

(Interviewed July 26, 1968)

GEORGE R. FAINT, SR.

Herbert R. Roubay

The junior college was started largely through the efforts of Dr. Frank G. Davis, chairman of the department of education at Bucknell University. He had a vision that this would be helpful to Bucknell and to the community at Wilkes-Barre and really planned this. He had approval from the state education department, and in May of 1933, Dr. Davis told me that I was to be the first registrar of Bucknell University Junior College in Wilkes-Barre, provided we could get enough students. In June, I began my work in Wilkes-Barre, getting publicity in the newspaper; Dr. Davis was there part of the time to help, and then we used Herbert Lloyd, a teacher in the Wilkes-Barre schools and a good friend of Bucknell (he had graduated there), and we were able to get more than the minimum suggested of seventy-five; in fact, we had about 152 or 153 as I remember the figures. The place we used the first year was Wilkes-Barre Business College, the third floor, next to Lazarus, which is now part of King's College.

(For information about the early days, it may be that Miss Florence Pyle, now registrar at Bucknell, can find duplicate copies in our files at Bucknell. She may have, at the very least, extra Bucknell catalogues,

which included the basic information from the junior college for a number of years.)

I should have indicated that Frank G. Davis was well aware of the fact that a very small percentage of students in Wyoming Valley were entering Colleges due to the Depression. And, I think he had the vision of what would happen if a college education were to be made available to the students.

Dr. John H. Eisenhower was a Bucknell graduate and principal of the Reading (Pa.) High School and made a good first director of the junior college. Eisenhower was a capable man, but I do not think he was as thoroughly interested as Dr. Davis in the work. This is shown because he turned back to the high school in December of 1935; Dr. Farley became the new head in 1936, after the flood.

At the junior college I had a heavy work load - including, as time went on, a bookstore, cafeteria, janitorial help, as well as being registrar. One of the interesting things to me in the registration process was that fact that almost all of the bills were paid by cash with very few checks offered. This was due to the depression period and people were frightened to leave money in banks. The curriculum was based on the one at Lewisburg,

particularly since President Homer Price Rainey had a new curriculum there at the university. These included a number of survey courses such as history of western man, world literature and the like, so that we were able to follow the Bucknell curriculum; however, we could not offer the variety of courses, and a number of courses were omitted. However, we did have the basic elements for not only liberal arts but commerce and finance and engineering.

noted in reference to much success, 1877

The students were above average in the first class. This can be seen from the number who went on to four-year colleges and succeeded admirably. The first class was really a superb one educationally. And, through the efforts of Dean Romeyn Rivenburg of Bucknell generous scholarships were awarded a number of them, including people like Ambrose Saricks and so on. There may have been a decrease in the quality later but we were getting larger numbers, and as was true in most colleges we needed numbers to meet the budget. The faculty in those days had hard work, because many of them carried eighteen to twenty-one semester hours' workload, just as I had a heavy administrative workload in addition to teaching occasionally English, religion and business correspondence.

I was a graduate of Bucknell in the Class of 1925. In 1929, I graduated from Crozer Theological Seminary at Chester but returned to the campus in August of 1929. In Wilkes-Barre I was often a supply minister and an interim pastor in churches such as the one at Wyoming, the English Baptist at Nanticoke, the Lee Park Baptist Church (called the Tabernacle Baptist Church) and toward the end of my services at the junior college, I was interim pastor at the Presbyterian Church in Lee Park. In February of 1942, I was ordained into the pastorate through the Wyoming Association. In addition, I served three years as head of the Luzerne County Sabbath School Association and was instrumental in the start of the Wyoming Valley Council of Churches, now headed by a Bucknell man, Howard Hartzell.

The faculty members who were transferred from Bucknell University on the whole were of high caliber; for example, John S. Gold is still teaching at Bucknell, has forty-eight years of service and is honored in the yearbook, The Lajonda, for 1968. I felt that the majority of the faculty who were transferred were of high academic quality: This means that the need in Wyoming Valley made possible the lightening of the Lewisburg budget, for these people would have had to be out of work.

Dr. Farley's efforts in Washington and the fact that a Wilkes-Barre man was in Washington made it possible for us to get the air corps students at the junior

college. I well remember that I had only a week to map out a schedule to take care of 250 air corps men. Dr. Farley was very successful in getting this program at Wilkes-Barre. The number of regular students was greatly decreased, but I don't think that it was down to fifty. I do not remember the exact class load, but the schedule called for some groups to be fifty and others twenty-five, and in order to accommodate them, we rented space in the Presbyterian Church, Sunday school classrooms. Then we had to coordinate their flying time at the Wyoming Valley Airport and still maintain our regular classes.

THIS WAS AN EXTENSION OF THE CIVIL PILOT TRAINING, WASN'T IT?

Yes, we had civilian air pilot training which also helped finance.....

WHAT OF THE LIBRARY?

Kathryn Hughes married Professor Irving Churchill and her successor, I believe, was Virginia Klinedienst.

When the junior college was founded, Wyoming Valley suffered a real unemployment and hardship. For example, most of the people in some of the smaller communities were on welfare. People put their reliance on themselves. Occasionally, miners, working one or two days a week in the mines, would do other work such as carpentry, painting, and plumbing to eke out their funds. The community was

largely conservative, with the most interesting pattern: Since there were twenty-six minority groups well-represented. I found it a real challenge to talk to people in the churches, and when I was ordained the conservatives in the Baptist Church said that on the one hand they wanted to condemn me for liberal tendencies but they felt I was doing good work part-time in the churches.

Most of the time while I was at the junior college I lived on Mallery Place in the city of Wilkes-Barre. We bought a double house in Forty Fort on Dana Street which we were not able to hold, but then we bought another property on Murray Street. I believe in the time, as I remember it, the railroad at the end of our lot had to be maintained at the grade level while our land sank. I think that instead of being level with our yard the railroad tracks were then about six feet above. Also, occasionally, it was hard to open either the front door or the back door and the gas main broke at least twice. The coal company did each year patch up the stones in the cellar wall for us.

Dr. Arnaud C. Marts was a most capable man in his work and proved to be a good college administrator as well. He was most kind to me on several occasions.

From 1929 to 1933, I was under Dean Rivenburg for special projects, such as the Pennsylvania Study, and in addition, I was program director of the college radio station, WJBU, which was sold to WKLK in Sunbury in 1933, just before I left for Wilkes-Barre.

_END _OF _INTERVIEW _