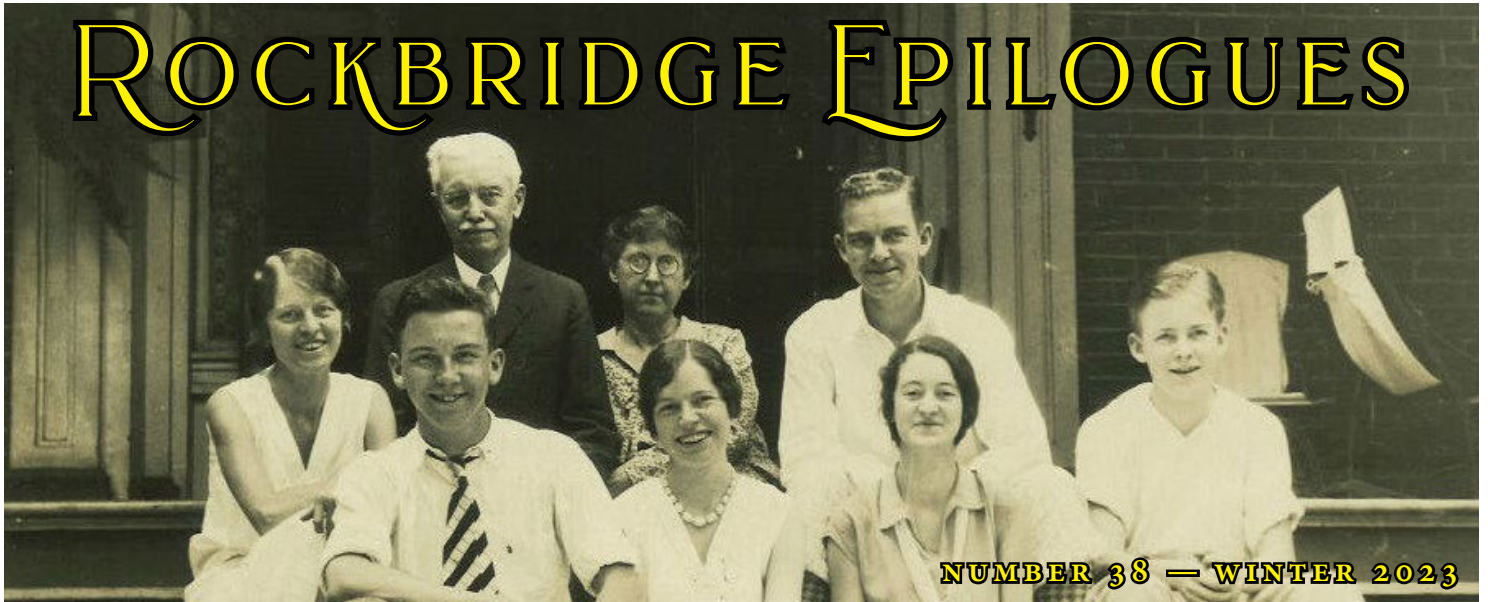


ROCKBRIDGE EPILOGUES



NUMBER 38 — WINTER 2023

Affectionately your Uncle,

Henry Louis Smith.

By Suzanne Barksdale Rice

THE PROLOGUE: HENRY LOUIS SMITH

HENRY LOUIS SMITH (1859-1951) was an educator, scientist, inventor and humanist. He was president of Washington and Lee University from 1912 to 1929.

At the time of his Washington and Lee presidential inauguration, *The New York Times* (May 4, 1913), hailed Dr. Smith as one of the South's foremost educators. "In the very prime of his life, a member of one of the famous families of the South, a man of wonderful address, a splendid speaker, a good mixer, of great attainments, Dr. Smith comes as near as any man could in measuring up to the stature of the man worthy to succeed to the chair of Lee."

Dr. Smith graduated with honors from Davidson College (North Carolina) in 1881 and earned M.A.

and Ph.D. degrees in physics from the University of Virginia. He was a member of Phi Beta Kappa and was instrumental in the creation of Omicron Delta Kappa when he was president of W&L. He served as Davidson's professor of natural science (physics and astronomy) and then, from 1901 to 1912, as its president. His

Suzanne Barksdale Rice was born and grew up in Lexington. After graduating from William & Mary, she pursued an arts administration career in Cambridge, Houston, Pasadena and Tucson. In retirement, she returned home. She recently discovered, tucked away in a trunk, a 1932-36 correspondence between her mother, Jean Taylor Barksdale, and her great-uncle, Henry Louis Smith.

Above: Dr. and Mrs. Henry Louis Smith and their children on the steps of Lee House, 1928. First row: Norris (7); Julia (4); Louise (6). Second row: Helen (2); Dr. Smith and his wife, Julia; Raymond (3); Frank (8). Numbers reflect Smith children in the Smith-Dupuy-Taylor family tree, page 4. Except where noted, photos in this article were provided by the family.

biographies unfailingly note that he was the first president of Davidson who was not an ordained Presbyterian minister.

He may not have been a minister, but Presbyterianism ran deep in the Smith family. His father, Jacob Henry Smith (1820–97), was a minister, as were three of Dr. Smith’s brothers. Dr. Smith himself served as an elder in Lexington Presbyterian Church during his Lexington years and later as an elder in the First Presbyterian Church at Greensboro, North Carolina.

Throughout his administrations at Davidson and Washington and Lee, Dr. Smith advocated for the small liberal arts college, believing that it could play a meaningful role in American higher education. Under his leadership, student enrollment and endowments at both colleges increased exponentially. At W&L, he established the School of Journalism, fulfilling Robert E. Lee’s vision.

Dr. Smith’s roles as scientist and inventor had widespread ramifications. While a professor at Davidson, he pioneered the development of X-rays. In 1896 he used an X-ray to locate a thimble lodged in a young girl’s throat. The thimble’s successful surgical removal signaled the first clinical application of the X-ray in the United States.¹

Toward the end of World War I, while president of W&L, Dr. Smith proposed that the U.S. government launch gas balloons containing peace leaflets. Using his knowledge



Henry Louis Smith

of air currents, he calculated when balloons launched in France would travel into Germany. The Allies released millions of propaganda balloons, and many surrendering German soldiers carried with them the balloons’ messages of peace. President Woodrow Wilson later acknowledged Dr. Smith for substantially shortening the war.

Dr. Smith and his wife, Julia Dupuy, were the parents of eight children. Of the eight, a daughter died in infancy and their eldest son, Jacob Henry Smith, named for his grandfather, died in 1918 at the age of 21 at army Camp Zachary Taylor in Louisville, Kentucky. Jacob Henry is buried in Oak Grove Cemetery in Lexington.

While Dr. Smith was born and died in Greensboro, he had many familial ties to Lexington and Washington and Lee. His minister father, Jacob Henry Smith, was born in Lexington and graduated with distinction from Washington College in 1843. His father-in-law, John James Dupuy, graduated from Washington College in 1841. Three of Henry Louis’s sons also graduated from Washington and Lee, as did a grandson and two Taylor nephews.

Dr. Smith wrote prolifically — letters, essays, speeches, newspaper columns. A collection of his essays and speeches was published in 1947 in a book entitled *This Troubled Century: Selected Addresses of Henry Louis Smith*. His unpublished papers, correspondence and newspaper clippings reside at Davidson and at Washington and Lee. The following personal correspondence between him and his niece and nephew sheds a light on his generosity, wisdom and humor.

THE SYSTEM

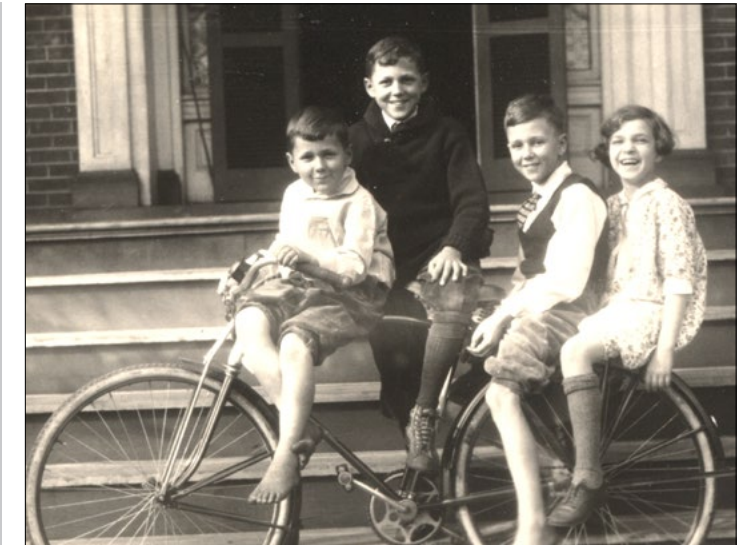
Henry Louis Smith devised a system to award his Taylor niece, Jean, and nephew, Henry, for achieving good grades at Lexington High School. From 1932 through 1936, he developed, tinkered with, and refined a mathematical formula to make monetary awards to the two budding scholars. He explained in a Feb. 10, 1934, letter addressed to “Dear Jean and Henry”: “*Feeling sure that two such BRAINY young people would really enjoy making rather higher grades I have made a slight change in the awards and enclose herewith the modifications which will decide the amount to be sent to you when the next reports come in.*” The letter was signed “Affectionately your Uncle, Henry Louis Smith.”

Dr. Smith had retired from the presidency of Washington and Lee University in 1929 and he and his wife had returned to Greensboro, where he grew up. But Uncle Harry continued to feel affection — and responsibility — for the Taylor family in Lexington. The Taylors had moved to Lexington in 1924 to be close to their Smith kin. Jean and Henry’s mother, Mary Marshall Dupuy Taylor, and Dr. Smith’s wife, Julia Dupuy Smith, were sisters. Mary Marshall’s husband, John Adams Taylor Sr., had died in New Orleans in 1923, leaving his wife with four children under the age of 10. The Smiths had their own brood of six, a bit older than the Taylor four. In family lore, the Smiths and Taylors made a merry band of playmates on the W&L campus. At the time of Uncle Harry’s 1934 letter, the two older Taylors, John and Joe, were college students at W&L, while the two younger, Jean and Henry, were a high-school junior and sophomore, respectively.

Jean responded with delight to her Uncle Harry’s revised system of awards for grades.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author is grateful for the help of her cousins Raymond Dupuy Smith Jr. and Elizabeth “Bee” Smith Krahenbuhl, (grandchildren of Julia Dupuy and Henry Louis Smith) and Sean Auldon Taylor (great grandson of Mary Marshall Dupuy and John Adams Taylor).



The Taylor Quartet: Henry Marshall, John Adams Jr., Joseph Montgomery, and Jean Dupuy in front of Lee House on the Washington and Lee campus

212 Barclay Lane
Lexington, Va.
March 29, 1934

Dear Uncle Harry,

It certainly was a surprise to get your letter with another dollar in it for me. The new system is marvelous. It seems that each time you revise it we are the ones who profit. I hate to think where you may land!

Today is quite warm and we are all set up over our Easter holiday. I was getting very tired of school and this break will help me get on my feet again. It’s grand to be able to loaf for four days.

Affectionately,
Jean

THE FORMULA

The new system to which Jean referred was perhaps most succinctly expressed in this letter from Dr. Smith.

Friday, Sept. 28/’34

Miss Jean Taylor,
Mr. Henry Taylor,

My very dear Niece and Nephew:

As the “daily grind” of the high school begins again I am writing to say that nothing will delight me more than

¹ See, for example: “Davidson professor performs first U.S. X-ray in 1896” (2009 television feature).

to repeat my offer of last spring in order that the grind may at least have a good flavor connected with it. I am supposing that Mr. Waddell [Lexington High School principal Harrington Waddell] will continue to send me your regular reports which we will value in hard cash as follows:

1. Each scholastic failure, having a grade below 65 will count as one dollar taken off the sum of rewards = minus \$1.
2. Each grade reaching 70 is worth 50 cents, with Math. for Jean and Latin for Henry (if either of you is taking one of these) counting 70 as worth a dollar.
3. Every scholastic unit over 70 adds four cents to the total for that study.
4. In addition to the above values of the grades every study-grade of 80 or over adds a special of fifty cents, and every grade of 90 or over adds a special of one dollar.

So I'm hoping both of my dear young relatives will every six weeks pull out of Uncle Harry's pocket a very good supply of honestly earned pocketmoney, and will greatly enjoy spending it.

With much love to the whole household I am
Affectionately your Uncle,
Henry Louis Smith.

THE CALCULATIONS

For each six-week grading period and at the end of each semester, Lexington High School Principal Harrington Waddell sent Dr. Smith reports. Mr. Waddell's reports, typewritten on Lexington High School stationery, enumerated Jean and Henry's grades. Dr. Smith added his pen and pencil calculations to Mr. Waddell's reports and then sent a typed letter addressed to Jean and Henry,

enclosing a check or occasionally cash. In his letters, Uncle Harry offered sage advice, encouragement and challenge to his young niece and nephew. Jean unfailingly replied with handwritten notes on "212 Barclay Lane, Lexington, Virginia" stationery. Her notes offered thanks and gave a glimpse of family life and activities in Lexington.²

Here is a representative letter from Dr. Smith detailing his mathematical calculations.

Dec. 5/34

Miss Jean Taylor,
Mr. Henry Taylor,
Lexington, Va.

Dear Jean and Henry:

I'm glad Santa Claus issued these good grades so near Christmas time, and I'm especially glad he is planning to bring all the Taylor bunch to Greensboro as our big multi-form Christmas gift.

Grinding out the grades in my rather rusty mathematical machine the following pocket-money drops out:

		Jean		
English	78	50 plus 4 times 8		.82
French	75	50 " 4 " 5		.70
Civics	87	50 " 4 " 17		1.18
		80 or over adds		.50
Science	87	50 plus 4 times 17		1.18
		80 or over adds		.50
				\$4.88
		Henry		
Geometry	83	50 plus 4 times 13		1.02
		80 or over adds		.50
English	82	50 plus 4 times 12		.98
		80 or over adds		.50
French	75	50 plus 4 times 5		.70
History	80	50 plus 4 times 10		.90
		80 or over adds		.50
				\$5.10

\$4.88 plus \$5.10 equals \$9.98, for which, with great pleasure, I enclose a check.

Congratulations both of you and hoping that you will find the climate of Greensboro VERY refreshing during the Christmas holidays and that your dear mother will find a rest from housekeeping even more so, I am

Affectionately your Uncle,
Henry Louis Smith.



Henry Marshall Taylor, on his second birthday, and Jean Dupuy Taylor, age three years eight months, July 14, 1921

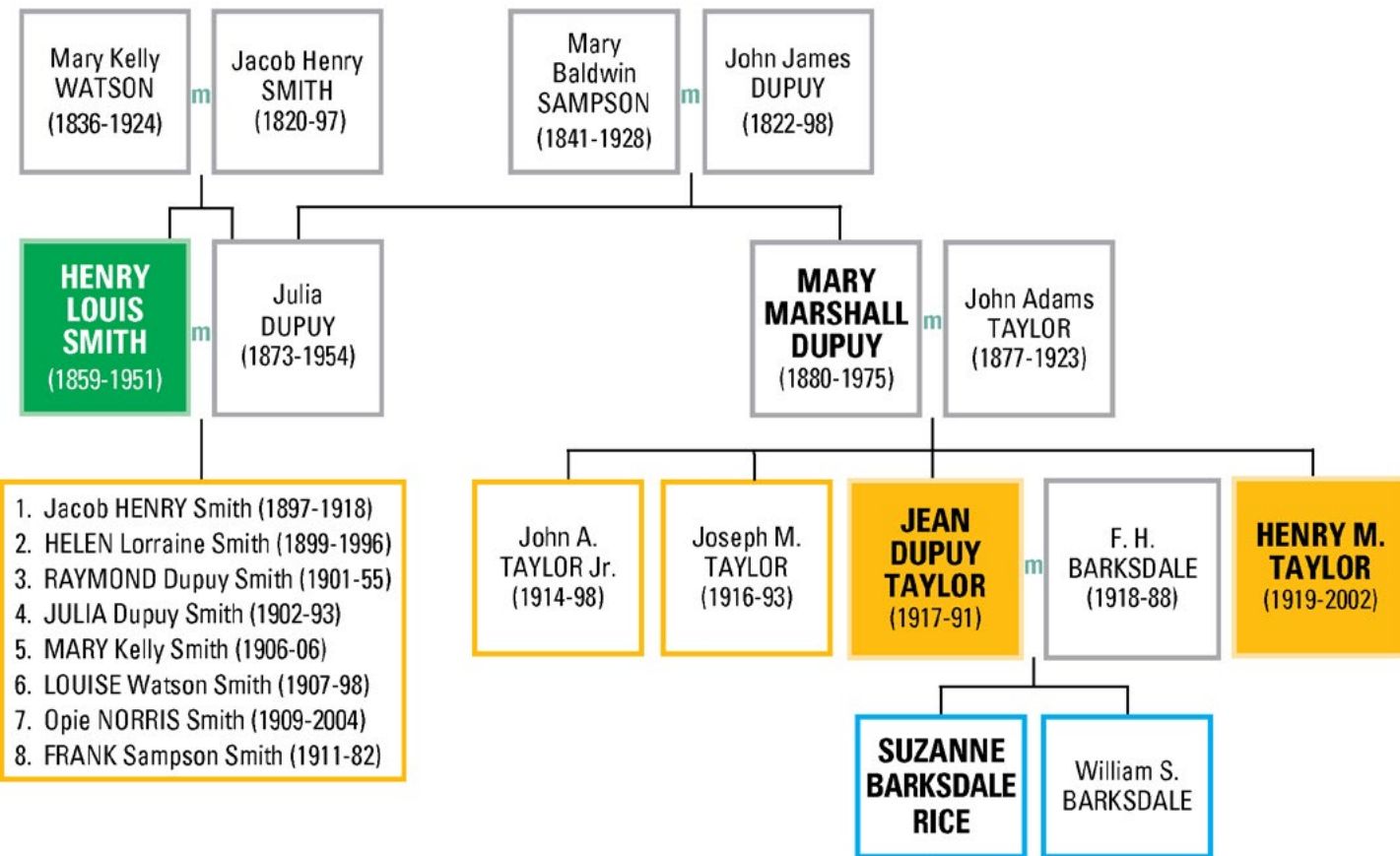
THE POCKET MONEY

What Dr. Smith referred to as pocket money was anything but. Five dollars in 1934, during the Great Depression, was the equivalent in purchasing power to about \$109 today.

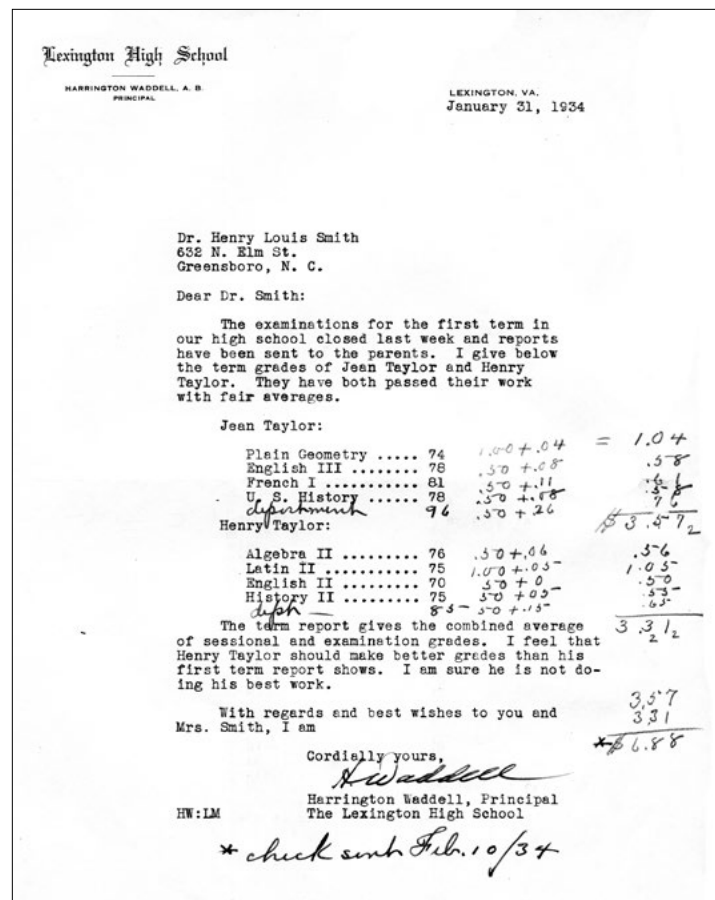
This May 4, 1932, letter from Jean and Henry's mother, Mary Marshall Dupuy Taylor, to her sister, Julia Dupuy Smith, sheds light on the financial realities faced by the Taylor family:

I am right interested in seeing just what I can do on half my former income. It will not hurt the children either. Already they have shown real character & are real sweet about it. Henry's [first comment] was, "I won't charge you anymore for mowing the lawn and you need not pay me for paying the bills," all of which shows a fine spirit. I've gone thro' deeper waters than this & reached the other side without drowning so I'll keep one eye cocked for a

SMITH – DUPUY – TAYLOR FAMILY



² Dr. Smith kept Mr. Waddell's typed letters, Jean's handwritten notes, and carbon copies of his own letters.



This January 31, 1934, letter from Principal Waddell detailed the Taylors' grades, to which Dr. Smith's added his calculations for the pocket money he would award.

passing raft. No one ever had such brothers & sisters as mine and I can always count on a life-preserver if the tide goes agin me.

And here are excerpts from a letter the Taylor mother wrote to her sister Julia (called Jewel) and brother-in-law the following month, on July 4, 1932:

Dearest Jewel and Dr. Smith,

It is not poverty that brings the tears but the goodness of you blessed folks. No one ever had such kin as I have & with your backing I feel as if I could remove mountains. I am going to accept your generosity graciously but with the understanding that it shall in time be repaid. For the time being, I shall hope that my dividends are only deferred payments, but, if not, I have three boys on whom I am counting to shoulder in time all my obligations.

Mary Marshall Dupuy, at 18 in 1898



We still have in the bank a few hundred dollars and you may be sure I shall brush up on long division — mathematics was never my long suit, but I know lots more about it now than I did when Essie Jetton worked all my problems at school.

I even raked out my hospital diploma to see if my RN [Registered Nurse] certificate in Pennsylvania gave me good and regular standing in Virginia, which it does. . . .

What a good sport you are, Henry Louis. I know you have lost like the mischief in the Hunter Co. & I hear the hotel here is passing up dividends, but to read your letter, someone who didn't know might really believe you at a loss to know how to dispose of all your surplus increment.

A heartfelt of love & gratitude to you both,

Marshall

Perhaps this Depression reality was the genesis of Dr. Smith's award scheme for good grades. In any event, he seems to have been faithful to it for five years. Throughout the Taylors' high-school careers and beyond, he gave them "pocket money" and disbursed advice in the bargain.

The Crystal



The beneficiaries in their Lexington High School yearbook senior photographs: Jean, 1935, and Henry, 1936

THE ADVICE

On November 2, 1933, after Henry had evidently been sick, Dr. Smith wrote:

I wish to congratulate Henry on coming so very near making up his lost time and passing on every one of his courses. I suppose that there is a plan in use which will enable him by some extra hard work to make up that low grade on Algebra. His best plan in Algebra is to KEEP RENEWING and increasing his knowledge of what he has already gone over. CONSTANT REVIEWING makes algebra ten times as easy. Every new lesson becomes easy IF you know thoroughly every single page UP TO the new lesson. Every past lesson unknown becomes a mill-stone around your neck as you swim forward into deeper water, and as they increase it soon becomes IMPOSSIBLE to keep your head above water. This is far more true of algebra and geometry than of other high school studies.

On February 7, 1934, Dr. Smith noted:

Mr. Waddell added to Henry's report the words "Henry Taylor should make better grades. I am sure he is not doing his best work." And Jean's grades make ME feel sure that IF she will get as much interested in studies as in the radio and its orchestras her pocket money will rise very rapidly. So I sincerely hope BOTH of you will pull a larger chunk of filthy lucre out of my savings next report than you have ever yet done.

On July 13, 1934, learning from Mr. Waddell that Jean, having received a grade of 65, was taking geometry in summer school, Dr. Smith remarked:

Jean, I understand, is to enjoy a second-course, which is of course a dessert, of Geometry, which I hope she'll find not at all plain but highly ornamental.

In the September 28, 1934, letter outlining the new formula, Dr. Smith also commented:

Tell Henry I have just read a whole chapter in a very well-written book for young people devoted to the one problem of HOW MUCH regular education is NECESSARY for a young American in which the author says that NOT to finish a high school course means today to doom oneself to be a day laborer all one's life with practically NO chance of rising any higher against the competition of better educated people everywhere. Such early stoppage dooms one never to enter any one of the regular professions like law or medicine and practically never to become a leading business man of any kind.

THE REPORTS

While Harrington Waddell, as principal of Lexington High School, reported the Taylor grades formally on high school letterhead, it is obvious that he and Dr. Smith had a congenial relationship. After all, they were both educators and attended the same church in the small, interconnected town that was (and still is) Lexington. Here's an example from Mr. Waddell.

July 9, 1934

Dear Dr. Smith:

I regret that in the rush of closing school the final reports of the Taylor children were not sent to you. I give them below. We shall look forward to seeing you and Mrs. Smith



Harrington Waddell

Special Collections, Washington and Lee University Library

when you come to Lexington the later part of July. I saw Miss Julie [daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Smith] at church [Lexington Presbyterian] yesterday and I am delighted to learn that she has such a fine trip with Lucy Gordon planned for the coming weeks. With regards for each member of your family and best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,



THE REQUEST FROM HENRY

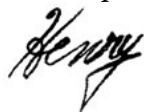
As a rule, Jean sent thank-you letters on behalf of herself and her brother, Henry. However, on at least one occasion in October 1934 Henry saw fit to write, on "212 Barclay Lane, Lexington, Virginia," letterhead, as follows:

Dear Uncle Harry,

We received your letter with the offer of rewards for high grades. I have failed to answer it sooner, since most of my time is taken "on the job" at "Stetson D." I appreciate the thought back of the offer; but since I have a steady income from my job don't you think you should forego this added expense?

Many thanks for the thought.

Your nephew,



Dr. Smith replied:

Oct. 25/'34

Mr. Henry Taylor,
Lexington, Va.

Dear Henry:

I would have answered your letter of a week ago sooner but was in Summit [North Carolina] and did not have much opportunity of writing. You ask if I do not

think I "should forego this added expense". After weighing the important matter from many points of view, considering the studiousness and high grades of my scholastic nephew, and his undoubted ability to spend wisely even more money than his Stetson income, I find myself answering the question in the negative, sincerely hoping that by diligent research he may be able to find SOME way of getting rid of such a troublesome surplus.

I will therefore forward the old-time rewards for his usual high grades, and if he cannot manage to find any way of using it I hereby authorize him to turn it over to his sister or mother whichever of the two can think up some method of disposing of such an enormous sum.

Hoping therefore that my investment in Brains and Industry will prove to be as large as its dividends, I am

Affectionately your Uncle,



THE THANKS FROM JEAN

Jean's handwritten thank-you notes were always breezy, with a glimpse of family, holidays, the weather and current activities. As she matured, she made mention of parties and sports events.

December 12, 1933

Dear Uncle Harry,

We are all looking forward to Christmas and it certainly is nice to have some money to help the shopping. I am glad that reports came out again so soon but I am sorry that I did not do better. A little more effort on my part though will help a lot.

Aunt Jean [Jean Jacqueline Dupuy, sister of Julia and Mary Marshall] will soon be here and then the fun begins. Mother made a few fruitcakes today and Aunt Jean can't come too soon to suit me. I hope you all have a very Merry Christmas.

Affectionately yours,



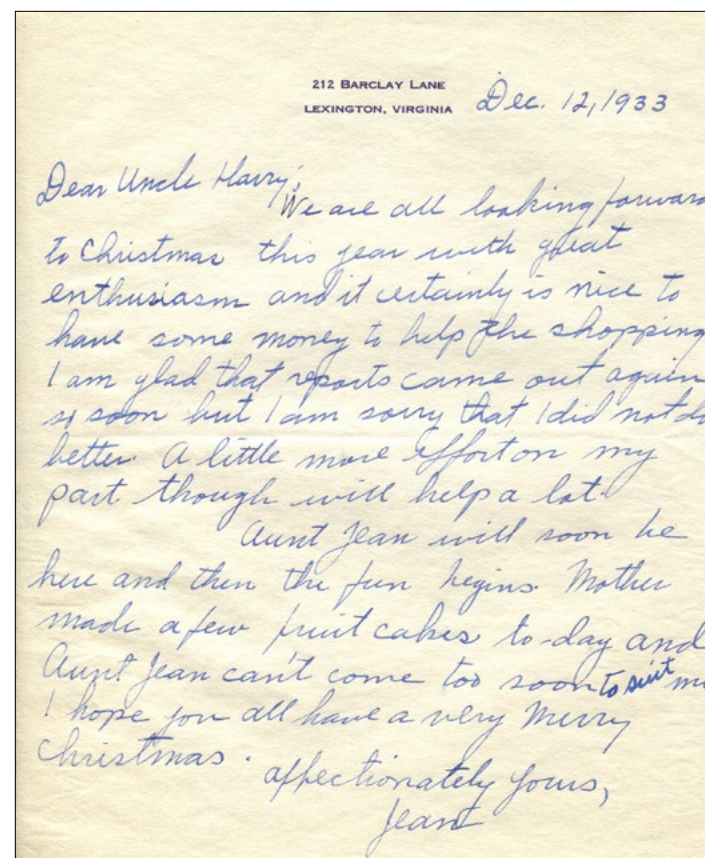
is gone. The snow is coming down in great "blobs" and Mother says that they look as large as the palm of your hand. There will be some grand sledding this week end and I can hardly wait.

Affectionately yours,



On October 7, 1934, in the fall of her senior year, she wrote:

Dear Uncle Harry, It is grand of you to make your lovely offer again and you can only guess what it means for us to have that to look forward to. The passing mark, this year, has been raised to 75 so we will have to work hard to make the grade. I have no more Math to worry with so I hope to do better this year. The game yesterday between Washington and Lee and Maryland was quite thrilling. It rained all day Friday and Saturday up until the game started and the field was one huge puddle. Ours was the victory and the bell rang far into the night. I know you and Aunt Julia are having a fine time with Raymond [the Smiths' son Raymond Dupuy Smith] and Winsie [Raymond's wife Julia Winston Ashworth Smith] and I would love to be there to see the baby [the Smiths' grandson, Raymond Dupuy Smith Jr.].



A thank-you letter from Jean to her Uncle Harry

On February 22, 1934, Jean reported:

Henry and I each bought a pair of roller skates with our mid-term money. We have gotten a great deal of pleasure out of them and will continue to do so when the snow



Jean Dupuy Taylor, fourth from right, in the cast of the senior class play, which she mentions in her Feb. 15, 1935, letter to Uncle Harry.

The Crystal

The Crystal

On November 4, 1934, Jean thanked Dr. Smith:

Dear Uncle Harry, It is hard to believe that my report is worth so much. I have never owned so much money and so I hardly know "how to take it." School is not so terrible this year in fact I am having a fine winter. Next Saturday I am going to Charlottesville to the Washington and Lee and Virginia game. There are four of us in the party and I can hardly wait. Here's hoping Washington and Lee wins! When are you and Aunt Julia coming to see us again? Please come soon.

On Feb. 15, 1935, Jean's thanks noted her Lexington High School activities:

Dear Uncle Harry, It was so good of you to send the reward for the grades even though you were so busy. I am looking forward to getting a High School Annual with some of this reward. Having never gotten one before it is even more exciting! What with the Senior play, the thesis and getting out the Crystal [high school annual] we are kept busy. It's great fun though and the thought of graduation so soon is almost too good to be true. I hope all are well at your end of the line.

Lovingly,

Jean

On April 29, 1935, she joked:

Dear Uncle Harry, It looks as if I were taking Henry's place in grades and also getting his share of the rewards. Too bad I emptied your pocket so and I shall try to do even better next time. I am enjoying my pin money in a number of ways and I am indebted to you for it.

On May 31, 1935, at the time of high school graduation, she related:

Dear Aunt Julia and Uncle Harry, You were precious to think of me and I thank you a thousand times. Exams are safely over and I made above 90 on two of them. Joe [her older brother] had his Economics Exam of '33 here and I studied it real hard. Much to my surprise Miss Moore gave us the very same exam. Every question was

the same. Such luck! But I'm afraid this happens only once in a lifetime. It's grand to be through with such subjects.

Lots of love,

Jean

On August 9, 1935, Jean looked forward to college:

I leave to-day for a week-end in Winchester and then a week in Washington. One of my friends is going with me and I am so excited that it's hard to sit still and write. The thoughts of college make me more and more thrilled! It's loads of fun planning for it and talking to girls who went to Farmville [State Teachers College at Farmville, Virginia, now Longwood University]. They have given me points on what to take and what to expect.



Jean Taylor at Farmville State Teachers College

Even after Jean's high school graduation, the Smiths continued to send financial assistance, as evidenced in this thank you letter on stationery with "Jean D. Taylor State Teachers College Farmville, VA" across the top:

Dec. 23, 1935

Dear Uncle Harry,

You can't imagine what a thrill I am getting out of your marvelous gift! You hit the nail on the head when you chose the gift and Aunt Julia hit it when she suggested sending it before Xmas. I am having more fun getting the presents I wanted and you have made it possible! Thank you a thousand times over!

It's so nice to be at home again and especially for this holiday. My exams are over so I don't have them to look forward to when school opens again. This makes

everything even nicer for this little vacation. I am having fun just sleeping and eating and there are a few parties scheduled for this week which also seem good to me.

Thank you again for making this such a happy time for me and I hope you have the Merriest Christmas ever!

Affectionately yours,

Jean

The Taylors: The Taylor family on Barclay Lane, Lexington, Christmas 1947. First row: Mary Marshall Taylor, her granddaughter Beverly Taylor, her granddaughter Suzanne Barksdale, her daughter Jean Taylor Barksdale. Second row: Mary Marshall's son Henry Taylor (note the funny face he's making at his daughter Beverly) and his wife Christine, Mary Marshall's son Joe Taylor and his wife Naomi, Mary Marshall's son-in-law F. H. Barksdale and his mother, Lula Sutherlin Barksdale.



The Smiths: In 1949, the Smith family celebrated the 90th birthday of Henry Louis Smith. Seated: Grandson Henry/Harry Louis Smith (son of Rebecca and Norris Smith), daughter Julia Dupuy Smith, grandson Raymond Dupuy Smith Jr. (son of Winston/Winsie and Raymond Dupuy Smith Sr.), granddaughter Elizabeth/Bee Ashworth Smith (daughter of Winston and Raymond), Julia Dupuy and Henry Louis Smith, grandson Frank Smith Merritt (son of Louise Watson Smith and Robert/Bob Merritt), daughter Louise Smith Merritt, granddaughter Julia/Julie Winston Smith (daughter of Winston and Raymond). Standing: Daughter-in-law Winston Smith, son Raymond Smith, daughter-in-law Rebecca Smith, son Opie Norris Smith, son Frank Sampson Smith, daughter Helen Lorraine Smith, and son-in-law Robert Merritt.



THE EPILOGUE

The Smith and Taylor families survived the Depression, and their close relationships remained throughout their lives. In retirement, Henry Louis Smith continued an active, civically engaged life and died at the age of 91. Mary Marshall Dupuy Taylor lived the remainder of her long life of 95 years on Barclay Lane, a warm and gracious woman beloved by her Smith nieces and nephews who

called her "Aunt Mary," her children who called her "Mother," her nine grandchildren who called her "Grandmama," and her friends who called her "Marshall." She signed her notes "M²." Jean Dupuy Taylor graduated from State Teachers College at Farmville, and in 1943 married Flournoy H. "Pinky" Barksdale.



Henry Louis Smith and Julia Dupuy Smith in retirement

After World War II, they lived on the Virginia Military Institute post and raised two children, Suzanne Barksdale (Rice) and William Sutherlin Barksdale. Henry Marshall

to rest in the Oak Grove family plot they inherited from their Smith relations when they moved to Greensboro from Lexington.

Taylor followed his two brothers in attending Washington and Lee, married Christine Beverly Hicks, and together they raised their daughter, Beverly. Henry characterized himself as an entrepreneur in a 1986 genealogy of the Dupuy cousins by Norris Smith, son of Julia and Henry Louis Smith. Members of the Taylor family are laid

THE FAMILIAL CHAIN OF CUSTODY

Henry Louis Smith was the custodian of this correspondence. After his death, his son Norris Smith, the family historian and genealogist, sent all Taylor-related letters to his cousin, John Adams Taylor, Jr. in Ohio. On November 6, 1988, John sent the correspondence to his sister, Jean Taylor Barksdale, in Virginia, with this handwritten note:

"Norris Smith sent a batch of old files from Uncle Harry's files. They involve letters to Mother and the Taylors.

Rather than read through the lot, I just sorted them out by the name of the individual involved. Some letters were addressed to you and Henry jointly which you two can exchange if desired. At this point in time, I think they might well have been burned."

But they weren't burned. In fact, they have survived for nearly 90 years and were rediscovered in 2020 by Jean's daughter, Suzanne.

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