

# XIII

---

## General Observations

Throughout its history, Bridgewater has steadfastly sought to be an undergraduate educational institution that offers a strong program in the liberal arts and sciences. It has emphasized the importance of knowledge, the search for truth, high scholastic standards, individual integrity, social responsibility, altruism, civic duty, respect for other persons and their views, appreciation of culture in its various forms, well-rounded personal development, the ability to communicate clearly and effectively in speech and writing, and the ability to think logically, critically, and objectively.<sup>1</sup>

A small college by preference, Bridgewater has been able to maintain "the personal touch in a home-like atmosphere," with good rapport between faculty and students and a genuine concern of the college for the students' welfare.

During its first 100 years, the school had its name changed several times. It began, in 1880, as the Spring Creek Normal School. The next year, it was the Spring Creek Normal School and Collegiate Institute for Males and Females. After moving from Spring Creek to Bridgewater in 1882, it was called, for seven years, the Virginia Normal School. In 1889, it was designated as Bridgewater College. In 1924, after the consolidation of the Bridgewater and Daleville school systems, the legal title became Bridgewater-Daleville College, and so it remained until 1951, when the name was changed back to Bridgewater college.

The school's early administrative heads usually bore the title of "Principal." From 1892 to 1895 (during Walter B. Yount's administration), the designation was "Chairman of the Faculty." Since 1895, it has been "President," a title first borne, however, by John Flory, 1885-87, the institution's catalogues reveal.

The school passed through some critical times: the destruction of its main building by fire in 1889; the controversy (1888-92) over the questionable conduct of one of its principals (Edward A. Miller); the debt crisis (1894-95); the years of the Great Depression that preceded World War II; the World War II era; the Korean War years; and the student unrest of the late 1960's and early 1970's. The unsympathetic attitude of many German Baptist Brethren toward higher education during the 19th century, the college's inadequate church constituency and territory prior to 1924, its small endowment fund, and its struggle (until 1925) for accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools were other problems that caused concern.

The consolidation with Daleville College and Academy in 1924, and the affiliation with Blue Ridge College (New Windsor, Md.), 1929-37, tended to make Bridgewater a regional

---

<sup>1</sup>This is a digest and synthesis of the several statements of purpose found in the college's catalogues since 1880.

educational institution with a greatly enlarged geographical territory that extended from Maryland and Delaware southward to Florida and Puerto Rico.

Bridgewater was among the first colleges in Virginia, "if not the very first," to adopt (in January, 1920) the semester hour-quality point standard for graduation in the B. A. degree program.<sup>2</sup>

During its first 39 years (1880-1919), Bridgewater conferred eight different academic degrees. Besides the B. A. and B. S. , it conferred 189 Bachelor of English degrees, 1886-1915; three Master of Accounts degrees in 1903; 14 Master of Arts degrees, 1908-19; 11 Bachelor of Sacred Literature degrees, 1908-12; four Bachelor of Accounts degrees in 1913 and 1914; and five Bachelor of Theology degrees, 1913-16.<sup>3</sup> The college's catalogues reveal these facts.

From 1891 to 1980, Bridgewater conferred 4,245 B. A. degrees, and from 1913 to 1980, it conferred 920 B. S. degrees, the college's records reveal. Since 1920, the college has conferred only the B. A. and B. S. degrees. Bridgewater has the distinction of being the first educational institution in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia to grant the B. A. degree.<sup>4</sup>

In 1930, the semi-centennial year of its founding, the college began conferring honorary degrees, after eschewing such recognitions during its first 50 years. During its second 50 years (1930-80), it conferred 88 such degrees.<sup>5</sup>

During the first 100 years, the college's church relationship underwent some changes. The college had begun at Spring Creek, in 1880, without any authorization or approval by the German Baptist Brethren Church (Church of the Brethren since 1908). When the school was incorporated in 1884, its charter did not state that the school was under the ownership and control of any religious body. In 1894, however, the school's board of trustees adopted a resolution that required the trustees, henceforth, to be German Baptist Brethren, and an amendment to the school's charter in 1895 declared the institution to be the property of German Baptist Brethren, and "wholly under their management and control." From 1904 to 1924, all of the school's trustees were chosen in Church of the Brethren district meetings. An amendment of the school's charter in 1924, however, provided that, henceforth, some of the trustees should be chosen by the trustee board itself; also that, henceforth, only four-fifths of the trustees need be Brethren, but that a majority of the college's faculty members should be Brethren (a provision absent from the charter revision in 1951). Revision of the school's charter in 1969 provided for the election of all trustees, henceforth, by the trustee board itself (none by church districts), and ended the requirement that four-fifths of the trustees be Brethren.<sup>6</sup>

For some years, the Church of the Brethren's headquarters made an annual appropriation (usually \$2,000) to each of the church's colleges, but discontinued that practice after 1969.<sup>7</sup>

No longer is the college under church ownership and control.

In 1974, the attorney general of Virginia ruled that, henceforth, Bridgewater College would be regarded as a non-sectarian institution (even though affiliated with a particular church), since none of its trustees were any longer chosen by church bodies, since it no longer received financial support from a national church organization (even though receiving some financial support from church congregations), and since none of its trustees or faculty members had to belong to a particular church. That ruling made Bridgewater College students eligible to repay

<sup>2</sup>Warren D. Bowman to James W. Armsay, Dec. 5, 1961, PrO Papers. See the C, June, 1920, p. 30.

<sup>3</sup>See the appendix on academic degrees near the end of this volume.

<sup>4</sup>Washington and Lee University in Lexington is outside the area drained by the Shenandoah River and its tributaries.

<sup>5</sup>See the appendix on honorary degree recipients.

<sup>6</sup>See Charter 584 at the SCC, and appended papers.

<sup>7</sup>Business manager's report, Oct. 30, 1970.

state loans by certain non-monetary methods, if minor changes were made (and they were made) in the college trustees' by-laws.<sup>8</sup>

During the 100 years, the college has made an immeasurable contribution to its affiliated church, the Church of the Brethren. "Bridgewater College is making the Brethren Church in Virginia what it is," wrote John S. Flory in 1908.<sup>9</sup> From the college have come educated men and women who have become pastors, elders, teachers, and other church workers, not only in Virginia, but in other states also; missionaries at home and abroad; prominent participants in the church's district and annual conferences, in inter-church relations and ecumenical Christianity.

The college has rendered an important service, also, to other churches: Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Baptist, Evangelical United Brethren, and others. Many of their members, since 1880, have been educated at Bridgewater College, and some of them have become prominent figures in their denominations.

Although Bridgewater is a church-affiliated college, it has carefully avoided proselytism and emphasis on denominationalism, and has respected the right of private judgment in religious matters.

Few students, however, have passed through the college without feeling the influence of "its emphasis on moral earnestness, respect for religion, a spirit of tolerance, and concern for the common good."<sup>10</sup>

From its early years, Bridgewater has been recognized as an important teacher-training institution. Many of its graduates have gone into public school teaching. Many have become school principals, and some, county superintendents of public schools. Quite a number have been college and university professors throughout the nation. Records show that about one-third of the Bridgewater alumni, during the school's first 100 years, entered the teaching profession.

The 100 years (1880-1980) witnessed notable changes in the geographic sources of the college's students, the academic deans' reports reveal. Although Virginians continued to predominate year after year in the student body (from two-thirds to three-fourths, 1964-80), the Virginia county origins revealed differences. Rockingham County, the source of as many as one-half of all the students in certain early years, supplied only 12.2 percent of the students (on the average) each year, 1964-80. During the same period, Fairfax County supplied nearly 10 percent (on the average) each year, advancing to second place (after Rockingham) as a Virginia county source, and ahead of Augusta County, which, in previous years, always ranked next after Rockingham. Beginning in the 1930's, Marylanders outnumbered West Virginians, who, in previous years, ranked next after Virginians in number in the student population. As the years passed, more students came from states outside the Church of the Brethren's Southeastern Region, especially New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Changes occurred, also, in the relative sizes of church groups among the students. The proportion of Church of the Brethren students, as high as two-thirds or three-fourths in earlier years, declined, especially after World War II, to about 18 percent by the 1979-80 session, when United Methodists were about as numerous. By the same session (1979-80), Catholics (7.57 percent) were the fifth largest church group in the student body, ranking next after the Brethren, United Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists, and ahead of the Lutherans, Episcopalians, and other denominational groups among the students, the academic deans' reports reveal.

---

<sup>8</sup>FacM, May 30, 1974; HDN-R, Aug. 30, 1974.

<sup>9</sup>JSF in DHZigler, p. 317.

<sup>10</sup>Words of Paul Haynes Bowman.

The college's records show that 105 students from 30 foreign countries and the British crown colony of Hong Kong got some of their education at Bridgewater during the years 1936-80. Twenty-seven of the 105 were Cubans, most of them attending during the years 1936-46. Twelve were from West Germany, seven from France, seven from India, seven from South Korea, six from China (in 1947 and 1948), six from Hong Kong, and not more than three from each of the following countries: Afghanistan, the Bahamas, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burma, Colombia, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Greece, Guyana, Iran, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, Nicaragua, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Vietnam, Spain, Thailand, and Venezuela. Thirty-six of the 105 received the B. A. degree and three the B. S. One of them graduated *summa cum laude*, three *magna cum laude*, and two *cum laude*. Some went on to graduate and professional schools. Seven earned the Ph. D. degree, two the M. D., one the D. D. S., and one the M. Div. The students' names appear in an appendix near the end of this volume.<sup>11</sup>

Women have been students at the college in every session since the school's beginning in 1880. Bridgewater claims the distinction of being the first four-year, private, liberal arts college in Virginia to admit women.

Blacks have been students at the college since 1953. Bridgewater was one of the very first four-year, private, liberal arts colleges in Virginia, that have predominantly white populations, to enroll black students.

Bridgewater's initiative in recruiting and attracting minority students won the college commendation (in 1971) from the Regional Civil Rights Director of the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.<sup>12</sup>

As stated in its catalogues, Bridgewater seeks to enroll qualified students "regardless of sex, race, color, creed, handicap, or national or ethnic origin," and it does not discriminate on any of those bases "in the administration of its educational policies, employment practices, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other college-administered programs and activities."

The college "reached out its hand to the obscure lad whom society would otherwise never discover," Paul Haynes Bowman wrote, "and gave him a chance to discover himself, his abilities, his aptitudes, and to expend his powers in channels of significant service."<sup>13</sup>

The college witnessed young people "emerge from unlikely backgrounds into constructive leadership," Warren D. Bowman wrote, and observed "near genius arise from obscure and unpredictable places."<sup>14</sup>

The college, reportedly, was the pioneer among Virginia colleges in having, annually, a "Freshmen Week" (beginning in Sept., 1926) for the orientation of first-year students.<sup>15</sup> It had instituted a "Student Life" course, for the orientation of freshmen, as early as the 1916-17 academic session.<sup>16</sup>

Since the college makes a special effort to help freshmen adjust to college life and academic standards, the Bridgewater student drop-out rate has been significantly lower than the average drop-out rate in colleges nationwide, a study has revealed.<sup>17</sup>

During the 100 years, the college relaxed its restrictions and allowed students more freedom. Beginning in the 1950's, it permitted social dancing at the college and tobacco-smoking in certain places. Beginning in the 1970's, it allowed a large measure of freedom in

<sup>11</sup>The college's catalogues, student directories, Registrar's Office records, Admissions Office files, and the AlumBF.

<sup>12</sup>Dale E. Mekeel, "Race Relations at Bridgewater College," (19 pp., typescript, 1972), p. 5; PrO Papers.

<sup>13</sup>PHB in B Oct., 1944, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup>Warren D. Bowman to James W. Armsay, Dec. 5, 1961; PrO Papers.

<sup>15</sup>B, April, 1926, p. 2; Aug., 1926, p. 3; Bee, Oct. 7, 1926, pp. 1, 2.

<sup>16</sup>C, April, 1916, p. 36.

<sup>17</sup>Alumnus, Dec., 1984, p. 5.

manner of dress, and gave resident women a large measure of freedom in leaving and returning to their dormitories in the evenings.

Throughout its history, Bridgewater has pursued a policy of strict amateurism in intercollegiate athletics, and has placed athletics under faculty supervision and control. Its athletic director and coaches are regular faculty members who receive no special salaries and who, besides coaching, teach in the academic program. They are not pressured to have winning teams, and are not replaced if they do not have them. Consistent with the rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (Division III), athletes at Bridgewater are treated in the same manner as non-athletes in their eligibility for financial aid. Despite such a policy, the college has had some outstanding athletes, some outstanding teams, and some outstandingly successful seasons in more than one sport.

Interestingly enough, Bridgewater is reported to have initiated intercollegiate competition in basketball in Virginia in 1903.<sup>18</sup>

Bridgewater alumni have lived throughout the world. They have resided in most of Virginia's 100 counties; in all 50 of the nation's states; in the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U. S. Virgin Islands; in at least 36 foreign countries; in the British crown colony of Hong Kong; and elsewhere.

Bridgewater alumni have had public schools, college buildings, athletic fields, medical clinics, streets, roads, and clubs named for them. They have received honorary degrees from colleges, have served as college presidents, have been elected to prestigious professional societies, have their sketches in standard biographical directories, and have been honored by foreign governments.

Bridgewater ranks high among the nation's colleges and universities in the proportion of its graduates who have earned "third level" doctoral degrees (e.g., the Ph. D.). That proportion, a recent study reveals, was approximately one (on the average) for every 26 Bridgewater graduates during the period 1920-80.<sup>19</sup>

Various sources reveal that, down to 1980, at least 174 Bridgewater men and women earned the Ph. D. degree, 30 the Ed. D., 155 the M. D., 14 the D. V. M., 54 the D. D. S., 11 the O. D., 66 law degrees, and 227 theological degrees, of which 20 were doctoral degrees. Six others earned doctoral degrees in various other fields. Many others earned the M. A. or the M. S. degree.

The college's catalogues, trustees' minutes, and other sources reveal that, down to 1980, at least 492 men and women served (most of them full-time) on the Bridgewater faculty. Many of them remained at the college for a long time. Ruth E. Weybright (who became Mrs. Edgar E. Stauffer in 1955) taught there for 52 years (1927-79); John S. Flory, for 49 years; Charles E. Shull, 47 years; Harry G. M. Jopson, 41.5 years (by 1980); and Allan B. Bicknell, 41 years. Eight others taught for 30 years or longer: Nelson T. Huffman, 39 years; A. Olivia Cool, 38 years; Charles C. Wright, 38 years; Minor C. Miller, 37 years; Raymond N. Andes, 34 years (by 1980); Rudolph A. Glick, 33 years; John D. Miller, 31 years; and Lowell V. Heisey, 30 years (by 1980). By 1980, seven others had taught from 25 to 29 years; 12 others from 20 to 24 years; 25 others from 15 to 19 years; and 42 others from 10 to 14 years. Nearly 20 percent of the faculty members (1880-1980) remained on the teaching staff for 10 years or longer. One probable reason for the generally low turnover rate among the faculty has been the high degree of freedom they have in their teaching.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup>Edgar S. Kiracofe, "An Historical Study of Athletics and Physical Education in the Standard Four-Year Colleges of Virginia" (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1932), pp. 23, 48, 50.

<sup>19</sup>*Baccalaureate Origins of Doctorate Recipients from U. S. Universities, 1920-1980*. Part I: Total Doctorates File (Commission on Human Resources, National Research Council), Jan., 1982; *Alumnus*, Oct., 1984, p. 9.

<sup>20</sup>See the appendix on the faculty.

Even in its early years, Bridgewater attracted to its faculty graduates of some renowned schools: in 1893, Charles G. Cook, and in 1898, Ottis E. Mendenhall, M. A. graduates of Haverford College; in 1902, Milton B. Wise, an M. A. of the University of Pennsylvania; in 1903, Walter B. Norris, a B. A. of Harvard University; in 1906, Allan B. Bicknell, a Ph. D. and Phi Beta Kappa of Brown University.

Although women have been on the Bridgewater faculty since 1883, not many were before 1919. From 1919 to 1980, however, more than one-third of the faculty members were women.

Less than a majority of the college's faculty members, at times, have belonged to the Church of the Brethren. This was true in certain years before 1918, and in certain years between 1964 and 1980, the church's yearbooks reveal.<sup>21</sup>

Down to 1980, 251 individuals (not all of them Brethren) served on the college's board of trustees, some of them for extended periods of time. John C. Myers was on the board for 45 years (1917-62); Leland C. Moomaw for 43 years; Lowell N. Layman, 39 years; R. Douglas Nininger, 35 years; Aaron M. Horst, 34 years; Isaac C. Senger, 32 years; James A. Fry, 30 years; H. Gus Muntzing, 30 years; and Charles W. Wampler, 30 years. Seven other trustees were on the board from 25 to 29 years; 15 others from 20 to 24 years; 18 others from 15 to 19 years; and 61 others from 10 to 14 years.<sup>22</sup>

R. Douglas Nininger was the trustee board's president for 19 years (1959-78), John C. Myers for 16 years (1931-47), and Hiram G. Miller for 15 years (1909-24). The other presidents, down to 1980, served for shorter periods, none longer than seven years.

No Bridgewater alumnus became the trustee board's president until 1931, when John C. Myers was elected. All of the board's later presidents, down to 1980, except Charles W. Wampler (1947-53), were alumni.

The college has a long record of operating without annual budgetary deficits. In no year since 1955 has it had an excess of operating expenditures over operating income, the result of good business management and financial support.

Increasing financial support of the college over the years attests to the faith of its alumni, many non-alumni (of various religious persuasions), and of the business and professional community in the college and its program.

From its early years, Bridgewater has had a close relationship with the University of Virginia and consequently has felt its influence. Bridgewater's founder and first administrative head, Daniel C. Flory, had spent three years (1875-78) in study at the university. Two of Bridgewater's other early presidents, an acting president, four of its academic deans, and a number of its faculty members earned degrees at Thomas Jefferson's "academical village." The first Bridgewater graduates to get the Ph. D. degree earned that degree at the university. Two of the charter members of the university's prestigious Raven Society, and two of the early members of its Phi Beta Kappa chapter were Bridgewater men. As early as 1900, professors from the university were speakers at Bridgewater, and as early as 1903, Bridgewater graduates were appointed to teaching positions at the university. By 1980, at least 40 Bridgewater graduates had earned the Ph. D. degree at the university, 10 the Ed. D., 34 the M. D., 18 the LL. B., and many others, other advanced degrees.

Bridgewater College "is the monument of the cooperation of a large number of people of small wealth, who, looking forward and upward, founded and built an institution of Christian education in their midst, not that their names might be heralded throughout the world as philanthropists, but that they might, with its aid, better cooperate in the great work of

---

<sup>21</sup>See also JSF in *B*, Oct., 1918, p. 3.

<sup>22</sup>The TrM and appended papers. See the appendix on the trustees.

uplifting mankind." So wrote Justus H. Cline in the first history of the college, published in 1905.<sup>23</sup>

"Already in the 25 years of her history," observed John W. Wayland in 1905, "Bridgewater College has done a great and good work. Her sons and daughters have gone out into the great world of humanity, to make it wiser, stronger, and better."<sup>24</sup>

"Throughout its history," wrote Wayne F. Geisert in 1975,<sup>25</sup> "Bridgewater College has devoted itself to becoming an increasingly effective force for the betterment of mankind. As alumni find avenues of useful service and influence, . . . the college finds its ultimate channels of service to humanity."

---

<sup>23</sup>BC (1905), p. 124.

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 235.

<sup>25</sup>His annual report, Dec., 1975.