended their holidays for a day or so," the business manager, S. J. T. Price, noted.

Advertising, which is of vital importance to any paper, did not appear to be a problem for the Cluster. Its pages were well filled with ads from local businesses, such as Jos. N. Neel and J. C. Penny, as well as national advertising, a sample of which is the Old Gold ad in the Feb. 7, 1930 issue.

Showing a picture of an all-American type strangling a villain, complete with black mustache, silk hat, and patent leather boots, the ad reads: All-American: "Curse you, you have the resistance of an . . . by Marvin Murgatroyd, you

## Saratoga Restaurant

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In The Alley