

P R E F A C E

"Those who can not remember the past", said Santayana, "are condemned to repeat it."

Every organization has multiple histories -- oral and written, formal and informal, official and personal, factual and mythic. Each provides a particular point of view and a special way of understanding the organization, its origins and development, its policies and activities, and of understanding also the various roles played by the persons who have influenced it and who have been influenced by it.

The International Commission on Physics Education is no exception and it has been fortunate in its written histories. One of these, *"The International Commission on Physics Education"* by A.P. French, was published in *Contemporary Physics* **21**, No.4, 1980. The other, previously unpublished, was prepared by William C. Kelly for a proposed Festschrift which was to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the commission in 1985. Unfortunately, the Festschrift proposal foundered on financial rocks, but Kelly's *"Witness at Creation: I.C.P.E.'s Founding and Early Years"* remains as a unique personal account of the people and events involved in the founding of the commission and in its early years.

In order that those associated with the commission might be assisted in "remembering the past", it seemed useful to bring together in one place the papers by French and Kelly and, as a way of bringing things up-to-date, the triennial reports of the Commission to the I.U.P.A.P. General Assembly for the years not covered by the first two authors.

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