

*People Worth Knowing*  
**Affable Historian**



PROF. JOHN A. MUNROE



**T**HE chairman of the Department of History at the University of Delaware has a large office on the second floor of Hullahen Hall on an inside corner with plenty of wall space for the books that are his windows into the past.

The room is big enough for its tall, lithe occupant, Professor John A. Munroe, to pace about in long strides if he likes or to pivot on restless ankles while his large, gray, mildly amused boyish eyes seem to plot an escape from the boredom of being interviewed about himself.

Dr. Munroe, who won't be 40 until the Ides of March, seemingly has no pet ideas to unload in a hurry. His audience must first be in the mood. It didn't take him long to whisk his interviewer down the stairs and over to the Library basement, pausing on the way for a passing greeting of a football hero and to admire the university book store, gleaming bright after the holidays. Then, over five-cent cups of coffee in the student-operated cafeteria, he permitted queries.

He was born in Wilmington and went to public schools in the Ninth Ward and to Wilmington High School. Wilmington remained his home for a decade or more while he commuted to UD, taught junior high history and senior English successively at Newark High School, completed his master's work at UD and his doctor's orals at the University of Pennsylvania. His thesis, "Delaware: 1775-1815," won him his Ph.D. from U. of Pa. in 1947, five years after he had joined the UD faculty as an instructor. That year he became an assistant professor and in 1949 an associate professor. Since 1952 he has been a full professor and department chairman.

A course in Delaware history and government is compulsory for UD students, by a law in effect since 1910 for the men and since 1945 for the co-eds. Dr. Munroe has alternated with Prof. H. Clay Reed in giving this course in recent years. Another captive audience, but smaller, are the Winterthur fellowship holders, who form the nucleus for a course Monroe gives on life during the early years of the republic. He considers his research field as running from 1775 through 1850, but this does not prevent him from giving courses in American history during the 20th century, or European history from way back.

His "Delaware 1775-1815" book will probably be published next fall by the Rutgers University Press, as a joint project with UD. His current major research is a life of Louis McLane, the Delaware Federalist in Jackson's Democratic Cabinet, who became president of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. He lectured on McLane at Stanford University during his sabbatical three years ago, when he traveled to Wisconsin and the West Coast as a Ford Foundation fellow. His M. A. thesis on "Relations Between the Delaware Legislature and the Continental Congress" has never been printed but he has contributed frequently to scholarly magazines and his New Castle Tercentenary pamphlet was widely circulated.

Like his contemporary, F. X. Gallagher, UD public relations director, Munroe has a wide acquaintance in Wilmington and has only to walk along Market St. or stop in the cigar store at 10th and Market to get into a many-sided conversation.

Munroe in 1945 married Miss Dorothy Levis of Baltimore, who is a master of science in chemistry. They have three children, Stephen, 7, Carol, 5, and John Michael, 10 months. Little John Michael bears the same names as his grandfather, Michael John Munroe, a retired ironmolder who was with the Lobdell Car Wheel Co. Mrs. Munroe has a twin sister, Katheryne, who is the wife of Richard McCormick of the Rutgers faculty.

Ill health barred John A. Munroe from sports but he wrote for the WHS and UD newspapers and literary magazines and was a class delegate to the Student Council at UD. During the war he served as alumni secretary in place of John N. McDowell. Dr. Munroe is a member of the council of the American Association for State and Local History, and of the Middle States Council on Social Studies.



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