



EX ANTE

OUR MISTAKE

Professor Brian Frye of the University of Kentucky wrote to us about an interesting problem he spotted in our Summer 2020 issue:

I believe there is a typo in Eric Wessan’s excellent essay on The United States Court for China, in Vol. 23, No. 4. On page 302, it states that Thayer attended the “Columbia Law School” night program while working at Treasury. It would have been quite a commute! I suspect he actually attended Columbian Law School in DC, which eventually became GWU Law.

We asked the author about this. He replied good-humoredly that, “I definitely agree it seems like quite the commute,” and then did some serious follow-up. Here is what he found:

After following a bit of a Congressional Record rabbit hole, I found the full *Hearings Before the Committee on Expenditures in the Department of Justice*, Cong. Rec. H.63 (1913). On page 4, Thayer is described as having attended Columbia Law School between 1871 and 1872. On page 126, however, the description for the eighth charge of violation of high crimes and misdemeanors states that “[h]is only study qualifying his admission to practice law was a two-year law course at a night school in Washington City, from 1872 to 1873, then known as the Columbian Law School, while during said two years he was a clerk in the Treasury Department[.]” Given the logistics of attending night school at Columbia Law School and the paucity of any other evidence to the contrary, I believe it is very likely that Thayer attended Columbian Law School.

Well done all around.