

History



◇ GLIMPSES OF GLORIOUS HISTORY ◇

With the end of the East India Company's regime in India and the failure of the first armed uprising in 1857, for India's freedom, a new era dawned in our country. It was clear that the emancipation of our land and the transformation of the life of our people had to be brought about by peaceful and constitutional means. Indian renaissance had begun and it heralded the role which education needed to play to achieve national aspirations. Wood's Education Despatch (1854), the Education Commission of 1882 and the Hunter Commission (1891), were all indicative of the concerted efforts, of both the Government and the Indian people, in the enterprise of education. The Founders of the Fergusson College had first started the **New English School, Pune** in 1880 and later established the **Deccan Education Society (DES)** in 1884.

The college held these classes, for almost ten years, in the old Gadre Wada and other locations in Poona. A plot of about 37 acres (a portion of the present extensive campus) was acquired on a 99 years' lease in 1891 by the DES. The foundation stone of the Main building of the Fergusson College was laid in 1892 and the building was completed in 1895. The college started functioning on this campus in 1895. From then onwards, the college has grown from strength to strength and acquired a reputation as a nation-building institution. It has a place of pride in the hearts of the people, as a historical monument and a symbol of the country's freedom struggle. While the founders



**Vishnushastri
Chiplunkar**



**Lokmanya Bal
Gangadhar
Tilak**



**Gopal Ganesh
Agarkar**



**Mahadev Ballal
Namjoshi**



**Vaman
Shivram Apte**

have become legends, in the history of education and the freedom struggle in India, it is a matter of great significance, that the college received active and moral support from academicians and statesmen, such as Principal William Wordsworth, Principal F. G. Selby, Lord Rippon, Sir William Wedderburn and Sir James Fergusson. Fergusson College was intended to be, "the seminary of the Indian educational missionaries".



Justice Mahadeo Govind Ranade, the wisest protagonist of liberalism and secular political ethos, emerging in Indian Society, described the opening of Fergusson College as having, "unquestionably a great political importance as well". The truth of this statement is evidenced by the fact that the Fergusson College has produced great political leaders, such as the former-Prime Ministers **P. V. Narasimhrao** and **V. P. Singh**, former-Chief Minister **Babubhai Patel**, former-Minister of Information and Broadcasting **Barrister V. N. Gadgil**; **Acharya Kripalani**, **Veer Savarkar** and **S. M. Joshi**. **Gopal Krishna Gokhale**,



who was described by Mahatma Gandhi, as his political guru and mentor, gave a distinctive touch to the Fergusson College. In his address delivered at the time of laying of the corner stone of the New English School and the Fergusson college building, on the 5th March 1885, Sir James Fergusson declared that the opening of the College was more a national than a local undertaking. He said, "... that this institution has developed is due to the self-denying patriotism, which actuated the teachers of the college. True patriots are they and well worthy of all the praise that can be given to them."



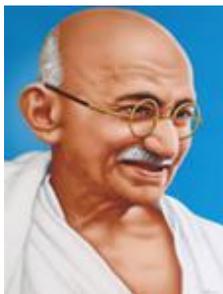
All through its 122 years of a shrine-like existence, the Fergusson College has given to the country, from among its alumni, great patriots, thinkers, philosophers, poets, writers, teachers, social workers, scientists, industrialists, entrepreneurs, researchers, administrators and defense officers. There is no walk of life that has not basked in the sun of the Fergussonian spirit.

In keeping with its eminent standing in the educational field, some of its teachers and students have brought laurels to the college, by being appointed as Vice Chancellors of Pune and other Universities. Notable amongst these are:

be Dr. **R.G. Takwale**



The college was thus, a fruit of the Renaissance that swept over the land from the beginning of the cultural and intellectual contact with the West. To quote from the **Platinum Jubilee Address of the then President of India Dr. Rajendra Prasad (1960)**: *"The Fergusson College was established at a time when the attitude of the Indian masses towards higher education of the western type was yet in a formative stage and when facilities for such education for the generality of Indian students were inadequate. Apart from the colleges sponsored and run by Government and Christian Missions, there were few institutions, imparting higher education, managed by private or non-official bodies. The importance of the Deccan Education Society lay in the fact that a devoted band of workers came forward at such a crucial time with a determination to set up educational institutions to make best of the **western education** under **Indian conditions** available to the people of this country. It was an enterprise, which benefited the Nation without offending or alienating the then rulers of India. **Fergusson College is the foremost fruit of that effort.**"* The Fergusson College completed 50 years in January 1935 and Sir C. V. Raman, the only Indian recipient of the prestigious Nobel Award in science, was the President of the **Golden Jubilee** function. He spoke in glowing terms of the place of the Fergusson college, in the history of our land, as quoted in his speech- " *Standing here today, I feel that history has been written in Poona- history of **self-help**, history of **self-reliance**, history of **great and constructive national effort** - that history has been written in Poona, has been written on this very spot* ".



Mahatma Gandhi, in his message to Principal Dr. Mahajani on this occasion, wrote, *"Who will fail to be enthused over the noble record of the service rendered by the D. E. Society and the Fergusson College to the cause of education?"* The **Diamond Jubilee** of the Fergusson

college was celebrated in **1945** and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the veteran liberal leader of India, graced the occasion as the President of the function.



Our first Prime Minister, **Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru**, expressed his feelings of the college in his message on this occasion: " *With the ideal of selfless service, they have sent out famous and many other non-famous, but nonetheless good workers for India's freedom and progress. On this occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the college, I join with the innumerable other persons to wish you ever larger opportunity of training the youth of India and of preparing true citizens of free India*".

The Platinum Jubilee ('Amrut Mahotsav') was celebrated in 1960 in glittering fashion with Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the then President of India, doing the honors as the President of the function. This was the second visit of Dr. Rajendra Prasad to Fergusson College, the first one being in 1954. In his speech, he said that in his first meeting with Mahatma Gandhi in 1917, the Fergusson College was referred to by Gandhiji as a role model for other colleges. The **90th Anniversary** of the college was celebrated in 1976 under the presidentship of **Shri Y. B. Chavan**, the then Minister of External Affairs, and Government of India. In his presidential address, he showered words of praise for the great service rendered by Fergusson College to the country. In his speech, he said, "*I am proud to be Rajaramian, but regret that I am not a Fergussonian*".



The **Centenary** of the college was celebrated on 1st June 1985. **Shri Rajiv Gandhi**,



The then **Prime Minister of India**, said in his speech on the occasion, "*Fergusson College symbolizes India coming into the 20th century, symbolizes a new education system being brought in, into our country. In a way, it has built into a genesis of our freedom struggle*". He

referred to Fergusson College as a **pocket of excellence** producing individuals who can rise to the levels unheard of and unbelievable. On this occasion, Shri P. V. Narasimhrao, former Prime Minister of India paid great tributes to the college in the following words: *“This college, born like a **twin** of the **Indian National Congress**, has always kept abreast of the country’s history. It has produced political leaders of all hues of the political spectrum including ultras and infras, if I may say so, administrators, eminent scholars, researchers, writers, sportsmen and many other categories of celebrities, which any country can be proud of ”.*