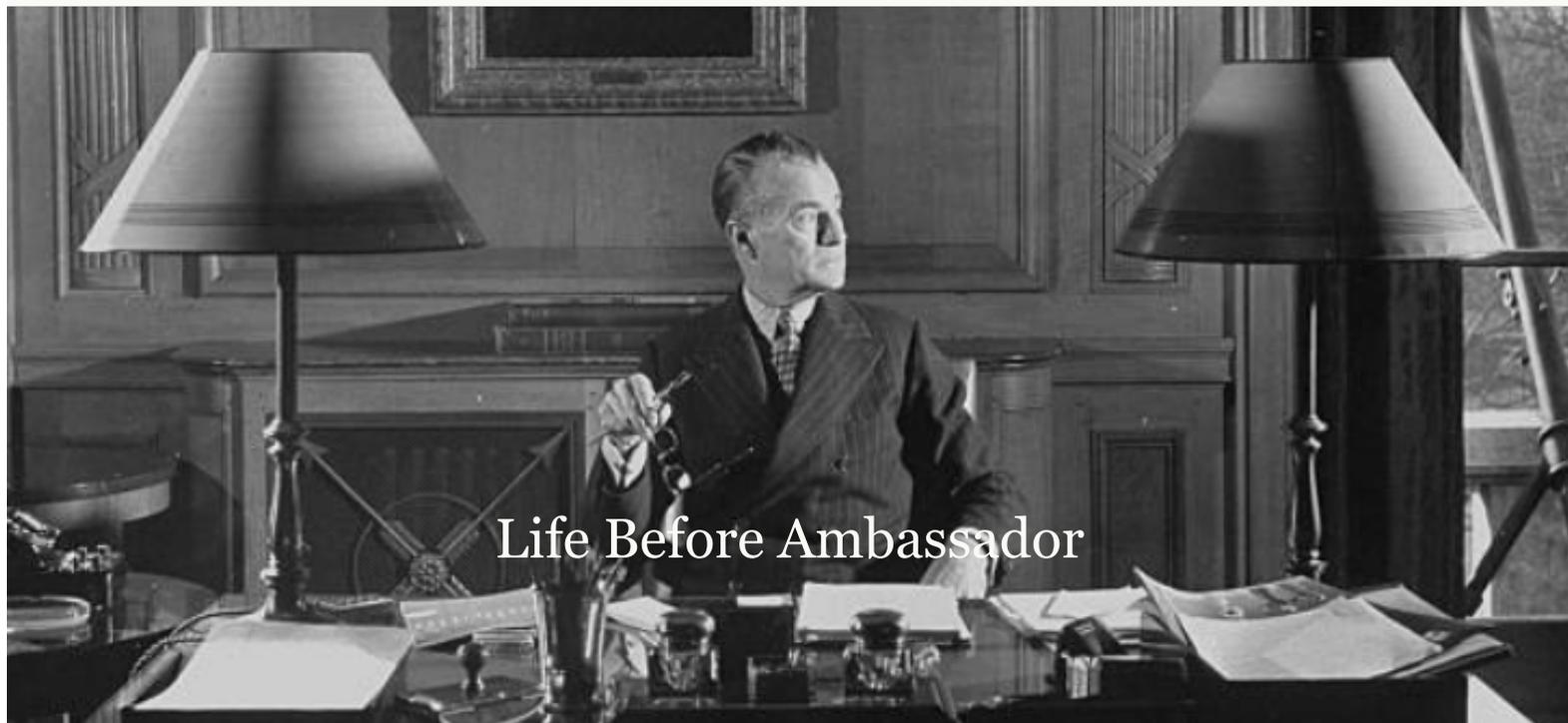


Ambassador Jefferson Caffery (1886-1974): Latin American Posts

Introduction Life Before Ambassador El Salvador (1926-28) Colombia (1928-1933)

Cuba (1934-37) Brazil (1937-44)



Life Before Ambassador

Jefferson Caffery was born on December 1, 1886, to Charles Duval Caffery and Mary Catherine Parkerson in Lafayette, Louisiana (University of Louisiana at Lafayette). Charles Duval Caffery, Jefferson's father, was a very respected individual in the Lafayette community and made a name for himself early on in his career as an attorney, mayor of Lafayette for two consecutive terms, and president of the Lafayette parish board of education ("Charles Duval Caffery"). Compared to the successes of his father, Jefferson Caffery had large shoes to fill, but he fell nothing short of expectations maintaining the title of longest serving ambassador in the history of the United States diplomatic service to this day (University

of Louisiana at Lafayette). Caffery served in the diplomatic service for a total of forty-four years with twenty-nine of those years spent in ambassadorships to six different countries (University of Louisiana at Lafayette). Caffery was a native of Lafayette and belonged to one of the most prestigious families in south Louisiana, which was a great advantage when he began to apply for entry into the consular service in 1910; he was just twenty-four years old at the time (Edwin B. Craighead to Hon. Philander C. Knox; Murphy J. Foster to Hon. Huntington Wilson).

Jefferson Caffery grew up on the “mansion block” of Lafayette, Louisiana, with his family in a home surrounded by farmland (Dur 1). Caffery spent most of his time helping his father around the house, completing his schoolwork, and tending to the family’s livestock (Dur 1). Caffery also enjoyed exploring his father’s library in addition to riding horseback throughout his family’s property, which was something he continued to do as he grew older (Figures 1-2).

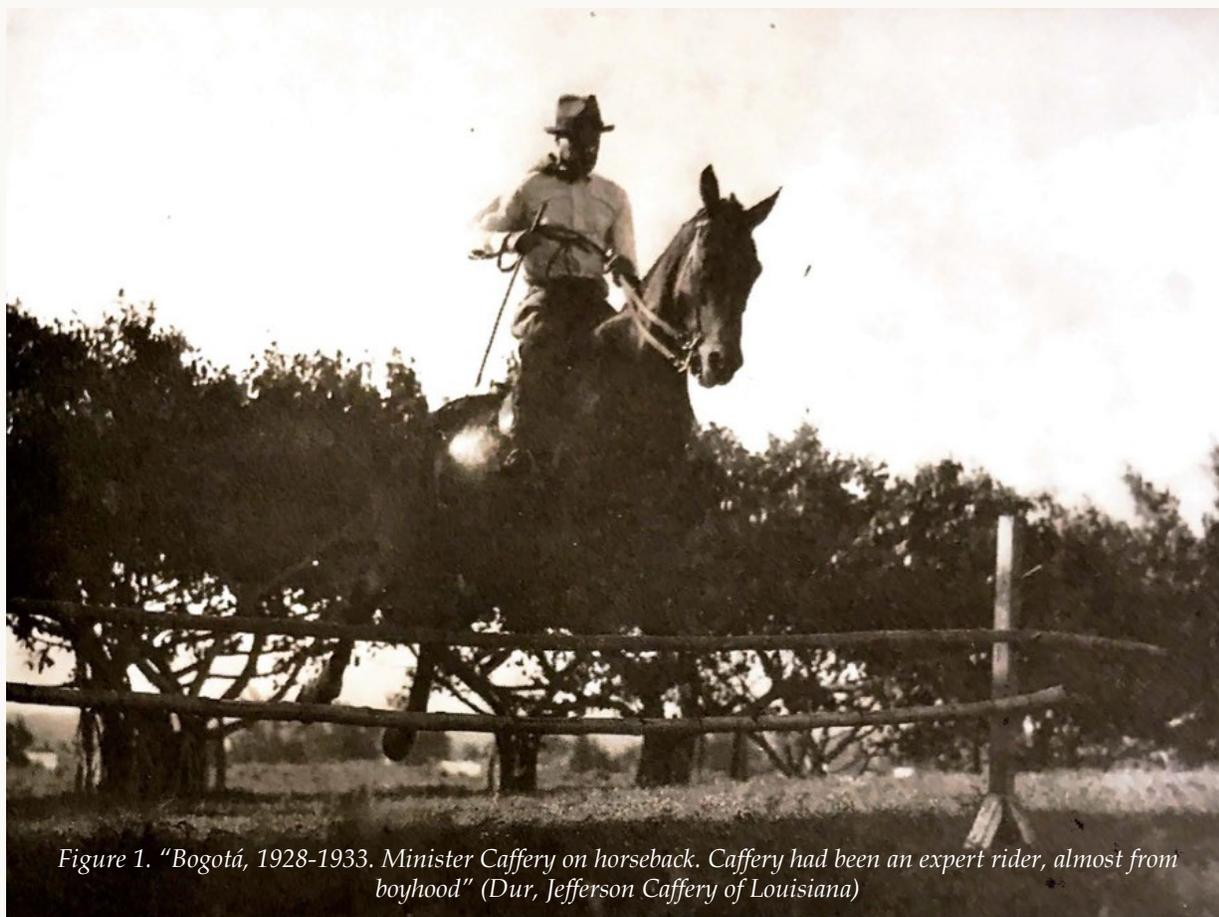


Figure 1. “Bogotá, 1928-1933. Minister Caffery on horseback. Caffery had been an expert rider, almost from boyhood” (Dur, Jefferson Caffery of Louisiana)



In 1901, at only fourteen years old, Jefferson Caffery enrolled in Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute, known today as the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, during its first year of operation (Dur 1-2). At this time, Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute (SLII) was more of a private secondary school than a university, and was a school his father, Charles Duval Caffery, helped to establish (Dur 1-2). Though, after just a year of attendance at SLII, Caffery decided to transfer to Tulane University in New Orleans, Louisiana, where he would graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in 1906 (Dur 2).

During his undergraduate studies at Tulane University, Caffery was deeply involved in the university's student life and was a respected individual among his peers and professors. Caffery held the title of business manager to Tulane's student newspaper *The Olive and the Blue*, ran track, and even helped establish a preppy "secret" organization called the "Fox Heads" (Dur 2). When it came time to start the process of applying to the

diplomatic service in 1910, Caffery was so respected that even Tulane University's President Edwin B. Craighead sent a letter of recommendation to Secretary of State Philander C. Knox endorsing Caffery's qualifications for the job (Figure 3).

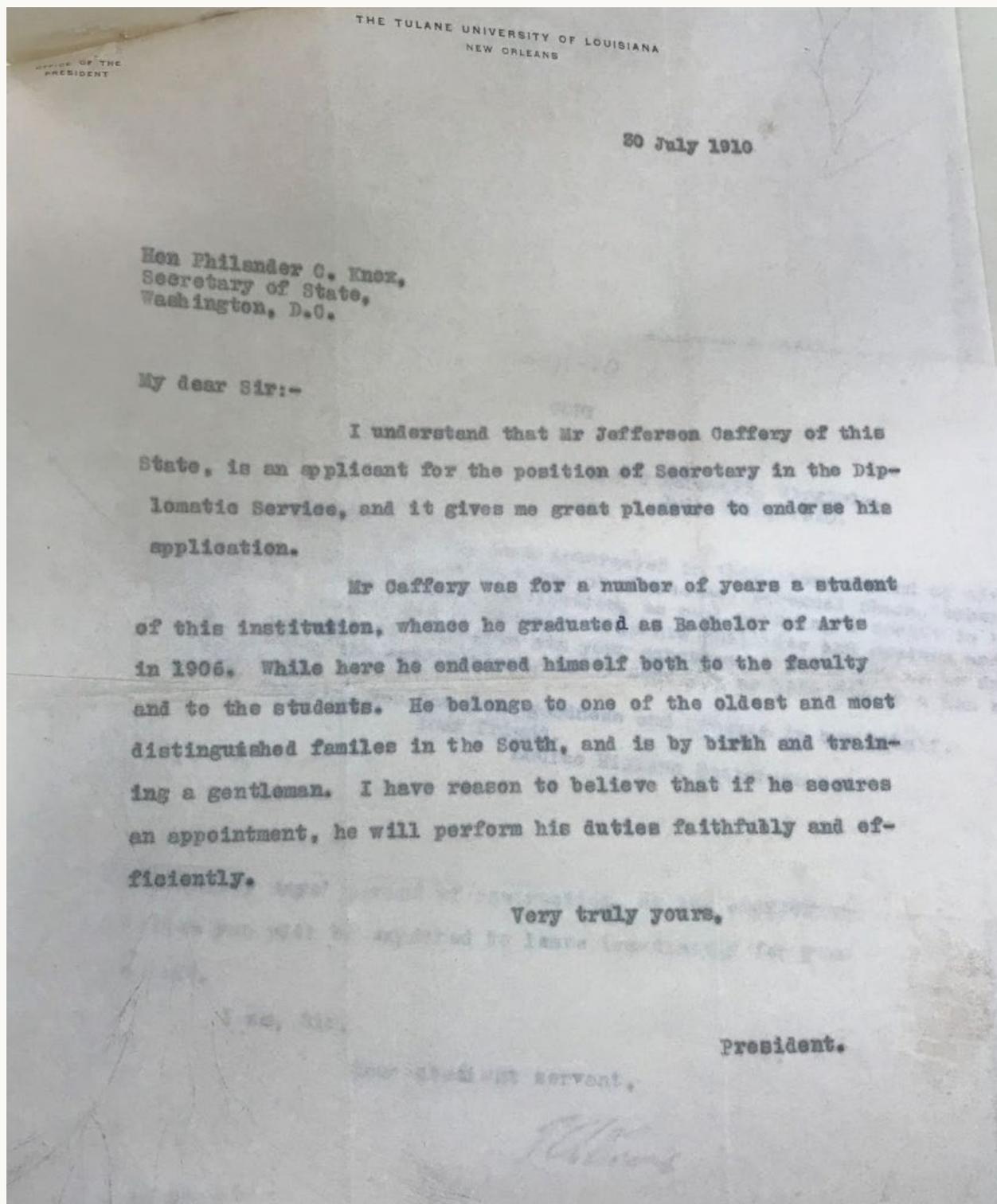


Figure 3. "My dear Sir: I understand that Mr. Jefferson Caffery of this State, is an applicant for the position of Secretary in the Diplomatic Service, and it gives me great pleasure to

endorse his application. Mr. Caffery was for a number of years a student of this institution, whence he graduated as Bachelor of Arts in 1906. While here he endeared himself both to the faculty and to the students. He belongs to one of the oldest and most distinguished families in the South, and is by birth and training a gentleman. I have reason to believe that if he secures an appointment, he will perform his duties faithfully and efficiently” (Edwin B. Craighead to Hon. Philander C. Knox)

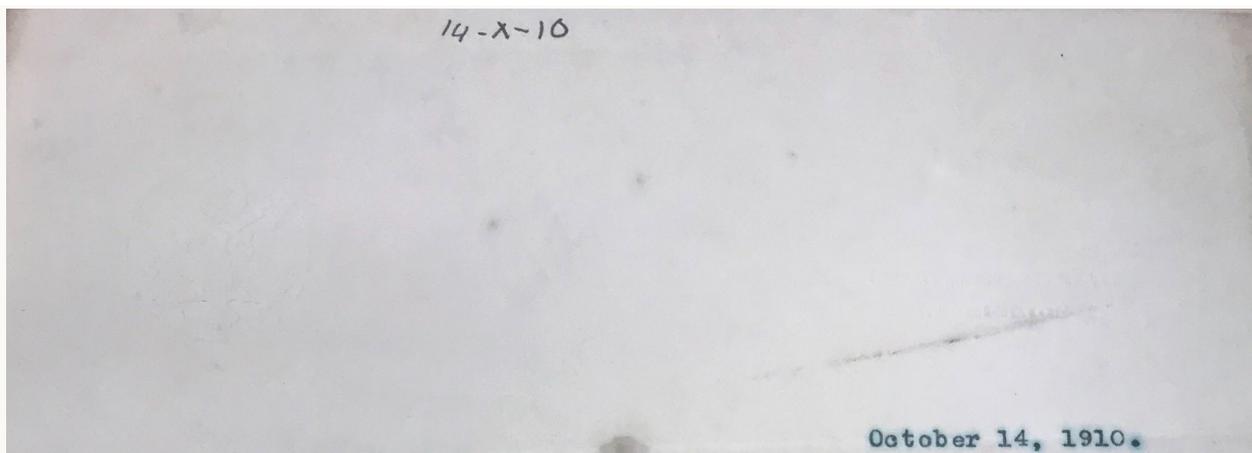
Following his graduation from Tulane University in 1906, Caffery moved back home with his parents in Lafayette, Louisiana (Dur 3). Assuming that Caffery’s father probably expected Caffery to become an attorney like himself, Caffery and his father spent the next two years studying for the bar exam in order for Jefferson to begin his career as a licensed attorney (Dur 3). At his father’s insistence, Caffery also taught at Southwestern Louisiana Industrial Institute for one year while he was in Lafayette (Dur 3). According to historian Philip Dur, it was during these two years that Caffery suddenly realized that he did not want to teach or practice law for the rest of his life and so he began to explore other career options and opportunities (3). It wasn’t until Caffery returned from a thought-provoking and enthralling trip from Europe in 1908 that he made the final decision to apply for a career position with the United States Consular Service (Dur 3). According to the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, the diplomatic services and consular services divisions of the State Department were combined in 1924 to form one entity, and therefore they can and will be used interchangeably throughout this project.

In order to secure a position into the United States Consular Services, prospective members must request the opportunity to take the consular service entrance exam in order to determine their eligibility for admission (Murphy J. Foster to Hon. Huntington Wilson). Instead of studying for the bar exam, which Caffery ended up passing in 1909, he began to focus his time on studying for the consular service entrance exam (Dur 2). When it came time for him to request to take the exam, a multitude of respected politicians and individuals from Louisiana sent letters of recommendations to the State

Department attesting to Caffery's qualifications. President Edwin B. Craighead of Tulane University (Figure 3), Louisiana Senator Murphy J. Foster, Louisiana Representative Joseph E. Ransdell, and Louisiana Representative Robert F. Broussard were of the most notable individuals to vouch on behalf of Caffery in late July of 1910.

Just a couple of months later in October, Acting Secretary of State Albert A. Adey sent follow-up letters to Caffery's recommenders informing them that Caffery had been accepted to take the consular service exam in January of 1911 (Figures 4-6). On February 1, 1911, Caffery received a letter from the State Department informing him that he had passed the entrance exam and President Taft would in fact be nominating Caffery for a position into the service (Figure 7). Upon the Senate's confirmation, as the letter states, Caffery would then report to the State Department for thirty days of training after which he would leave immediately for his first assignment. The Senate confirmed Caffery in 1911 and quickly assigned him to his first official position as a member of the United States Consular Service in Caracas, Venezuela, where he would serve as Second Secretary of Legation (University of Louisiana at Lafayette).

Caffery served as a member of the consular service for fifteen years before his first ambassadorship appointment as Ambassador to El Salvador in 1926. During these first fifteen years in the service, Caffery's assignments took him all over the world to destinations such as Sweden, Spain, Greece, Persia, and Tokyo (University of Louisiana at Lafayette). It was during this time where Caffery gained the necessary skills and experience he would later utilize during his next twenty-nine years of unprecedented service as a United States ambassador.



14-X-10

October 14, 1910.

My dear Mr. Broussard:

Referring to your endorsement of the application for appointment to the diplomatic service of Mr. Jefferson Caffery, of Louisiana, I take pleasure in informing you that he has been designated to appear for examination January 16, 1911, to test his eligibility for such an appointment.

Very sincerely yours,

Alvey A. Adee

Acting Secretary of State.

The Honorable Robert F. Broussard,

House of Representatives.

Ap W *mms*

New Iberia, La.,

Oct 18th 1910.

Dear Caffery,

While you have already been advised about your designation, possibly you may want this letter anyway. Are you going to prepare in Mass. for this exam? R. F. Broussard

read captions, context, articles, and newspapers*

Citations are located on page 2 of every section

14-X-10

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The Honorable Murphy J. Foster,

United States Senate.

Ap W *mm*

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1-11-11

February 1, 1911.

Mr. Jefferson Caffery,
Lafayette, Louisiana.

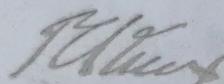
Sir:

I write to inform you that in the diplomatic service entrance examination of January 16th-18th, you attained an average percentage of 82.335 and that your name has therefore been placed on the list of those eligible for appointment to a secretaryship in the diplomatic service.

It is the expectation of the Department that you will be nominated to the Senate in a few days for appointment to the service. Upon the Senate's confirmation of the President's nomination you will be directed to report at the Department for a thirty days' period of instruction, at the expiration of which you will be expected to leave immediately for your new post.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient servant,



✓ Ap W *hms*

SEARCH



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