COLLEGE AND THE PAPER MILL

HOLYOKE AND AMHERST, MASSACHUSETTS, AND BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA · 1961–1964

On Calender Rolls, Side Horses and a Board of Twelve

We never know how high we are
Till we are called to rise;
EMILY DICKINSON

In the early 1960s the Pioneer Valley of western Massachusetts still lived, as it had for a century, off the Connecticut River. At Holyoke the river came over a granite dam 1,020 feet long, finished in 1900 at a cost of about a million dollars and called, with the directness of the age, the Million Dollar Dam. From there it was led off through three levels of canals, four and a half miles of them, dug between 1847 and 1892, to the mills that lined their banks. Most of the mills made paper. In the late nineteenth century Holyoke had turned out an estimated 80 percent of all the writing paper used in the United States, and in 1960, with 52,689 people, it still answered to the name of the Paper City. Up the valley at Amherst, the university that had opened in 1867 as Massachusetts Agricultural College, with four teachers and four wooden buildings, was busy turning itself into something much larger. In the spring of 1962 it had 5,800 undergraduates and expected nearly ten thousand within four years, and for a Massachusetts boy the tuition was $200 a year.

This chapter covers the three years in which Daniel went up and down that valley, and once across the whole country and back, trying to get himself through college. It begins in the summer of 1961. He was seventeen, he had just graduated from high school, and he had been accepted at the University of Massachusetts. That same summer his father, John, left the family and went to Los Angeles, which, as the last chapter told, Daniel found "very upsetting." That is how he came to spend a part of his youth in the paper mills of Holyoke, and how there came to be, in the yearbooks and the student newspaper of the University of Massachusetts, a gymnast called Dan St. John.

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In the summer of 1961, Daniel needed money for college and had none. His father "had run away," as he put it, with some money from his own mother. "I didn't have any money to go to college," Daniel said, "so we had a neighbor who worked in the paper mill, and I lied about my age. I was 17. I couldn't legally work there." The neighbor got him in. He was taken on as a calender helper, and he worked nights, "from like 11 at night to 7 in the morning."

A calender, for anyone who has never had the pleasure, is the last thing paper meets in a mill before it is rolled up and sent away. It is a tall stack of hard iron or steel rollers, often heated, pressed together under great force, and the paper is run down between them to come out smooth, glossy and of an even thickness. The pressure where two rolls meet is called the nip, which is a word that tells you most of what you need to know about the job. In Daniel's words, the work was "compressing paper in these big stacks of rolls, heated rolls."

Calender work had a particular hazard, and on one of those night shifts Daniel found it. Paper would jam in the stack, and somebody had to climb up and get it out. He told it this way:

> *In the night, one of my jobs was, you know, was compressing paper in these big stacks of rolls, heated rolls. And I had to go up on top of these rolls and reach in and get, you know, when paper got stuck there. And I had put my arm between two bars and then the hydraulics, the operator had pressed the button to raise the*



A SUPER-CALENDER IN A HOLYOKE PAPER MILL, 1936–37

hydraulics and my arm was pinned between the two upper bars there and I was pinned up there and fortunately there was maybe a half inch bolt that kept the bars from compressing totally or my arm would have been just pinched off.

Nobody, at first, knew how to get him out. "Seemed like forever," he said, though he did not think it was hours. "People were running around because they were afraid to press any of the buttons in this machine. It was a new, hyped-up version of an old machinery. They'd taken the 19th century machinery and made them go faster. Even more dangerous." The rescue came from the laboratory, where every roll the mill made was tested before it went out.

"There was a fellow, a very bright fellow, I'd like to say. I'm grateful to him. A very heavy guy worked in the laboratory where every roll of paper, the paper had to go through these tests about its caliper, its puncture strength, and so forth. And he came out and he saw that all they had to do was press the button that released the hydraulics so that it would drop the bars. And then that's what they did." Daniel took his arm out of the machine. He had, he said, "some pretty nasty bruises."

The bolt, half an inch of it, had been the difference, and he knew what the alternative looked like, because it walked around the mill. "There were many, many accidents," he said. "The paper mills had their own doctors and they played games with the insurance companies. And if you lost your arm, they'd give you a job punching the time like a security guard. There were several of them walking around with one arm." There was a second reason the arm mattered to him.

"I was 17, just out of high school. And I was a very good gymnast. And that would have hurt my feelings to lose my arm." He had a scholarship waiting at the University of Massachusetts, and it was for gymnastics. Without the arm, he said, "I wouldn't be doing gymnastics. I had whatever money I had from saving from working the paper mill."

In the fall of 1961, Daniel went up the valley to Amherst and the university. The Federal Writers' Project had described the town a generation before as "a dignified college town," with "quiet dwellings, elm-shaded streets, and general air of academic calm," and the town had not much changed, but the university at the edge of it was

being rebuilt around its students. A new infirmary had opened that year, the dining commons had been doubled, and there were nine men's dormitories with two more going up, all on a master plan that called for ten thousand students by 1965.

He was a young freshman even by the standards of freshmen. "I was only 17 years old," he said. "I was young. I didn't turn 18 until I was November 13th of my freshman year."

He came in, as he said, on a gymnastics scholarship, and he was good: he competed in "four things," in his words, "the trampoline, side horse, parallel bars, and still rings." In his first year, though, there was no question of competing on the varsity. "I couldn't participate on the senior team at the University of Massachusetts," he said, and the university's rules agree with him: freshmen earned their physical-education credit as members of a freshman or a varsity squad, and the varsity that winter was a team of upperclassmen under Coach Robert James, which went four and three.

He arrived with a large class. On the Friday night of the first week, about eighteen hundred freshmen filed through the Student Union ballroom to shake hands with the university's president, John W. Lederle, and his wife. The student paper that month carried a small advertisement for the "Kangaroo Court Trampoline Center," in town, "Behind Rowe's Garage," open from three in the afternoon on weekdays and into the evenings, so that a young man in Amherst in 1961 who wanted a trampoline did not, at any rate, have far to go.

The first bill a freshman's family received came to about $560 for the semester, and every item on it was a fair indication of what the university expected of a young man. There was $100 for tuition, about $100 for a dormitory room, $210 for board, a ten-dollar athletic fee, and a ten-dollar physical-education equipment fee, "men only." There was also a line that read "Military Uniform Deposit (men only)," $30.

The university thought a careful student could get through a year for about a thousand dollars, and it was serious about the word careful. Its scholarships went "only to needy and deserving students of high character whose habits of life are economical," and its loans, of no more than $200 a year and, except in exceptional cases, only after the freshman year, to "needy students of good scholarship whose habits are economical," on a note endorsed by a responsible party.

It also advised that "few students should plan to spend more than ten hours per week in part-time employment." Its new president, John W. Lederle, had pledged at his inauguration that spring "the right of every individual, regardless of race, religion, or economic background, to that amount and kind of education of which he is capable and for which he has the desire and will." Of scholarships for athletes the bulletin said nothing at all, though the university paid them all the same; a state audit issued early in 1964 found "about $80,000 a year" going into them. Daniel, by his own account, came with a gymnastics scholarship and whatever he had saved from the mill.

The uniform was for the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and it was not optional. The university catalogue put it plainly: "All physically qualified male students, except veterans, who intend to complete the necessary requirements leading to a degree in any four-year course at the University are required to take the basic course (Army or Air) in the freshman and sophomore years." The reason went back a hundred years, to the Morrill Act of 1862, which had paid for the land-grant colleges on the condition that they teach agriculture and the mechanic arts, "including military tactics."

Massachusetts had sold its 360,000 acres of federal land scrip for $208,464, given a third of the money to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and two-thirds to the new college in Amherst, and in that way an agricultural college came to have a Department of Military Science. The catalogue was confident about the results. "Participation in ROTC has notable effect on character development," it said. "It also discloses to the Army existing officer material and potential leaders."

Daniel's account of it was much the same, with less about character. "It was to prepare special forces," he said. "It was all in the context of the war in Vietnam. The university was getting large funding from the military, and they were using it

as a place to train officers. So you were required to take two years of ROTC, whether you liked it or not. And these were graded classes. And if you'd signed up with them, then you'd become an ROTC major. Then you had all the other male students to march around and practice leadership skills with."

The Army's program at Amherst did in fact form a volunteer "Special Forces" unit the following year, under a former Ranger, and the yearbook described it as "modeled after the famed Army Special Forces Counter-Insurgence Troops," with training in "summer and winter survival training, scuba, hand to hand combat, mountain climbing and small arms instruction." The yearbook's caption for its photograph called it "our littlest guerrilla training force."

The military was not far away in any case. Down the valley, at Westover Air Force Base in Chicopee, the Strategic Air Command had kept the headquarters of its Eighth Air Force since 1955 and the B-52 bombers of the 99th Bombardment Wing since 1956, and an alternate command bunker, for use in a nuclear war, had been dug deep into nearby Bare Mountain. The university's Air Force drill team, the Flying Redmen, performed at Westover, and two years later the cadets at the Military Ball would begin their evening with dinner at the Westover Officers' Club.

In the fall of 1961 the American war in Vietnam was still officially something else. On December 19, 1961, while Daniel was in his first term, the United States Air Force began Operation Farm Gate, in which American air commandos flew in South Vietnam under the cover story of training the South Vietnamese, and on January 13, 1962, they flew their first combat missions. By late 1962 there were about eleven thousand American advisers in the country, with aircraft and helicopters, and with napalm and defoliants among their weapons.

The ROTC class showed films, and it was the films that decided him. "I didn't like the films where they were showing films of our planes napalming villages in Vietnam," he said. "It didn't seem like a worthy thing. I had been a chemistry major, and I didn't like the idea of using scientific knowledge." So he stopped going. "I objected to that," he said, "and I refused to go."

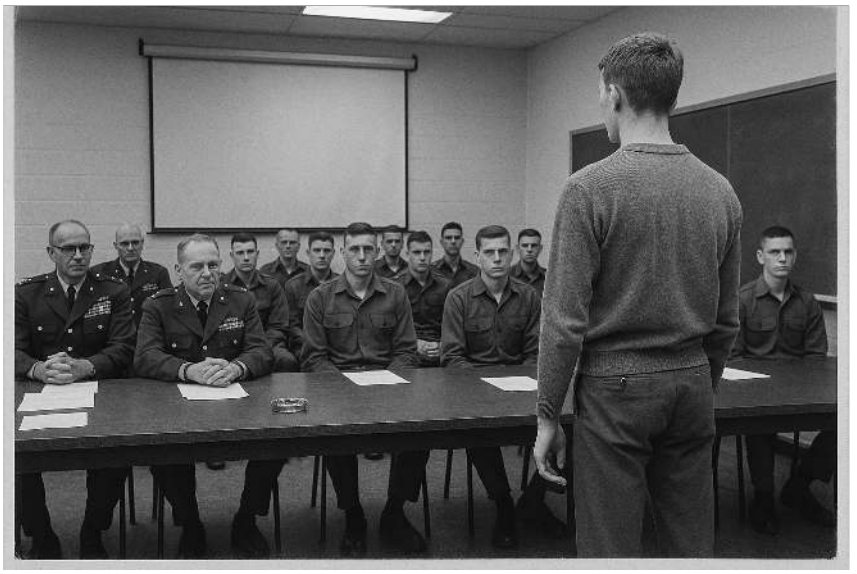
The department summoned him to explain himself. He found himself in a room with about twelve people: "It was their young promising officers and then the head of the department had me there." Their purpose, he said, was "to determine for punishment." Daniel told them what he thought. "I told them that I think it's war crimes. And then I don't think anyone should have anything to do with it. It's unworthy of our country and we have no reason to be there." And he gave them the rest of it, which he could still say, word for word, sixty years later:

> *I don't agree with this. I don't, you know, this is, you know, my father just fought four years against the Nazis for doing this. And I'm not about to participate in it myself.*

The board did what boards do. "The only punishment they had for me there," Daniel said, "was that I got an F in a three credit class for four semesters." It was not a small thing. The ROTC classes were required for a degree: "If you didn't have them, then you couldn't get your degree. So I kind of risked my whole degree there." To stay on the honors roll he now had to earn grades good enough "to surpass like 12 credits of F." He was seventeen, or just eighteen, years old.

He was not the only student at Amherst that year who objected. On the night of December 9, 1961, as the cadets and their dates went into the Student Union ballroom for the Military Ball, about fifty students calling themselves the Committee for the Abolition of Compulsory R.O.T.C. walked a picket line outside. Their handbill said, "We will submit to academic discipline, but never to militaristic indoctrination. There can be no compromise."

The yearbook, recording the evening, captioned one picture of the protest "Paul Theroux, the brains behind the whole affair," and another, of a cadet and his date at the dance, "Are you really going to protect me from those nasty Russians." Theroux, an English major in the class of 1963, would go on to write some of the best-known travel books of the century. The committee kept at it after Christmas. "R.O.T.C. is an attempt to



ABOUT TWELVE PEOPLE IN A ROOM (ILLUSTRATION)

thwart the intellectual growth of the student," its statement in the student paper began in January.

"Rather than education, R.O.T.C. constitutes nothing more than indoctrination." In February 1962 the Student Senate voted 28 to 8 to ask the faculty and trustees, once again, for voluntary ROTC. Daniel never said that he was part of any of it.

The year settled two things for him. Chemistry was finished: "I decided I wasn't going to go into chemistry because I saw chemistry being used especially by the military and in the war context and I said you know I did not want to participate in that." And with the ROTC failure on his record, "my chance of getting a degree at UMass was kind of doomed by not passing the compulsory ROTC requirement. So I switched to Berkeley." He applied to the University of California at Berkeley, "as a kind of pre-med student," and was accepted.

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In the summer of 1962, Daniel was in Los Angeles, working for his father. It was a city in a hurry; that year it opened Dodger Stadium, built in less than three years for $23 million. John had gone into painting contracting, and his son painted buildings with him to save for Berkeley. "And so I got work with him doing pretty good," Daniel said. "It was like $5 an hour, which was quite a bit then. Because when I worked in the paper mill, it was like $2 an hour."

It was. Through 1962 the average American factory worker earned between $2.25 and $2.29 an hour, so five dollars was more than twice that. His father's business, as Daniel described it, came with "all these jobs and these kind of strange people he had working for him," about whom, unfortunately, he said nothing more.

He worked the whole summer and saved what he could, "which was not enough," he said, "to go to Berkeley." He went anyway. "I went there when I was 18," he said.

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In the fall of 1962, Daniel was a student at Berkeley. The University of California charged no tuition at all to Californians who had lived in the state for more than a year; they paid an incidental fee of $90 a semester. Students from out of state paid $300 a semester in tuition on top of it. Which column Daniel fell into, with a father newly in Los Angeles and his own home still in Massachusetts, no surviving paper says.

Either way, he said, "I did not have enough money to complete it." The university's catalogue, which cited the same Morrill Act of 1862 as the one in Amherst, drew a different conclusion from it: "Military training at the University of

California is offered on a voluntary and selected basis." The regents had ended compulsory training at Berkeley that year.

Berkeley was a great deal bigger than Amherst. A year later, when the language survey counted, the campus had 26,756 students, more than three times as many as the university he had left, and 633 of them were taking Russian. He took on a great deal. "I enrolled in 17 credits like physics, calculus, and so forth. And I was working three jobs trying to support myself. I had a job at a fraternity washing dishes, then I was living in this rich lady's house with her daughter for a place to stay, and I was doing painting for her. And then I had another job, I forget what it was." He was on the gymnastics team at Berkeley, too, "because I was very good at gymnastics." And, he said, "I was also involved with the politics there too."

Berkeley had a good deal of politics to be involved with. A student party called SLATE, founded in 1958, had been fighting for years against the university's Kerr Directives, which forbade student groups to take stands on "off-campus" issues, and its summer conference of 1962, "The Negro in America," had just given birth to the Bay Area Friends of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The administration had for a time banned SLATE from the campus. The great Free Speech Movement was still two years off. What part of all this was Daniel's, he did not say.

Berkeley is also built on the side of a range of hills, which is lovely to look at and less lovely to cross several times a day between three jobs and seventeen credits. He bought a bicycle, "like a 15-speed Japanese bike," to get around. It was a wet autumn to be doing it in. September had brought Berkeley less than half an inch of rain.

Then the remains of the great Columbus Day storm came down the coast, and the town's weather station measured 2.34 inches on October 11, 2.29 on the 12th and 1.82 on the 13th, six and a half inches in three days. Oakland's 4.52 inches on the 13th set a record for a single day, there were floods and mudslides around the bay, and the rain held up the World Series between the San Francisco Giants and the New York Yankees for days.

Even with the bicycle, he missed classes, and the semester never left him. "I still have nightmares about did I go to this class," he said, "and there was no way I could both pass and I had no notion of getting advice or getting a loan or something. So I just burned myself out."

The end came on a hill. He told it like this:

> *I was going down the hill on my bike. ... and then I was going down the hill and then somebody walked in front of me so I slammed on the brakes and the bike threw me off in the air. And I did a flip and I landed on my feet, being a gymnast, which was fine. ... But the bike spun up in the air and then landed right on top of me and slammed me to the street, apparently.*

"I just decided I could not survive there," he said, "so I had to go back to Massachusetts somehow." His grandparents in San Jose, as he remembered it, bought him a ticket, and in November 1962 his father put him on the train east. His own verdict on the whole year was short. "That was a bad time for me," he said. "I didn't make it through."

It was a long way home. Three trains ran east from the Bay Area to Chicago in those years: the *California Zephyr*, by the Feather River Canyon, Salt Lake City and Denver; the *City of San Francisco*, by Ogden and Omaha; and the Santa Fe's *San Francisco Chief*. In the middle 1950s the *Zephyr* had been timetabled at 50 hours and 50 minutes for the 2,537 miles to Chicago alone, arranged so that it passed through the best of the scenery by daylight. Which train carried Daniel, and from which station, he did not say.

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In the winter of 1962, Daniel was back in Holyoke, in the paper mills, and he stayed eight months. He worked seven days a week. The mill allowed double shifts, eight hours and eight more, sixteen hours at a stretch, and he took them: "I worked four 16-hour shifts where I was paid double time," he said, though elsewhere in the same telling he put the number of doubles at two. The pay was "about $1.80 an hour." He moved from job to job, wherever a helper was wanted, until he had "worked on every paper, every machine in the paper mill there. ... And I worked on the beaters. I worked on the air dryer. I worked on the calender. Yeah, I worked in a lot of the areas as a helper."

Between them, the machines he named made up most of the business of papermaking, from beginning to end. The beaters came first. A beater was a long oval tub of water and fiber, with a heavy roll in it that beat the fiber against a grooved plate into pulp; the design was Dutch, from the 1680s, and it had won its place because it could make as much pulp in a day as the old stamp mills made in eight. The pulp then went out onto the moving wire of the paper machine, where the water drained away and the web of paper formed, and through the presses and the dryers, and at the very end it went down through the calender, where Daniel had nearly lost his arm two summers before.

$1.80 an hour was a good deal better than the law required. The federal minimum wage had gone up to $1.15 that September, and it would go to $1.25 the following September. It was rather less than the $2.29 the average American factory worker was making that December. In money of the 2020s it comes to something over eighteen dollars an hour, for sixteen hours at a time. The university, for its part, reckoned that year that $1,350 was "the bare minimum needed for a full academic year" for a student living on campus. At $1.80 an hour that is 750 hours of work, or something like forty-seven of those sixteen-hour shifts, before taxes.

He lived with his grandmother. To get to work, he said, "I took the bus, the trolley, and then walked along the canals." The canals were the city's oldest machinery. The First Level Canal, the one the river fed first, was 140 feet wide with 22 feet of water at its head, and the mills along its banks and those of the two canals below it took their power from the fall of water between them. The city's buses, for their part, still belonged to the Holyoke Street Railway Company.

Its last streetcar had run in 1937, but the name had stayed, and in January 1963 the state's directory of labor organizations still listed the drivers' union as "Street Railway Employees No. 537 (Holyoke St. Rwy. Co.)." A man could take the trolley in Holyoke that winter, in other words, provided he did not mind that it was a bus.

The Federal Writers' Project, describing the city in 1937, had found it "built around the numerous power canals that cut across the city," and noted that its paper mills, which made "high-grade writing paper, the principal support of the town," had "given the town the name of 'The



A PAPER MILL ON A HOLYOKE CANAL, 1936–37

Paper City.'" A syndicated travel note of 1960 introduced it to newspaper readers as "'The Venice of America,'" "a friendly, industrial city of 53,000 population," which was generous to the canals and a little hard on Venice.

By the winter Daniel went back, the paper city was beginning to come apart at the edges. The American Writing Paper Company, which had been formed in 1899 out of twenty-three rag-paper mills, thirteen of them in Holyoke, was reorganized in 1963 into an investment company called Holyoke Shares, and by the end of the decade it was gone. The people who worked the mills had changed over the years as well.

In 1937 the guide found that the descendants of the Irish made up a third of the city and that they, "with the French-Canadians, make the city an outstanding Catholic center," with Poles a tenth. That same year the photographer Lewis Hine came through for the government's National Research Project, which was studying how machines were changing work, and photographed the city's paper mills from the beaters to the calenders. By 1963 the French newspaper *La Justice*, published for the French-Canadian millworkers for more than half a century, was in its last year, and families from Puerto Rico had been settling in Holyoke since the middle 1950s; by 1956 the *Springfield Republican* counted about a thousand.

The papermakers had been organized for a long time; the union that became the International Brotherhood of Paper Makers had begun in Holyoke in 1884, as a social club. In January 1963 the state's directory listed five locals of its successor, the United Papermakers and Paperworkers, in the city, among them No. 1, the Eagle Lodge, and No. 226, the Finishers, a local of its own for the finishing rooms, where the calenders stood.

Two days before Christmas a fire gutted the upper floors of the Hotel Essex, the tallest commercial building in the city, and its closing left Holyoke, as the *Springfield Union* put it, "without a major hotel operating." In 1963 the old Skinner silk mill, once the largest silk mill in the world and lately making rayon, shut altogether, with about two hundred jobs. Which mill Daniel worked in, and whether he was in a union, he did not say.

It was a hard winter for walking along canals. The weather station at Amherst, up the valley, recorded thirty-two nights at or below zero between December and February, and on January 29, 1963, it read twenty below. That same day, in a Boston hospital, Robert Frost died, at eighty-eight. Frost had taught at Amherst College on and off for twenty years, and two years before, at President Kennedy's inauguration, he had recited "The Gift Outright" from memory, the sun being too bright for him to read the poem he had written for the day.

Back at the university that winter, the faculty was deciding the question Daniel had been punished for. The provost had told the students in September that, although land-grant colleges were required by law to offer ROTC, "there is no governmental rule for compelling students to enroll in the courses"; the compulsion was the university's own, and so was the decision. On December 13, 1962, the Faculty Senate accepted the report of its committee on ROTC, which called for "an end to compulsory ROTC on the UMass campus" and recommended "voluntary ROTC starting in the Fall of 1963," for freshmen and sophomores alike.

The student paper greeted the new year with an editorial headed "ONE DOWN, TWO TO GO," the two being the president and the trustees, and in the same issue offered its predictions for 1963. The first was that the trustees would approve. Number 36 was that "300 ROTC Cadets will disappear into the mud at Spring Review."

In February a letter to the editor judged that "compulsory ROTC seems doomed," and among those it thanked were the students who had picketed the Military Ball. It was doomed. By early March the paper could refer to "the Board of Trustees' recent decision to place the once-required R.O.T.C. program on a voluntary basis." The yearbook that spring announced voluntary ROTC "scheduled to go into effect in the '63-'64 academic year," and on its page of world news the same editors observed that "the many sided war in Vietnam has become all but forgotten."

In May the Holyoke Water Power Company held its second Shad Derby on the river below the dam, an event it had begun the year before and which the city has held nearly every May since. In July the thermometer at Amherst reached 99 degrees. Daniel kept working through the spring and the summer. "I just saved up money," he said, "so I could go back to UMass in the fall of 1963." Later he summed up the year in a sentence: "I had spent the better part of the year saving up money and working the paper mill."

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In the fall of 1963, Daniel was back at the University of Massachusetts. It had grown while he was away. That September it enrolled 8,800 students, the most in its hundred-year history, with a record 2,200 freshmen, and he came back to it as a sophomore. He had decided, he said, that he would "major in English, and I would take a Russian class. That's when I took my first Russian class."

Russian was not a crowded subject. A national survey of college language classes that fall counted 8,053 students at the university, which made it, by the same count, more than seven times the size of Amherst College down the road, with its 1,071. Of the 8,053, 1,142 were taking French, 924 German, 811 Spanish and 213 Russian.

Across the whole country, only 31,755 college students were studying Russian, against nearly 275,000 in French, and this was five years after Sputnik had frightened Congress into the National Defense Education Act, which paid for language teaching and for loans to students with a "superior capacity" in a modern foreign language. That fall, the university's Russian Club held its first meeting of the year in the Student Union, with slides of Russia.

Daniel had come to Russian, he said, "for various reasons," and the main one was his father. John had come out of the Second World War, Daniel said, a member of the Communist Party, and "was very in love with the Russians." The Party had sent him to work among the automobile workers, where he became "a shop steward, union steward, because he could talk the talk." Daniel was careful to say that this did not make his father anybody's agent.

"They were American communists," he said, and the movement went back "many, many decades when the first unions were being organized and even before the Russian Revolution there were American communists." It went back, as he traced it, to the 1840s, "when Marx came out in Engels with the Communist Manifesto saying that basically the workers of the world should unite worldwide."

What it led to in the son was a language. "That led to my strong interest in Russian," he said, "to where I actually majored in it when I was 19 years old and then went on to a doctorate in Berkeley in Russian."

He came back to a different ROTC, too. That fall it was an elective for the first time, and, as the yearbook reported, "As had been expected, the total enrollment of the program dropped by nearly one half." The 938 men who chose it got something their predecessors had not: "One academic credit was given to the previously creditless course."

That October the President of the United States came to Amherst. It was, the student paper pointed out, the first official appearance on the campus of Amherst College by any president; Calvin Coolidge, who had graduated from the college and served as one of its trustees all through his presidency, had never once come while he was in office. The arrangements were announced in advance. The President would fly from Washington to Westover Air Force Base, and from there "he will come to Amherst either by helicopter or by motorcade, depending on weather conditions."

About four thousand people were expected in the Amherst Indoor Athletic Field and in the buildings beside it, where the ceremony would be shown on closed-circuit television, and the music would be provided by the Eighth Air Force Band of Westover Field. The convocation itself was "open to ticket-holders only."

On Saturday, October 26, 1963, Kennedy broke ground for the Robert Frost Library, a $3.5 million building given by an alumnus who did not wish to be named, and received an honorary Doctor of Laws, with the poet Archibald MacLeish on the platform. Weather delayed the President, though evidently not the weather at

Amherst, where the thermometer reached 79 degrees and no rain was recorded, and the ceremony started late, with a solemn procession of the Amherst faculty "led by a pike-carrying High Sheriff."

The university's student paper put the crowd at "over 4000," and the student radio station, WMUA, carried the speech. Kennedy spoke first about privilege. Private colleges as a whole, he told the Amherst audience, "draw 50 percent of their students from the wealthiest 10 percent of our Nation. And even State universities and other public institutions derive 25 percent of their students from this group." "There is inherited wealth in this country," he said, "and also inherited poverty." Then he spoke about Frost and about power.

The men who question power, he said, "determine whether we use power or power uses us," and "When power leads man towards arrogance, poetry reminds him of his limitations." On Monday the student paper's front page had it in five words: "ART MUST BE FREE SAYS JFK."

Daniel remembered the day, and the connection to Frost: "Robert Frost was the poet laureate for Kennedy, gave a speech at his inauguration. And so Amherst College was dedicating a library to Robert Frost and Kennedy was there." Kennedy, he said, "came to Amherst" to dedicate the library to Frost, which is how the student paper described it too, "just before Kennedy was assassinated." "And we have the invitations," he said. Regina, whom he had not yet met, was there as well. The two of them, as he put it, "were standing on the same street corner there, but we didn't know each other then."

The gymnastics team he came back to had a new coach. Coach Kjeldsen had arrived while Daniel was away and in his first season had made the team, by the yearbook's arithmetic, "40 points better than last year's," with a place promised in the Eastern Gymnastic League "against such teams as Army, Navy, Penn. State, Temple, and Syracuse." On November 20 the student paper previewed the season. It was, the paper said, a young team, mostly sophomores, and "Capt. Dave Williams, Dan St. John, Dick Cardiff, Stan Brallier, and Jim Dusenbury are the boys Coach Kjeldsen pointed out as the ones who may contribute to the success of the team."

Two days later, on November 22, the President was killed in Dallas. The university's yearbook remembered how the news came to the campus. "Twenty-six days earlier he stood in the midst of students from both the University and Amherst College where he broke ground for the Robert Frost Memorial Library. When word of the death of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy struck campus, all motion ceased and the wait began."

Students, it said, "wept unashamedly, and the University went into formal mourning. All activities, social and academic, were suspended," and the students went home early for a Thanksgiving holiday that had suddenly grown longer. The student paper did not appear again until December 4. The armed forces declared a thirty-day moratorium on all military events out of respect for the late President, and the university's Military Ball, set for December 7, was put off to January 11.

The season began in December, against Southern Connecticut, and the student paper's account of the side horse gave a fair idea of the order of things on that team: "Dave Williams did an excellent job," and "Dan St. John followed Dave with his usual excellent routine taking second place." The university won the meet, and the team's next trip was to West Point, to meet what the paper called "the number three team in the country." On the rings that day, behind Southern Connecticut's winner, the next three places went to Williams, St. John and Brallier.

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In the winter of 1964, Daniel was competing for the university on the side horse and the parallel bars, which were the events in which the student paper most often found him. The Military Ball, when it was finally held on January 11, went off quietly. "There were no anti-ROTC pickets," the yearbook noted, "no Revolutionary War uniforms and no Navy uniforms to dampen the Army-Air Force formal." It was the first Ball in four years, it said, that had been "strictly a military affair." Outside it was a proper valley winter: the Amherst station logged nineteen below zero on January 15, and February brought eighteen inches of snow.

The Ball was not the only event on campus that Saturday night. At half past seven, Penn State, which the student paper had called "one of the strongest teams in the country," met the gymnasts at the university, before about fifteen hundred people. On the side horse, the paper reported, "Dan St. John and Jim Dusenbury both had good showings, but the Penn State depth of talent was just too much for the young inexperienced UMass squad." In the last event, the rings, "Second place honors went to sophomore Dan St. John." Penn State won 154.80 to 126.85. The visitors' own student paper, back in University Park, printed the box score: St. John of Massachusetts fifth on the side horse with 7.05, fifth on the parallel bars with 8.0, and second on the still rings with 8.15, behind only Penn State's John Martin.

In February, against Ithaca, the Redmen swept the side horse, with second and third places "going to sophomores Dan St. John and Jim Duesenbury." Two days later the paper explained what had made the young team better than the last one: versatility. Four of its men, Dan St. John among them, competed "in three events, the maximum number a performer may enter."

Against Cortland, a team the university had never lost to and did not lose to that day either, he took second on the side horse and second on the parallel bars, where, in the paper's words, "St. John, a sophomore with a great deal of potential, scored an 8.05 with a fine routine to place second to Williams." The captain's first place, the reporter added a little apologetically, "tends to overshadow, to some extent, the fine performance of Dan St. John."

On March 14, in the middle of the university's Fine Arts Festival, an overflow audience of fifteen hundred filled the Student Union ballroom at midday for a "Tribute of the Arts" to the late President. The woodwind quintet played Bach, professors of English read poems they had written in his memory, and a senior, Edward O'Connor, read "The Gift Outright," the poem Frost had recited at the inauguration. The program also gave back to the campus a sentence from Kennedy's October day in Amherst, the one the student paper had made its headline: "If art is to nourish the roots of our culture, society must set the artist free to follow his vision wherever it takes him."



DAN ST. JOHN ON THE SIDE HORSE

The team finished the dual-meet season at three wins and four losses, beating Southern Connecticut, Ithaca and Cortland and losing, in the yearbook's phrase, "by slim margins to the gymnastic giants Temple, Springfield, Army and Penn State." At the New England championships in April, where the university finished second to Springfield College, Daniel placed sixth on the side horse; the event was won by Russel Mills of Yale, the Eastern and national champion. The yearbook's summing-up was generous.

"Al Cohen and Dan St. John turned in consistently outstanding performances," it said, and it looked forward to great things from "brilliant sophomores like Dan, Al, and Coach Kjeldson," a sentence that, read strictly, also enrolls the coach in the class of 1966. In the team photograph on the same page, "D. St. John" stands in the back row, next to "Coach Kjeldsen."

By the spring he had finished his sophomore year, with his first year of Russian behind him, and he signed up for the second year of it in the university's summer program at Amherst; he had, as he said, missed a year, and he meant to major in the language. The university had been rebuilding its summers as well. That October the student paper had explained the plan: "With the new summer session of twelve weeks, the student can take within three credits of a full semester's work."

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That summer class is where the next chapter begins, because it was there that he met Regina. He went on to major in Russian, as he had meant to; the 1965 yearbook names him among the standouts at Temple, and the 1966 yearbook lists "St. John, Daniel J." among the seniors who were not there to be photographed. In 1966 he went back to Berkeley, the university he had left in November 1962, to begin a doctorate in Russian.

What remains of the three years in between is mostly paper: box scores in the student newspaper, a team photograph in the 1964 yearbook with D. St. John standing beside his coach, a line in the university catalogue about the notable effect of ROTC on character, and, in the family's keeping, the invitations to Kennedy's day in Amherst. Some things are on no paper yet found: the name of the mill, the neighbor who got him in, the minutes of the board of twelve, the Berkeley team.

One later piece of paper came from the same student newspaper, forty-three years after his last season. In November 2008 it announced that the Student Union Craft Center would host "a visiting artist workshop entitled 'Art of Paper Marbling,' conducted by the nationally recognized Chena River Marblers, Regina and Daniel St. John." He had come back to the campus, this time with paper of another kind.

And in Daniel's memory there remained a bolt half an inch thick in a calender stack in Holyoke, a man from the laboratory who knew which button to press, and a recurring dream about a class at Berkeley that he may or may not have gone to.

THE RECORDS

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The epigraph: Emily Dickinson, "Aspiration," *Poems, Third Series* (1896), Project Gutenberg 12242.

The photographs: Lewis W. Hine for the WPA National Research Project, Holyoke, 1936–37, National Archives (public domain): American Writing Paper Co., super-calender (NAID 518330) and an independent paper mill on a canal (NAID 518353). Neither shows a mill Daniel worked in.

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Local copies: every source above is cached in the book's repository (paths in `dossiers/college-and-the-paper-mill/SOURCES.csv`): yearbooks, bulletins, newspapers, government data and web pages in `facts/records/_raw/college-and-the-paper-mill/`; the Hine photographs in its `hine/` folder; full texts quoted in `facts/sources/poets/` (Dickinson, the WPA guide, Kennedy).

THE ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The photographs in this chapter are printed digitally restored: dust and scratches removed, noise reduced, contrast evened, nothing added or changed. These are the raw files, as received.



A PAPER MILL ON A HOLYOKE CANAL, 1936–37
The unretouched original.



A SUPER-CALENDER IN A HOLYOKE PAPER MILL, 1936–37
The unretouched original.



DAN ST. JOHN ON THE SIDE HORSE
The unretouched original.