Smith's College

In some countries this developer of natural resources would have been knighted. In America, he remained just Paul Smith. But that name presented so much of skillful promotion of resources, that he stood out as a great figure and an integral part of the Adirondack country.

With that supreme spirit in mind, Phelps Smith was deeply conscious of the social responsibility of the individual and was keenly interested in education; he, on many occasions, had financed the education of promising students in northern New York institutions of higher learning. However, the extent of this greatest interest in education was not revealed until his sudden and unexpected death January 17, 1937.

Provisions were made in his will, for the foundation of a co-educational institution which was to be known as the Paul Smith's College of Arts and Sciences. The estate, valued at several million dollars, including the original hotel and resort site, timber tracts, water rights, and the Paul Smith's Electric Light, Power, and Railroad Company, has become the major source of income for the perpetuation of the college.

The coming of World War II delayed the opening of the college as a private institution of liberal arts and sciences. The resort buildings and grounds were used, however, from July 1942 to March 1943, by the New York State Signal Training School which trained enlisted reserve men in radio and electronics. Later, the school again became a temporary training center for members of Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC).

In the spring of 1946, the Board of Trustees completed plans for the initial opening of the institution as a college of arts and sciences that fall. Immediately thereafter, an extensive building program was undertaken, including enlarging and modernizing classrooms, renovating dormitories and cottages, and winterizing them for cold weather occupancy. One hundred and ninety freshmen matriculated for the opening session of the college on September 23, 1946. The college for the academic year, 1947-48, prepared to accommodate two hundred and sixty freshman and sophomore students—its present enrollment.

The place where a man passed his life should bear some evidence of how he lived. Paul Smith's personality survived. His works are here. His purpose in life was in affectionate hearts and hands. His sons, Phelps and Paul, who were in charge of the resort for many years, had the zest and experience to carry the burden and they were unselfish; they were men of genuine ambition. In their hearts lay the treasures of gifts, experience and the attainment of beneficial aspirations which shall never be forgotten.