vantage of small size was that all instructors could become personally acquainted with all graduate students, and so could judge them without recourse to mechanical devices such as written qualifying examinations. Probably the largest number of graduate students that can be thus known is less than twenty. By this measure the department did not become too large until after the second world war, when enrollment in the universities greatly increased. Sauer kept a critical eye on his graduate students, tactfully eliminating those who did not come up to his standards. The qualities he valued most were eagerness to work in the field and ability to see what the landscape offers. Probably none of his graduate students, however, completely fulfilled his expectations. He did not ask aspirants to the Ph.D. to earn preliminary masters' degrees, but encouraged them to proceed directly from the baccalaureate to the doctorate. He trusted students who were doctoral material, after some substantial undergraduate courses and a few seminars in which they might demonstrate their competence, to go into the field and gather material for their dissertations. Most had an opportunity to learn by accompanying him on his many forays into Mexico. All added to their competence by acquiring needed knowledge in other departments, taking courses that ranged from taxonomic botany to Spanish paleography.

Sauer always disclaimed any intention of founding a "school" or of shaping students over a common last. He expected the individual to find his own objects of interest and his own ways of satisfying his curiosity. What we had in common we gained mostly from Sauer's attention to the past of geography. Of his seminars I remember only those on the history of geography. In these we learned to appreciate the antiquity, the continuity, and the dignity of an intellectual concern with the earth. We were thus immunized against infection by the numerous "new geographies" whose birth has been proclaimed repeatedly throughout the history of academic geography in the United States. We were spared, too, the anxiety that seems to have afflicted many of our colleagues elsewhere, the apparent fear that the position of geography in the universities is precarious, and needs defense by frequent assertions of its special niche, redefined at intervals, in the academic structure. Best of all, we acquired a sense of participating in the worldwide and perennial enterprise of intellectual discovery, of which the university, the department, the course of instruction, and even the single lecture, are parts, however minute. We caught at least a glimpse of Isaac Newton's great unexplored "ocean of truth," on the shore of which we might, with effort and some luck, pick up our own small handfuls of smooth pebbles.

THE LATER SAUER YEARS

James J. Parsons

WHY Geography? Why Berkeley? I had taken an undergraduate degree from the University of California in economics and had learned about the existence of geography through chance encounters with Carl Sauer in courses on North America and Latin America. When I felt ready to go back for a year of graduate work in 1938, geography promised a convenient departmental base. There had been no reply to an inquiry concerning admission, but it turned out that the doors were open to anyone with the academic requisites.

At that time geography at Berkeley was still less a department than an individual. Sauer had been on the campus for fifteen years, quietly making his mark, and carrying the subject along with him. Geography, one sensed, was largely synonymous with his name. He had assembled a small supporting cast with striking individual personalities and vigorous scholarly interests in John Leighly, John Kesseli, and Jan O. M. Broek, the last two from Switzerland and the Netherlands, respectively. Erhard Rostlund, fresh from the Swedish merchant marine, joined the staff as lecturer in 1945, as I did two years later. Clarence Glacken came in 1952. The strong European flavor of the department had earlier been enhanced by Oscar Schmieder and Gottfried Pfeifer, both of whom had returned home to German pro-


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fessorships. Later part-time lecturers included A. A. DeVries, a Dutch map lecturer, Nicholas Mirov, Russian forest biologist and authority on pines, and Edwin Loeb, an anthropogeographer who had had extensive experience with the Austrian School of Anthropology. Sauer wrote affectionately of it on his retirement in 1957, "It's a kind of nice little department, with all its queer characters, where everyone pretty much works at what he wants to work at."

There was no "program," no formal requirements that graduate students were aware of in the earlier years. We were on our own, an assorted group of aspiring scholars immersed in our work, seldom questioning or concerned about how geography might be defined by others. Discussions in the halls, at departmental "teas," on field excursions, at George and Alberta Carter's (George was the only graduate student who was married) were as important as classes and seminars with their more organized approach to learning. Methodology and "techniques" were of little concern, except within the context of a particular inquiry. We somehow felt on the frontiers of knowledge right from the start. It was unanswerable questions, we soon sensed, that would engage us, not the known. In retrospect I do not quite understand just how we ever made that gigantic leap forward, without the presumably basic preparatory work, but we were collectively badgered into thinking we could manage it. Somehow we survived.

Student-faculty communications seemed free and easy, facilitated by some remarkably able and congenial departmental secretaries. But we were all just a little bit in awe of the chairman, a father figure of sorts, the "Old Man" to many while still in his forties. A notice on the bulletin board had announced that Mr. and Mrs. Sauer were "at home" on Sunday afternoons and invited students and friends to join them. I first went while still an undergraduate, accompanied by a friend. We mapped out the itinerary of a proposed summer bicycle trip through Europe with him over tea and cookies, an ice-breaking encounter that he seemed to enjoy as much as we did. Graduate students, especially, took advantage of these Sundays at home with the Sayers, and John and Katherine Leighly might also drop in from down the street. For years the Sayers invited unmarried graduate students to Thanksgiving dinner at their Arch Street home. After Franklin D. Roosevelt changed the date of the traditional holiday to the third Thursday in November, the Sayers resolutely continued to celebrate on the fourth Thursday of the month.

There were less than a dozen graduate students in 1938, most of them teaching assistants in the large freshman courses. Introductory economic geography (the "why" and "where" of production and trade) was then required in the large Business Administration program, while introductory physical geography carried "science" credit. Sauer and Leighly had earlier offered the physical course, but by the time I had arrived it had been handed on to Kessel. He had come to Berkeley in 1931 for a Ph.D. with Sauer and had continued on the staff, perhaps the most underestimated member of the team. A student of a later day has described him as "gruff, lofty and impatient . . . mountains and rivers and blowing sand seemed to be under his wrinkled skin. His course [was] rooted in clambering through woods, feeling the warmth of the scent of the chamise, and thinking about the landforms on your backside. When this man with piercing blue eyes spoke—and he didn't waste words—you felt that knowledge came from experience." His love for the rumpled and rough face of the earth, especially the mountains of California and in his native Switzerland, was boundless. He was the rigorous disciplinarian and brutally frank.

If you got by Kessel there was every chance you would make it. It was an undergraduate student in a section of his Geography 1, for which I was a teaching assistant, who became my wife. I knew that I was on the right track when he approved, and not just because of her German-Swiss name. He was the most critical teacher that I ever had, and perhaps the most effective.

Leighly, who had come to Berkeley from Michigan with Sauer and was his first Ph.D., was the quiet, unassuming gentleman scholar. Ignoring opportunities elsewhere, he chose to remain in the shadow of Sauer, his precise and logical mind a natural complement to that of the speculative and free-wheeling chairman. His unassailable integrity was legendary. While climatology and the history of geography were his special responsibilities, he also taught us much in other matters, whether of Scandinavia, of place names as a subject of geographical inquiry, of the history of printing and book-
binding, or of literary style. Not a field man himself, he was nonetheless fully supportive of the importance of direct observation in geography and of those who headed for the non-industrial societies of the tropics to test themselves. In other circumstances he would have been more widely heralded for his own considerable scholarly productivity, but he preferred Berkeley and his association with "Mr. Sauer," whom he respected and appreciated, I believe, above all other men that he knew.

In a situation where there was little room for urban or economic geography Broek faced an uphill fight. He was young, ambitious and of ready wit, but he was also stubborn. When the opportunity came to move on to greener pastures he took it, but I think that in a real sense he always considered himself a pupil of Sauer, however much he disagreed with "the Chief" in detail.

THE INSTRUCTIONAL OFFERINGS

We took two graduate seminars each semester, Sauer's and one other. All faculty members, including the chairman, taught three courses a term, but only Sauer always had a seminar. The others offered them in alternate terms. Sauer's seminar topics reflected his changing research interests. Before I arrived geomorphology, soil erosion, regionalism, the prehistory of northern Mexico and the Southwest, and the history of geography had been featured themes.

Later seminars reflected Sauer's additional concerns, some in gestation and others fully developed. They included the Classification of World Culture Areas at the onset of European expansion, Conservation and Destructive Exploitation of Resources, the Historical Geography of Latin America, the Nature of Geography (in answer to Hartshorne) and, somewhat later, Plant and Animal Domestication, and Pleistocene Environments (especially marine terraces). Early Man, with changes in terrestrial and atmospheric conditions to which he was witness, was always somewhere in the background, but I believe this was never a specifically designated seminar topic. Joint seminars were experimented with, especially with Siegfried Ciriacy-Wantrup of agricultural economics and, earlier, with Alfred Kroeber of anthropology.

My entering class included George Carter, Robert West, Andrew Clark, with the addition of Edward Price, Erwin Hammond, Clarence Olmstead, Erhard Rostlund, Homer Aschmann, Maurice Perret, Milt George and a few others in the next two years. There were visits and field reports by Ph.D. candidates well along on their dissertations—Dan Stanislawski, Webster McFyt, Robert Bowman, Henry Bruman, Leslie Hewes, for example. Our first seminar with Sauer was on the Historical Geography of European Settlement of the Atlantic Colonies, an outgrowth of the essay he had done for the 1938 Department of Agriculture Yearbook, Climate and Man. With an upstate New York background I had cautiously opted for the Hudson River Valley and worked my head off reading all that I could find about it. Everything hung on our oral presentation, punctuated by typically Sauerian questions, usually on unexpected aspects of our work. The trick was to anticipate them, which usually meant reading far beyond the immediate confines of our topic. While we talked Sauer sat at the end of the old wooden table puffing on his corn cob pipe or cleaning it, or periodically whittling a match stick or two into ever finer slivers of wood. We soon learned that maps, lots of them, were almost a sine qua non of a "good" report.

Sauer's undergraduate offerings included introductory cultural geography (Geography 2), a kind of Gang der Kultur Über die Erde, for which a mimeographed outline, later elaborated upon by Rostlund, was used as a syllabus elsewhere by several Berkeley graduates. Stanislawski, then completing his Ph.D., taught this course just prior to and during World War II. I was one of his teaching assistants. Sauer's North America course, relentlessly historical, had Daniel Boone "peeping over the crest of the Appalachians" at the term's final lecture. For Latin America he more or less followed the format used by Oscar Schmieder in his Länderkunde with a major concern for aboriginal and colonial geography. He also taught the Saturday field course in the Berkeley Hills and Marin County and Natural Resources and their Exploitation (with considerable emphasis on the prehistoric role of fire). Not many graduate students missed more than one of these. Plant and animal domestication became the subject of a regular lecture course only in the post-World War II years. The field trips were obligatory and for many of us the capstone of our graduate student experience. Sauer was a master observer, asking questions of us and of
the landscape, usually from the highest vantage point around. Lunch time discussions, with Sauer as the center of the group, were especially memorable. When Kesseli came along the exchanges became more lively. Field techniques as such had no place in Sauer’s field instruction. We got some of that in the summer field course in soil science, run out of the Davis campus, which also attracted many geography graduate students. It was as much a class on California agriculture as it was on soils geography and our people traditionally did well in it.

From Leightly we got our meteorology and climatology (Oceanic Influences on Climate was one seminar that I especially remember), cartography, with hand lettering (although this could be avoided), and the principles of geography (Nineteenth Century Geographic Thought); from Kesseli, geomorphology; from Brook, Southeast Asia as well as economic and urban geography; and from all of them an appreciation of the importance of both foreign languages and field observation (preferably in a non-Western culture) as the cornerstones of our subject. Of some twenty-seven dissertations completed under Sauer’s direction from 1938 on, all but one was either set in foreign (non-industrial) societies, mostly in the tropics (thirteen in Latin America), or was concerned with American Indian cultural survivals. California and the American West were neglected. It was assumed almost as a matter of course that field work would be conducted overseas and in the early 1950s financing became available through a special grant from the Office of Naval Research, Geography Branch, to facilitate this in the Caribbean area, including its mainland margins.

European geography, not the geography of the Middle Western regionalists, was our model. Everyone worked on French and German and was expected to be using both languages. It was Kesseli, the top sergeant, who cajoled us and drilled us and who administered the language exams. One seldom was allowed to “pass” until a few weeks before the qualifying orals. This came when Sauer felt that you were ready, a time that for some never arrived.

THE INFLUENCE OF SAUER

Sauer had a wondrous ability to get work out of us. He expected us to learn by our efforts. No one wanted his ignorance exposed to him if it could be avoided. He flattered us by expecting much from us. He would stalk into the graduate students’ room with a question, and in the ensuing discussion make reference to a half dozen sources and authorities we might never have heard of. As he left there would be a rush to the library to remedy some of these revealed deficiencies and perhaps to come back with at least a partial answer to his query. In retrospect, as one former student has observed, “we would have wished to have been more mature in matters of geographical lore during our early exposure to him. Most of us had nothing to compare him with and little background against which to test his work. We picked up only part of what he offered, often with little sense of its context.”

We were fairly well sealed off from, even oblivious to, whatever was happening in American geography elsewhere, and this was hardly attributable to California’s geographical isolation. We seemed to be marching to another drummer. On returning from a long rail trip to AAG meetings in St. Louis, Leightly had reported tersely that Berkeley participants had “made a good showing from the point of view of quality.” The usefulness of the regional sequent occupancy and land use studies that dominated the sessions, even to C. C. Colby’s presidential address, he termed “an article of faith rather than something that has been proven.” When Richard Hartshorne’s Nature of Geography appeared in 1939 Sauer immediately led us through the author index. We noted especially the few references to names like Edward Hahn, August Meitzen, Karl Sapper, Oscar Schmieder, Nathaniel Shaler, Clifford Darby, Estyn Evans and others who had been doing substantive work on major questions of culture history and on cultural imprints on the landscape. Many of the Americans listed were in connection with what Sauer termed “piddling” articles. If this was geography it was hardly the kind we knew and had come to respect.

from the difficult German by Kesseli). There were others, like Lewis Mumford, Edgar Anderson, and Frank Fraser Darling, with increasing representation in later years from among the biologists.

The programmatic Morphology of Landscape, which earlier had catapulted Sauer into international attention, was seldom referred to at Berkeley, least of all by its author. He later observed that several of the Middle Western geographers apparently had spent more time reading it than he had in writing it. It saddened him that so few seemed to have taken equal notice of the substantive historical works that had more largely engaged him. Who has read his Road to Cibola or Colima of New Spain, he asked? Surely not the Chicago, or Clark, or Michigan geographers. Sauer didn’t force his predilections on us, but he was much too strong a personality not to influence the direction of our interests and enthusiasms in what he termed our “years of elasticity.” He was especially concerned about the decline on the physical side of the subject and sought to impress on his students that a geography that mattered had both strong physical and historical components.

OUTSIDE TIES

Our outside ties were especially with anthropology, where everyone took courses with Kroeber and with Robert Lowie and perhaps one or two others. Several geography graduate students (e.g., Donald Brand, Robert Richardson, Carter, Rostlund, and Stanislawski) had come out of anthropology backgrounds, while others from geography (e.g., Peveril Meigs and Fred Kniffen) had done important field studies contributing to ethnography. In those days Sauer was on the oral committees of most anthropology doctoral candidates and students from there often thought of geography as a second home. A joining of the two departments had even been considered at one time, when Kroeber had been preoccupied with concepts of culture areas and cultural configurations. Later, as the departments expanded in size and developed more diverse interests, these early ties tended to dissolve.

There were other faculty in other departments to whom geographers were also directed, people such as Herbert Mason in botany, Howell Williams in geology, Hans Jenny in soil science, Wolfram Eberhard in sociology, M. M. Knight and Paul Taylor in economics, Wantrup and Carl Alsberg in agricultural economics, Lesley Simpson in Spanish, perhaps Herbert Bolton or Herbert Priestley in history, George Stewart in English, and Alden Miller in zoology. Such people were for our purposes almost adjuncts of the geography faculty, sympathetic to our point of view and with the broad concern for culture and environment that set them apart from those with more specialized interests in these fields. Sauer’s dislike for disciplinary partitions was notorious, and with such productive lines with other disciplines expansion of the geography faculty seemed unwarranted.

We didn’t think of ourselves as social scientists. “Culture history” was the preferred term. A lesser number, influenced more strongly by Leighly and later Kesseli but supported by Sauer, were more explicitly “earth scientists” (after Warren Thornthwaite and David Blumenstock had come Edwin Hammond, Clyde Patton, David Miller, John Vann, and Yi-Fu Tuan). Biogeography was subsumed under cultural geography or culture history, the connection being man’s impact on vegetation, including plant and animal domestication, and especially in later years the role of man-induced fire. But no one went into the field without an eye out for plants as cultural indicators. Many returned with collections for the University Herbarium, or for such authorities as Edgar Anderson (maize), Thomas Whitaker (cucurbits), or Charles Rick (tomatoes). In his later years Sauer’s concerns were increasingly with the biologic side of culture history, as reflected in dissertations coming out of the department in the 1950s and early 1960s (e.g., Rostlund, Carl Johannessen, Leroy Gordon, Levi Bucham, Lee Talbot, Gordon Merrill, David Harris, and William Denevan). Sauer’s son, Jonathan, after a year as a graduate student-at-large at Berkeley, had gone on to a Ph.D. in botany at the Missouri Botanical Garden but later switched his academic allegiance to geography.

The years of World War II had brought a hiatus in Berkeley geography activities. Kesseli and Leighly were called to Washington while Broek, after a brief return to Holland, took up the chairmanship at the University of Minnesota. Sauer was in residence during the War Years except for a field excursion to South America under the aegis of the Rockefeller Foundation. Stanislawski, West, Carter, and
Clark finished up their dissertations in that period. Graduate students were few. Hilgard Sternberg was here briefly from Brazil, Graham Lawton from Australia for somewhat longer. Wilbur Zelinsky emerged during this time as an un heralded undergraduate geography major who, after a time at Wisconsin, returned to Berkeley for his final degree. He was one of the first Ph.D. orals committees that I ever sat on, for most of the three hours a fascinating discussion of house types and settlement forms in Georgia, from where he had just returned after a year of teaching and field study.

U.C.L.A. supplied the largest number of Berkeley graduate students (e.g., Spencer, Bruman, West, Aschmann, Miller, Mikessell), but Wisconsin was the department with which linkages and philosophical sympathies were closest. When I attended my first AAG meeting in Columbus, Ohio, in 1946 en route home from field work in Colombia, it was to interview with Professor Vernon Finch regarding a position at Madison which would be open for someone ready to make a substantial commitment to transportation geography. But there was an opening at the same time at Berkeley and the prospect of continuing in the congenial atmosphere that Sauer had created there was irresistible. Later Andrew Clark and Fred Simoons, as Wisconsin faculty members, became Berkeley contact points there.

A SENSE OF IDENTITY

The sense of identity of Berkeley geographers has always been strong, but most especially among those from the Sauer-Leighly-Kessell years which lasted to the end of the 1950s. A departmental newsletter, *The Geographical Error*, had been established by the effervescent Blumenstock and Richardson in 1935. In the post-war years it was revived as *The Itinerant Geographer*, a report to alumni and friends of departmental activities that today has a circulation of some 400 copies. The *University of California Publications in Geography and Ibero-Americana* were serials initiated at Berkeley but open to contributors from throughout the University system to carry the more formal research results of faculty and graduates. An annual Christmas Party, an adjunct of the departmental "teas," with students and staff contributing satirical skits and songs, was a highlight for many years, reaching its apogee in the early 1950s when Patton, Tom Pagenhart, David Sopher, and Phil Wagner were simultaneously in residence. Ella-Marie Loeb's departmental dinner parties, begun about this time, have continued to be an institution to the present day. At an earlier time week-end outings to the Mendocino coast had served to bring the group together and to cement loyalties, as the Owens Valley field trips with Doug Powell were later to do.

My own first years of teaching at Berkeley, beginning in 1948, were really an extension of my graduate student experience. I attended the seminars of other faculty members rather regularly until their retirement, and also the Saturday field classes conducted by Kesseli, until they became my responsibility. On numerous occasions Sauer took small groups of graduate students on camping trips south of the border. The Baja California desert and the West Coast of Mexico were the preferred locales, originally at the long Christmas break, in later years during the summer months. In 1949 Lowenthal and I had gone with him to Mexico in a pick-up, ostensibly looking for ancestors of domesticated varieties of maize, beans, and squash. More important was the savoring of the ambiente and authenticity of native life, getting a feel for a semisubsistence society, and living close to the land in the shadow of three centuries of Spanish colonial rule. The last such expedition was to the Dominican Republic in 1962. It provided part of the background for the Caribbean phase of his studies that culminated in 1966 in *The Early Spanish Main*.

Edward Price, in correspondence, has contrasted Sauer's dominance of the department (he was chairman for thirty-one years, until 1954) with current views of departmental governance. How necessary was it that the intellectual and administrative dominance be linked in the way that it was? It is difficult to imagine the one without the other. Yet he saw clearly at his retirement that times were changing. "This university," he wrote to a former student, "is becoming a mass of wheels within wheels. One does not need to be a chairman to get swamped. We've kept this department fairly clean, but there are an awful lot of people, including young fellows, who are wholly absorbed in committees and other kinds of foo-faraw."

Some students, like myself, stumbled onto Berkeley geography without much understanding of what they were getting into. Others came
recommended from afar and with a fairly clear idea of what might be in store for them. Especially in the earlier period the majority came into graduate work after several years of outside experience. Many took more than the normally allotted five years to complete their studies and dissertation. In the late 1950s the median age at the time of receiving the Ph.D. was thirty-three years, one of the highest in the university. Someone called the process "aging in the wood."

The department was not quite a male preserve. There were usually several women enrolled for graduate work. In the climate of the times some must have had serious doubts about what the future might hold in the predominantly men's preserve of academic geography. None went beyond the M.A. until Patricia McBride Bartz, from Australia, completed the doctorate in 1949. Elinore Magee Barrett was next a full two decades later. Today the Ph.D. candidates in the department are nearly balanced as to sex.

Relatively few foreign students came to the Berkeley department, Britishers and Commonwealth sorts excepted. A Swiss, a Chilean, and a Brazilian plus one or two Chinese are all that I remember prior to the 1960s. There were numerous postdoctoral visitors in the thirties, including Karl Pelzer, William J. Talbot, Stanley Jones, Walter Hacker, and Fritz Bartz, most of whom later came back as visiting lecturers. But despite Berkeley's reputation in Latin American studies no one from Latin America ever completed a doctorate. For many years the department had a budgetary provision for a visiting professor. It was almost always filled from overseas, most commonly from Britain or Germany.

Those who experienced Berkeley in the Sauer years will not forget. We felt privileged above the norm. Ours in many ways must have been a world apart from most of academic geography and in later confrontation with the larger geographical community a temporary disorientation was not uncommon. The emphasis on intellectual initiative, on direct observation, on "a good honest job of reporting," the strong historical and earth science bias, did not necessarily fit the prevailing fashions elsewhere. Most of us left with a strong sense of obligation to contribute as we might to what one graduate reverentially called "the edifice." Many of us knew that we were expected to be more than routine practitioners and we did not want to let down either our mentors or the department.

Throughout the country there was a distinct group of Berkeley doctorates, and geographers from other schools, it was said, could spot them a mile away. That by and large they stood their ground, and that an "open geography" has prevailed, was perhaps sufficient reward and vindication both for Sauer and for the small supporting cast that he selected.
Top: Marin County field trip, 1938. Those seated, at top, include, from left: Andrew Clark, Carl Sauer, George Carter, Robert West, John Kesseli. Bottom: Christmas Tea, Berkeley, 1950. "The Choir" (from left): Mr. Sauer, Mr. Rostlund, Mr. Leighly, and Mr. Loeb. Photos courtesy of James Parsons.