

We were talking along the lines of how students had changed during the time you were at Centre, specifically during the time you were dean. I want to talk about the rules students lived under, the rules of the College as they applied then and as they changed during the time you were there. If you could contrast the rules a male student would live under as opposed to those a student at the women's college would have been living under.

I can't speak too clearly or accurately on that. I know that the girls had limitations as to the hours in which they were supposed to be in. The men presumably didn't have any limitations as to the hours at which they were supposed to be in. But I can't remember what they were. I think the women, when I first came, probably varied. The upper classmen had more freedom than the lower classes. I think this is true, but I don't have that kind of thing well in mind. I had very little responsibility ever along that line and simply never charged my mind with it.

Was it during the time you were dean--at what point did the first black student enroll?

He came while I was dean, and the first one has to be after President Spragens came. He was not a native American. He was from either Nigeria or Ghana--Ghana, I think--and I can't think what his name was other than "Tim." We called him Tim. But he was the first, and then I think maybe the next year we had the first native black students. So it had to be probably about '59 I would think, or may even '60.

Did it create any controversy on campus at all?

Not on campus that I know of. There were some alumni who were still sore about it. I remember one alumnus who had graduated from Centre the same year I'd graduated from my college and who was in my age bracket, obviously. And he said, "Oh, we'll lose all our alumni support", and all this kind of red tail, which of course didn't happen.

Was there any community, not necessarily alumni but community, response to Centre for this?

Not that I know of. But in many ways I have been very innocent about things. I haven't known things that I perhaps should be expected to know about in the community. I think that on the whole there were students by the time the black students arrived-- I would not say this to our students in '48 when I came because I had some pretty, shall we say, old fashioned boys when I first came here on that kind of an issue. But I think by the time we actually got them our white students were enlightened. The public schools were doing it, why not Centre? I think one of the nice stories about one of the early black students-- The first fraternity to admit any black students was Phi Kappa Tau. They had a pledge, I guess he had been an initiated member, and they also had a couple of twins who were maybe not quite identical but very close to identical twins, and these boys were runners of a sort. So the black student came in and he says, "Hi, Mike." He said, "I'm not Mike, I'm Ray." He said, "Well, I never could tell you white people apart."

Could you describe President Spragens and your relationship with him?

Well, I talked for ten minutes on that subject last winter. President Spragens when he came here was young. He was 40, he was smart, he was handsome, and he was interested in building a college of high quality. I think that this is what you have to say primarily about him, and I think he has a tremendous achievement in the time he was here. The buildings--the building of the campus is practically a monument to him. The endowments have gone from something like \$3 million to \$18 million under his leadership. When he came, and I said this in my talk last January: when President Spragens was inaugurated, we didn't have any place on campus where you could put all the guests at the inauguration to eat at the same time. I don't think there was any place in town (decent place) where you could have taken them. So they had two dinners, one in the women's dining room over on the other campus and one in the men's dining room here, which is where the infirmary is now located. The inauguration was held in that barn known as the Alumni Gymnasium; it was quite new, but it was still barn-like. So the physical structure is--happened.

Well, then I think that he had a very strong commitment to excellence so far as choice and retention of faculty members, a subject on which I tended to be soft and he not so soft. I think he was interested in providing conditions under which the men and women who taught here might do their work in the most effective manner. Certainly Doherty Hall is a memorial to him. I remember his drawing me verbally a picture of that building as we were driving back from some meeting in Louisville. And it worked out. I didn't believe that it would, but it did.

And then he supported us firmly in the continued effort to raise the level of competence and maintain the level of competence among the students admitted to the College. I think I would emphasize, as would President Groves, though their manner is very different, they are very different people, their style is very different, but again a real genuine interest in students and a liking for young people. I never ceased to wonder at the number of students whom he knew at any given time. That was perhaps less true in the last few years, when he was giving more of his time toward money raising and promotion than he was earlier. It certainly is an important thing about him.

Of course, one of the important things that happened in his time and could not have happened without some of these advances which he was in the last analysis responsible for bringing about was the bringing here of the Phi Beta Kappa chapter which we secured in--I guess it was installed in 1971.

In the few years after you left the post of dean, some rather radical changes came over American campuses that changed the face of some perhaps forever. How would you describe the climate of Centre during the late '60s and early '70s?

Well, I think that of course Centre was affected by the same waves of feeling and a climate of feeling on the part of the College age genre people as were other places. I think it was modified, one by our relative smallness and the closeness between many students and many faculty people, many students and the president. I think it was modified some by the fact that our students, perhaps for economic reasons, tend to be conservative. So that I presume the sense of outrage was not as great here as it was in some other places.

But I remember the reaction of Kent State here. Well, there was a-- Maybe we ought to take a, what did we call it in those time, vacation? But they didn't call it a vacation. Anyway, we ought to strike; we ought to have a student strike

in reference to what happened at Kent State. So there was a big mass meeting in what is now the Sutcliffe Ballroom, which at the time was our principal meeting place. The president was there, and quite a few faculty members were there. Nobody was required to be there, but quite a few people were there. And I remember saying, "Well, who are you going to strike against? There's no point in striking against the president of the College because he agrees with you completely." And he did, and they knew it if they were honest. He was just as outraged as any of them. "Are you going to strike against the President of the United States? He couldn't care less." They didn't have a strike, not because of my remarks, but they didn't have a strike. They worked out a plan whereby we had a day of seminars on some of the issues, you know, in Viet Nam and so forth and so on.

This was called "Day of Concern?"

I forget what it was called, but something of the sort. After that we went back to business. And I think some student was commissioned to carry a petition to Washington. Washington was the appropriate place, no doubt, and they are on file there. But, you know, things simmered down pretty quickly.

I remember a lovely girl who was a major in history. She was deeply outraged by what Dave Morrill and I had said in this meeting. We should have been urging on the protest and so forth and so on, but we didn't.

What about the other perhaps more cosmetic changes, if you will. What do you remember when those changes first occurred, length of hair, mode of dress?

Oh, yes, that begins about the time I went back to full-time teaching, I think. The first beards that I remember in class were in the old high school building on this site which we called College Hall, in which I taught in '65-'66; and I guess I would have taught in it in '64-'65 if I had taught that year. But I think it was there that I first encountered the beards and the longer hair.

Were students running afoul of any standard codes? Was it a process of changing certain codes that are a fact?

Oh, I don't know. Of course a lot of things changed, and I can't tell you when some of these things happened. When Cowan was built, the president was committed, and firmly committed, to seek its service for dinner and coats and ties for men for dinner. And, of course, he had to give that up. He was strong, though he never made much of a fuss about it, he would much have preferred that faculty members would always wear coats and ties in the classroom. And of course he had to get used to the fact that they didn't any more. So I suppose those things hit us about the same time or maybe a year later than some of the bigger places.

I was wondering if at this time you could give us some additional details on your wife's career and her time here at Centre.

My wife, as I told you, had a doctorate from Cornell and had taught at Miami. I think from about 1935 to 1945 maybe. I met her in '38, and she taught until the summer before we were married. On coming here--we came here with a young son who was two years old. She did not do much of anything outside the home, you know, church and her social activities which took place and so on, for several years.

In 1953-54 the enrollment, which had dropped very sharply in the Korean War and got down (I was looking at the figures) to 360, and I think the faculty believed that that figure was padded. I don't know; but 360 in the post Korean War period. Suddenly the freshman enrollment-- We didn't have a good measure of what we were going to have, but late in the summer we realized we were going to have more freshmen in the fall of '53, I guess, than had been anticipated. They needed a couple of extra sections of freshman English. Charlie Hazelrigg persuaded her to teach a couple of sections of freshman English; which she did and still remembers with pleasure some of the people she taught in that period--some local businessmen, professional men, and others who are no longer here. But she'll see the women at alumni gatherings and so forth and so on. Then for a number of years she did substitute in the public schools. There was a biology teacher at the Danville High School who had some military obligation, and he used to go back for six weeks, I suppose, in the spring and all summer. She finished out the year for him a couple of times.

Finally, by the time our boy was, shall we say, a senior in high school, she thought she could go back to full-time teaching; and she did go back to Danville High School, which had never had and will probably never have again a Ph.D. on its faculty. After two or three years, she realized it was too much, that she ought not to be teaching full time. She got down to, I think, a three-course load, though they normally teach five. A three-class load would normally be two courses with her. She developed a course in anatomy and physiology which was very much favored by students going for careers in various health fields. And I think she was an outstanding teacher, probably better than the school deserved.

But she resigned in 1972. She was quite ill in the summer of '72, and she resigned. She recovered very remarkably toward the end of the summer. It turned out that the lady who had been supposed to teach here in education that fall asked to be released in late August. So Edna was asked to teach in the secondary education program and to supervise the student teachers. They had a tremendous number of student teachers, and they had been scheduled to teach in all sorts of places where they don't now teach, like Tates Creek in Lexington and in Frankfort, Stanford and all over the place. So she took that job for a year and helped them out by supervising the student teachers and helping with, I think, one each term of the formal education courses with Miss Emily Reeves, who was then the senior person in education.

Was there any kind of regulation concerning husband and wife both being at Centre at one time?

Not that I know of. I don't remember this. I don't think there were any full-time, dual teaching appointments until Bruce and Bobbi White came, probably about '66 or '67, maybe. Early in my stay here we had a professor of economics named Hodgkins who died in 1952. His wife, who was a native of France, had helped out with a French class or two every so often until his death. Then she got on at Danville High School and was teaching at Danville High School when he died in '52. I think the next year we brought her over to the College part-time on a firm basis. But that was a little overlap. And of course Edna and I overlapped the year she helped out in English. So I don't think there was any established policy against it; it just didn't happen. Almost no faculty wives were gainfully employed when we came here. It just didn't happen. As small as the salaries were and low as the incomes were, I guess we made it up with poor housing. I remember my wife-- She wanted a job before she had one, but she didn't pursue it.

We haven't talked about your son. You had one son?

One son, who came here when he was two years old, graduated from Sewanee.

His name is Edward?

Edward B. Heck. He, mixed in with his military service, got a (and he was in Viet Nam for nearly a year) master's degree in political science at the University of Virginia and subsequently got a doctorate at Johns Hopkins. He taught two years at San Diego State University and now has finished five years at the University of New Orleans.

In 1972 you became Matton Professor of History. Could you describe the Matton Professorships a little?

I really can't tell you much about it. I was trying to refresh my memory this morning and this afternoon. I thought I had a letter appointing me Matton Professor of History, but I can't find it. Well, it seems that Mr. Matton had left a sizable amount of money to the College, which I believe was put into endowment, and I think it was a surprise gift. No one knew of his interest in the College. Dean Reckard told me this morning that he thought that Rick Nahm had all the information about the thing, but I haven't had a chance to talk with Rick. My wife said I should call President Spragens, but I didn't. I am sure he would remember. They appointed three Matton Professors, one in each division. So I was in history for Division II, and Charlie Hazelrigg was in English for Division I, and Charlie Whittle was in Division III for physics, or physics and applied math I think was his title at that time. They thought it was appropriate to establish these named professorships in honor of Mr. Matton's gift. That's all I can tell you about it. I'm ashamed to say I don't remember his given name or initials.

There are just a couple of areas I'd like to go back and ask if you would comment on briefly, backtracking just a little.

Surely.

One area that I wanted to ask you about was the fraternities on campus. From what I have learned, apparently Centre has always had a very strong tradition of fraternities. I was wondering if you could speak to the strength of the fraternities here--why they have remained so strong.

Oh, I don't know; they had their slump. You spoke of the climate of opinion in the '60s and early '70s, and they lost in the membership at that period and had their difficulties. I have not been close enough to the fraternities to know just exactly the details of the problems from time to time and the basis for their success. I don't know. I was really surprised when the girls elected to bring sororities in a couple of years ago. There's evidently an appeal in this kind of thing to many young men and women of that age. And, of course, they have their friends who are members of fraternities here or elsewhere, in many cases their fathers, their uncles, their brothers, and so forth and so on. And I expect a fair proportion of men who come to Centre would not enter a college where there weren't some fraternity chapters in which they might expect to become members.

Yet they've had, apparently, their troubles over the years.

Oh, I think so. I think there's always been one or two that you knew were numerically weak. This was not, I think, true in the postwar bulge of which I spoke.

In regard to the possibility of probation incidents and that sort of thing, they've had their troubles through the years.

Oh, I suppose. I remember when I was supposedly a faculty advisor to a fraternity here back in my early years here, I think about my first six or seven years here, and I decided I was getting to be too old. There was another alumnus available on the staff (he was not a faculty member), so I resigned. They had, I think it was, one of these veterans, you know, who knew everything; so they were playing fast and loose with the rushing rules. It was a perfectly innocent thing. This freshman boy came up to the house to see a sophomore boy whose friend he had been in high school and consult him about some course they were both taking, I think. But it was in violation, and there were apparently a lot of such violations. "Oh, well, we can get away with that; we'll explain it on such and such a basis." You know this big know-it-all point of view. Well, the only thing that they forgot was that their judges were going to be the representatives of the other five fraternities who had every motive to exclude them from pledging for the year. It took them about five years to get over that, to really get over it, because they lost out significantly. But it just shows what loud-mouth, bad advice can do for you. That was not a College penalty; that was the interfraternity council penalty. And I think that they maybe vaguely hoped that the College would step in and save them from the penalty; but the College didn't step in, so they were not saved from the penalty. They were strong enough so that it didn't destroy them, but they certainly were weakened by it. It was so utterly unnecessary. As far as the more recent things, I have no remote knowledge of these things.

We had asked you prior to the interview for favorite stories or peculiar incidents. You have told us a couple. Are there any others?

None comes to me now.

I wanted to ask you about one because an alumnus had actually mailed me a clipping of this and a handbill. Apparently in the late '40s, and it may have been immediately prior to your coming to Centre, there was a tradition of putting a goat in the women's dormitory.

Yes, I think they were still doing that when I came here.

Apparently there had been a strike shortly before you came here.

Yes, that's right, there had been; but I don't know what it was about. No, I don't know what it was about. So I'm pretty ignorant. Ask Charlie Hazelrigg; he probably knows.

There was one area I was curious about. During the 1950s, during the early years that you were here, with the climate of McCarthyism in some areas of the country, at Centre did you have any dealings with demands for loyalty oaths? Had you heard of that or anything along those lines?

No, nothing of that sort here that I heard of. I knew people in the community who thought McCarthy was pretty good. Obviously I didn't, but then that's another matter.

I just have one more brief question. We talked about the move from the women's campus, the physical transition over to Centre. Was there any feeling that you became aware of from the alumni of KCW, of the women's campus, against the move and losing their own campus?

I think there was. I really don't remember the details, but I think there was a good deal of regret that this was coming to an end. Of course it was a tremendously useful and important thing to do in my opinion. And I think until it happened you really couldn't say that you had a truly integrated college as to men and women until the women had moved over here. The bus service between the places was a constant aggravation; you could never depend on the buses. They were breaking down, or the driver didn't show, or something was always wrong. People would get late to class on both campuses, of course, because we had classes on both sides. And, of course, until 1967 I guess we had classes on Saturday morning as well as on the other days of the week, including Wednesday.

I'll tell you one story, and this is on the one faculty member whom I really shouted at in my career. He's no longer here. You've never seen him, and you never will see him probably. But he taught music, and he had a class over on the women's campus; I think it was at the first hour on Saturday morning. And the bus wasn't functioning, as it often didn't function in the first hour of Saturday morning. We had a faculty member then who was also the chaplain, Rex Knowles. Rex Knowles was a big-hearted guy, and he saw these students standing on the sidewalk waiting for the bus which hadn't come. And it was probably five minutes after eight or ten minutes after eight, or whatever the time was. He picked them up and loaded them into his car, all six or seven of them, and took them on over to the class. They were supposed to meet on the other campus. The guy wouldn't hold the class because they hadn't come on the bus. Well, do you think I was justified in telling him what he was?

Finally, what changes did you observe in the teaching of history itself from the time you arrived until the time you left, and also the students relationship with the instructor in class and out?

I don't know of any. I won't attempt to go beyond my own years of teaching. I would not feel any great difference in my teaching as far as I personally was concerned. I always preferred an informal class structure, shall we say, the informal lecture with students free to interrupt me and me free to interrupt by asking Joe or Bill or Mary about this or that that we were talking about, and a pretty informal class.

I have always been an audio visual man, and up until the time Doherty was finished this had to be by just passing pictures around the classroom. That was about all that was available. In my own teaching I played the audio visual pretty hard from the time we moved into Doherty in '67 and routinely had an opaque projector available in the room. We used maps constantly and often would order up an overhead projector or, once in a while, a cassette player and one thing and another. I did a great deal of that and believed strongly in it. Of course one of my many objections to the "new curriculum" of 1967, on which I was one of three faculty members to vote in the negative, was the fact that I didn't think I could hold students' attention for a 90-minute period. On the other hand, I didn't feel I could spare the time. So even more than otherwise I went in for audio visual. I mean, I would have done it for that reason if I hadn't believed in it on principle earlier.

I've always had a very broad view of what is included in history and what should be incorporated in history. Many years before I came here I had given up history as past politics and think of it as being concerned with every aspect of life. There's many aspects of life, human experiences, you can bring into the thing without just making it unmanageable. And I think when I first came here, I encountered some students who resented some of the breadth of inclusion of the things I brought in. I tended to bring in local history and sometimes had a bad reaction from students from, say, Maryland or Ohio, who couldn't care less about Kentucky illustrations--Kentucky history illustrations. So as far as I'm concerned about the only change was that with the possibility of having something significant in the way of audio visual work, why I did what I would have wished to do all the time.

I don't believe any of our people have gone in for quantification; and, of course, this is the big change that's come over the profession of history and my son's field of political science. But I have no qualification along that line other than the rudimentary rule of thumb. I use the census data and this kind of thing, which is manageable by simple arithmetic, and so on. But, of course, this is one of the big changes that has happened in all the social sciences and certainly in history, too; and to a greater degree than I would wish. I think the historical journals are less interesting reading than they were before this hit us. The thing I like about my son's work is he's qualified in both. He can do the quantitative stuff, and he can do traditional stuff. His stuff is more readable than most of these characters'.

Are there any final comments that you would like to add to this tape, Dr. Heck?

Oh, I don't think so. Certainly I've talked too long as it is. No, I don't have anything further to add.

That concludes this interview. Thank you, Dr. Heck.

Thank you, John.

Tape 2, Side 1 (Part 3) Dr. Frank Heck Interview (concluded)

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