

10-1910

Editorial

Joseph French Johnson

G. B. Hotchkiss

Follow this and additional works at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/jofa>



Part of the [Accounting Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Johnson, Joseph French and Hotchkiss, G. B. (1910) "Editorial," *Journal of Accountancy*. Vol. 10: Iss. 6, Article 5.

Available at: <https://egrove.olemiss.edu/jofa/vol10/iss6/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Archival Digital Accounting Collection at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Journal of Accountancy* by an authorized editor of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.

The Journal of Accountancy

Published monthly under the auspices of The American Association of Public Accountants by THE ACCOUNTANCY PUBLISHING COMPANY.
President, John R. Loomis; Vice President, E. W. Sells; Secretary and Treasurer, John R. Wildman

EDITOR

JOSEPH FRENCH JOHNSON

MANAGING EDITOR

G. B. HOTCHKISS

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

W. M. COLE, Harvard University.

STEPHEN W. GILMAN, University of Wisconsin.

JOHN H. GRAY, University of Minnesota.

HENRY R. HATFIELD, University of California.

FREDERICK C. HICKS, University of Cincinnati.

EARL DEAN HOWARD, Northwestern University.

ISAAC LOOS, University of Iowa.

EDWARD SHERWOOD MEADE, University of Pennsylvania.

CHARLES W. MIXTER, University of Vermont.

HARLOW S. PERSON, Tuck School, Dartmouth College.

M. H. ROBINSON, University of Illinois.

CHARLES E. SPRAGUE, New York University.

H. PARKER WILLIS, George Washington University

EDITORIAL

An Executive Officer for the American Association

The Constitution of THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS declares its objects to be: to unite the public accountants practicing in the United States in one organization; to bring the several state societies of accountants into communication with one another; to encourage the formation of more state societies and to aid them in securing C. P. A. legislation. In these directions the American Association has done much useful and formative work. There are now twenty-three state societies and an equal number of state C. P. A. Laws. *Thus far well!*

The constitution contains this further object:

“(f) To spread and to urge upon its constituent societies the importance of spreading a knowledge and recognition of the utility and necessity of the public accountant in the industrial and financial development of the country.”

What has been done in this direction? It must be admitted, *very little.*

The American Association is now about to pass out of the formative stage and enter upon a wider field of usefulness for

Editorial

the benefit of the profession it represents. It is about to enter upon the fulfilment of its most useful mission. It has always been one of the objects of the association to "advance the interests of the profession," but until now it has not been possible to attempt any movement on a large scale.

As told in the September *JOURNAL*, a special committee of its members has been at work to provide ways and means for the board of trustees of the association to retain the services of a competent executive officer, one who shall devote all his time to the interests of the association. A national organization of an important and useful group of professional men should have a permanent executive, who should be provided with suitable quarters and adequate office facilities.

Some of the proposed activities of the new executive were indicated in an article in the September number of the *JOURNAL* and will be fresh in the minds of our readers. One is by bringing the public accountants into contact with other groups of business and professional men, on the occasion of annual trade conventions and the like. By this means a sphere of usefulness will be opened up, which as yet has been untouched.

An important part of the duties of the executive secretary will be to prevail upon members of the association to prepare and to deliver lectures at the universities and to student classes, addresses to conventions of business men, and, in some cases, after-dinner speeches at banquets. The publication of these lectures and addresses in the daily press and in business periodicals, in a systematic, well-ordered manner, under the auspices of the association, will lead to a better recognition of the profession and its utilities.

For these important duties the association needs the services of a well-educated gentleman, a man of good address, tactful and resourceful; a man of original ideas, with ability to carry them out; a man who can bring about opportunities for the exploitation of the profession by its own members in a well-directed, dignified campaign of education.

The duties of the new officer are to be defined by the board of trustees or by the executive committee on its behalf. It will be no light task for the committee to guide and control the movements of a new and resourceful executive, without dampening his enthusiasm. The authority to be given to the new

executive must be carefully guarded by the board. The added impetus, derived from the employment of a high-salaried man, will make a great change in the doings. Things will travel at a faster pace, which will necessitate most careful steering.

The success of this important and far-reaching movement will depend not alone upon the efforts of the executive secretary and not alone upon the wisdom with which his efforts shall be directed by the executive committee of the board of trustees, but upon the continued enthusiastic support these efforts shall receive from the members of the American Association.

A number of adverse comments have been made by some members of the association regarding the methods chosen by the committee to secure the additional income. The opinion has been expressed that the necessary income to meet the increased expense should be raised by *increasing the dues* of the association or by making a special assessment on all its members. To increase the annual dues or to levy an assessment would require changes in the by-laws not only of the American Association but of all its constituent societies. This cannot be contemplated lightly.

The committee appears to have adopted the only means immediately available, and, moreover, has succeeded in securing all the additional income necessary to carry out, or, at least, to inaugurate, this new movement. A compulsory assessment would work a hardship on many who cannot afford to participate in a movement of this sort, while voluntary contribution places no burden on those who may be unable or unwilling to help.

At the forthcoming annual meeting of the American Association there will be an opportunity for the delegates of the several constituent societies to consider and discuss the propriety of raising the dues, or of amending the by-laws so as to provide for the appropriate assessment. In the meantime the success attained by the special committee in raising this guarantee fund, evidences the fact that the profession can support a national organization and can afford to adequately remunerate its Executive Officer.

Why Not Latin ?

The old cry that the classics are useless as preparation for any practical work has been heard so often in the past century or two

Editorial

that it is no surprise to hear it now when education for business is discussed. A recent article by Mr. William Arthur Chase in *THE JOURNAL OF ACCOUNTANCY*, in which an outline was given of the preparation desirable for the public accounting profession, evoked the following comment from *Beach's Magazine*:

It is very true that anyone expecting to become a successful public accountant should be a man of culture and possess something more than a fair general knowledge. A thorough acquaintance with literature, history, political science and economy, and philosophy is very desirable—but why Latin? What is there about the learning of a dead language which makes a man a better accountant? Everything worth while in the way of Latin literature was translated long ago and there is no necessity for a man to make his own translations. The value of a knowledge of German, French, Spanish and, perhaps, Japanese cannot be over-estimated—but why Latin?

In emphasizing the importance of a good general education Mr. Chase asserts that the history of mankind goes to prove that the man of culture is the man of honor, and honor is one of the indispensable attributes of the successful public accountant.

It is true that Latin has little value as a specific training for the profession of accountancy. But it may be urged with equal truth that many of the subjects taken in preparation for this or any other profession cannot be directly applied. In spite of this, no one would maintain that the preparation is adequate which involves only instruction in the subjects that are of certain and daily use. The university schools of commerce are not satisfied that their graduates should possess merely a technical knowledge of accounting and law; they insist upon such other subjects as finance and economics as will be valuable to them in solving future problems, the precise nature of which cannot be foreseen. Whatever the profession, the preparation for it should be broad enough to supply a basis upon which the student may work in solving such problems and meeting such difficulties as he has not been directly prepared for.

If too narrow specialization is undesirable in the strictly professional training it is so much the more inadvisable in the preparatory education that precedes it. The prime purpose of education should be to cultivate qualities of mind and of character that will serve in all times and places. The student's question should not forever be, "what particular good will this do me?"

The Journal of Accountancy

Granted that the particular good can be pointed out as it has often been—may it not be enough to rest its claims upon its general good? It brings him in contact with a literature that has been studied, not for years, but for centuries. Hazlitt has excellently stated this view of the matter in one of his essays, which it is worth while to quote in part here:

The study of the classics is less to be regarded as an exercise of the intellect than as “a discipline of humanity.” The peculiar advantage of this mode of education consists not so much in strengthening the understanding as in softening and refining the taste. It gives men liberal views; it accustoms the mind to take an interest in things foreign to itself; to love virtue for its own sake; to prefer fame to life, and glory to riches; and to fix our thoughts on the remote and permanent, instead of narrow and fleeting objects. It teaches us to believe that there is something really great and excellent in the world, surviving all the shocks of accident and fluctuations of opinion, and raises us above the low and servile fear, which bows only to present power and upstart authority. Rome and Athens filled a place in the history of mankind which can never be occupied again. They were two cities set on a hill, which could not be hid; all eyes have seen them, and their light shines like a mighty sea-mark into the abyss of time.

To this view expressed almost exactly one hundred years ago the past century has added little. In view of the present tendency toward specialization it is worth while to look to this side of the matter and see that the tendency does not proceed so far as to exclude education that is broad enough to cultivate the man as well as the mind.

Furthermore it cannot be admitted that the study of Latin has no practical or “particular” value for the accountant. Exactness, precision, conciseness should be qualities of an accountant’s style. The young man who has studied Latin will acquire these qualities quicker than one who has not. If he has mastered the fundamental principles of the Latin syntax and has translated a few hundred pages of Cæsar, Virgil and Cicero, he will have had invaluable lessons in the art of writing tersely and clearly. This is surely of practical importance to the accountant. He must be clear and exact or his client will not understand him, and he must be concise and to the point, for long-winded verbosity makes the businessman impatient. By all means, then, let the

Editorial

boy who expects to become an accountant learn something about the vigorous speech of the old Romans.

The young man preparing for the accounting profession has the option of two courses. Having completed his high school course, he may enter a university school of commerce and get a thorough training in the theory and practice of accounting in its various applications, in economics, in finance, in commercial law and in it at least one of the modern languages. In several of the larger cities he can get this university training by attendance at evening sessions, getting practical experience at the same time by employment during the day as bookkeeper or as assistant in an accountant's office. On the other hand, he may put himself in the hands of a coach and have crammed into his head just enough knowledge of law and accounting to enable him to pass the C. P. A. examinations. He will have no difficulty in finding coaches who will "guarantee" his preparation for the examinations. THE JOURNAL believes that the young man who chooses the second course makes a serious mistake. Accounting is not a trade or a mere routine vocation like bookkeeping. It is a profession and its successful practitioners in the future are going to be men of broad views and liberal education.

A University Memorial for an Accountant

The New York University School of Commerce, Accounts and Finance next month will honor the memory of its first Dean, the late Charles Waldo Haskins, by special exercises and by the unveiling of a memorial tablet which is to occupy a conspicuous position in the University Building at Washington Square. The tablet will show a bust of Mr. Haskins and a quotation from his writings. This event must be of interest to all accountants in the United States, for it is probably the first time that such honor has been paid by a university to a member of the accounting profession. Mr. Haskins had a wide acquaintance throughout the United States and all who knew him will agree that the accounting profession has never had a more genuine, active and efficient friend. The School to which he gave a great deal of his time during the last few years of his life was founded by New York University as a result of the wise and determined efforts

of a group of prominent and public-spirited accountants in New York City. Mr. Haskins became its Dean and organized the teaching staff, remaining at its head until his death in 1903. The School, which now has about 1,000 students, has developed along lines laid out by Mr. Haskins and has many graduates active in the profession. Other universities during the last ten years have founded similar schools and much of the credit for this educational progress, which is of far reaching importance to the accountant, must be given to the man whose distinguished services New York University will commemorate in November.

The Accountants' Round Table

The Accountants' Round Table, a social club organized in New York City the early part of this year, had an enjoyable outing and clam-bake at Point View Island on September 13. The "Table" chartered the tug "Dalzelline," which left the Battery at 12.45 with about twenty members aboard. A baseball slaughter, resulting in a score of 14 to 10, prepared them for a special clam-bake.

The next gathering of the "Table" will be on the night of November 28.

Bankers Favor Supervision of Reports

J. B. Russell and Company, New York bankers, in a recent weekly circular say: "We believe that no corporation that sells its stocks or bonds to the public should be permitted to publish any statement of its condition or earnings that has not first been examined by auditors chartered by the state for such purposes, certified to as correct in every particular by such auditors; also that it should be made a criminal offense for an auditor so chartered to certify to any false statement of condition or facts."

Michigan Association Elects Officers

The annual meeting of the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants was held on September 20, 1910, in the Majestic Building, Detroit.

The officers elected for the ensuing year are as follows:

N. A. HAWKINS, C. P. A., *President*
FRED WISXON, C. P. A., *Vice-President*
HARRY RUPLE, C. P. A., *Treasurer*
FRED T. GIES, C. P. A. *Secretary*

Editorial

At the last examination for C. P. A. certificates the following candidates passed and have received from the Governor their certificates:

Mr. George H. Parks, Grand Rapids, Mich.; Mr. W. D. Bonthron, Detroit, Mich.; Mr. Fred H. Suter, Detroit, Mich.; Mr. Frederic A. Tilton, Detroit, Mich.

Annual Meeting of the American Association

Complete Program of the Convention in New York City

Plans are now practically completed for the twenty-third annual meeting of the American Association of Public Accountants, to be held at the Hotel Astor, in New York City, October 17 to 20, 1910. The largest attendance in the history of the association is expected, and an interesting program has been announced by the joint committee of arrangements, composed of the following:

E. W. SELLS, Chairman; ALEXANDER ADERER, JAMES T. ANYON, HENRY R. M. COOK, HOWARD B. COOK, LEON O. FISHER, PERLEY MORSE, S. D. PATTERSON, J. E. STERRETT, E. L. SUFFERN, ARTHUR W. TEELE, WILLIAM F. WEISS.

The complete program of the meeting is as follows:

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17TH

10.30 A.M. Meeting of the Board of Trustees.

4-6 P.M. Reception by the Ladies of the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants at Hotel Astor.

8.00 P.M. Theatre Party. By invitation of the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants. Tickets to be obtained at Registration Bureau. Performance begins promptly at 8.00 P.M.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18TH

10.00 A.M. *First Business Session.* Address of Welcome, Hon. John Purroy Mitchell, President of Board of Aldermen of the City of New York. Paper by Dr. Elmer Ellsworth Brown, U. S. Commissioner of Education. Some relations of Public Accounting to Education. Discussion by prominent educators.

2.30 P.M. Presentation of Credentials. President's Address and presentation of the Report of the Board of Trustees. Reports of Officers, Committees and State Societies, including the report of the Special Committee on Terminology.

7.00 P.M. "At Home" and Informal Dinner at Healey's, by invitation of the New York State Society of Certified Public Accountants.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19TH

10.00 A.M. *Business Session.* Regular order of Business, including the election of Officers and Trustees.