

ALBION GUILFORD TAYLOR

Albion G. Taylor came to William and Mary in 1927 to teach economics, one of several midwesterners appointed by J.A. C. Chandler. He taught in that department, which underwent several organizational changes, until his retirement in 1958. In addition, during the 1940s he served as dean of the Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship and often during the 1940s and 1950s served as a federal labor dispute arbitrator.

Dr. Taylor now lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado. In the course of interviews for this project many people spoke of him as a person who would be able to make a contribution to the project. When asked if he would answer questions by mail Dr. Taylor replied enthusiastically and typed out the following answers.

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1) Why was it that you came to William and Mary in 1927?

A number of factors contributed to my choice of William and Mary. I came to the University of Illinois in 1923 with a graduate-student teaching fellowship, after one year was made an Instructor (half-time teaching, half-time graduate work; thus four years were necessary to obtain a Ph. D. degree, built upon my M. A. degree from the University of Nebraska. In 1927 I saw no immediate opportunity at Illinois for a position promising advancement in rank or salary. I applied for a place at the University of Washington and the University of Colorado. Soon thereafter William Hamilton, then Professor of Law and Chairman of Economics and Business Administration at the College of William and Mary, came to Illinois to interview candidates for employment in both Law and Economics. The position in Law was offered to Dudley Woodbridge and that in Economics to me. I was favorably impressed with Dr. Hamilton, had visited Tidewater Virginia the year before while working on my doctoral dissertation, and liked it. I was also familiar with the rich history of William and Mary from an undergraduate course in History of Education. An offer came from the University of Colorado at a comparable salary. I met Dr. Woodbridge and we both decided to accept the offers from the College of William and Mary. I never regretted the move, but I did supplement my work there with ~~nine~~ ten summers teaching at Southern Illinois University, Illinois State University, University of California at Los Angeles and the University of Oregon, also 4½ years on leave with the War Manpower Commission in Washington from 1942 to 1946, and much arbitration work from 1947 on in Southeastern States as a member of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

2) Is it significant that a number of people from mid-western schools were hired at W&M in that period, particularly in the business and economics fields?

Yes, we were informed that prior to the incumbency of Dr. J. A. C. Chandler in 1919 few other than Southerners were employed. President Chandler seemed to have no mental barrier toward bringing in teachers from any area. Then, too, Ohio State, Chicago, Northwestern, Wisconsin and Illinois had a long-time development in graduate study in Economics and Business Administration, prior to such an emphasis in the Ivy League and in the South.

3) What were your impressions of the town and the school (students, faculty, and administrators) upon your arrival?

My impression of the town was favorable, due perhaps to my background, having been reared in a small community in Quebec, where it was necessary to go into Montreal for shops of size or quality as it was necessary to go from Williamsburg to Richmond for major items such as furniture or clothing. We were intrigued also by the historical setting in which we found ourselves, particularly after learning soon after arrival of John D. Rockefeller, Jr.'s plan to restore the colonial city.

My impression of the school was likewise favorable in general. The growth in buildings and equipment was apparent under the guidance of Dr. Chandler. His dynamic building program was impressive and encouraging to us newcomers.

The students in general lacked the background which I encountered during my previous four years at the University of Illinois.

The faculty in 1927 was weak in certain areas, but potential strength was apparent because Dr. Chandler was bringing in young instructors with doctorate degrees from a wide range of institutions.

The administration was to me unique in that decision-making seemed centered in the President's office. To me, personally, this was not distasteful, for I admired President Chandler's ability. Many on the faculty objected to what they characterized as dictatorial methods. My contacts with the President, however, were most cordial. My evaluation of the Board of Visitors was less praiseworthy. The Board seemed to contribute little, acting much as a rubber stamp in conforming to the will of the President.

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4) How did you find working with J.A.C. Chandler?

As I have indicated above our relationship was agreeable. He was not generally liked by faculty members. He was somewhat harsh in dealing with the faculty. Part of this was due to necessary retrenchments incident to the depression following 1928. Dr. Charles Marsh and I were called into his office in the spring of 1931 and told that one of us must be dropped, that the budget would not permit employing both of us. We did not take the demand too seriously and our contracts came through as usual.

5) Did Chandler have a particular interest in economics and business instruction? If so, what was this founded upon?

I believe President Chandler did have a special interest in Economics and Business Administration instruction. The foundation for this interest is hard to identify. His doctorate emphasis was in History. His managerial ability seemed to be innate, ^{as} manifested not only during his presidency at William and Mary but prior to that while Superintendent of Schools in Richmond. Another motivation may have sprung from his desire to increase the College enrollment, and Economics and Business Administration made a strong appeal.

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6) When you came, economics was part of something called the school of economics and business administration. Was economics connected more with business than it would be later? If so, how were your courses different from their later content?

Yes, prior to 1927 the emphasis in the School of Economics and Business Administration had definitely been on Applied Economics and Business. Accounting, Advertising, Sales Management were examples of that emphasis. The presence of such courses and the absence of such courses as History of Economic Thought, Advanced Economic Theory, Comparative Economic Systems, and other theory courses, existed because of the training of the staff which preceded the coming of four men in 1927 from Illinois, Michigan, Ohio State and Princeton whose doctoral direction had been basically theory. The emphasis from 1927 to 1942, when the separate department of Business Administration was set up, was on pure Economics. Sociology was for a few years after my introduction of the beginning course in 1927 housed in the Department of Economics.

7) What changes, if any, in your department can be attributed to John Stewart Bryan's desire for the *collège* to be liberal arts in nature?

Very little change in Economics and Business Administration may be attributed to President Bryan's influence since, as I have pointed out above, the emphasis during his administration from 1934 to 1942 was on pure Economics and away from Business Administration in keeping with the policy established in 1927. President Pomfret, who followed Dr. Bryan, authorized the establishment of a separate department of Business Administration, a development which probably would have been distasteful to President Bryan.

8) Did this liberal arts orientation continue under Dr. Pomfret and Admiral Chandler? What changes in your department could be attributed to these two presidents?

The liberal arts orientation was emphasized less under Dr. Pomfret, with little change under Admiral Chandler. No notable changes in the course offering in the Department of Economics were made during the administrations of these two presidents. The Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship was abandoned during President Pomfret's administration, thus establishing independent departments of Economics, Government, History and Sociology.

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9) For a time, economics was part of the Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship. Why was this school established?

The probable reason for the School's establishment was the fact that a modest endowment was provided for the School ^{by} an industrialist in Upstate New York during the administration of J. A. C. Chandler. At first the Marshall-Wythe School of Government and Citizenship consisted of what is now known as the Department of Government, with a close affiliation with the then Department of Law. Economics, History and Sociology became a part of the "School" during the administration of John Stewart Bryan.

10) Did Dr. Chandler consult with the faculty involved before setting it up?

Not to my knowledge, though it is probable that he did consult Dr. Pollard and Dr. William Hamilton, original organizers of the "School" and men with whom President Chandler had close relationships.

11) Did an interdepartmental school work well in practice? Could you give some examples of cooperation and some examples where the Marshall-Wythe school worked to disadvantage?

Personally, I was enthusiastic about the interdepartmental School, as was President Bryan under whom the organization was established on an interdepartmental basis, and I am still convinced that the arrangement had distinct merit.

Did it work well at William and Mary? / Yes, to a degree. The department heads had frequent policy meetings which were helpful. Our chief difficulty arose because of the lack of cooperation on the part of the Department of History, which demanded complete departmental autonomy, especially in the matter of interviewing and choosing personnel for the department.

12) As dean of the Marshall-Wythe school what was your main concern during World War II?

As dean of the Marshall-Wythe School my main concern during World War II was to preserve and improve the organization President Bryan and I had established. Its demise was due to the death of Dr. Bryan early in the War period and also to my absence from 1942 to 1946 in Washington as an official in the War Manpower Commission, thus cutting off my direct contact and influence at William and Mary. President Pomfret was easily influenced toward the disorganization of the School by those who opposed its original organization.

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13) What led to its dissolution? Could it, or in your opinion, should it have been preserved or perhaps expanded, with a closer relationship to the law instruction?

The question of what led to the dissolution of the Marshall-Wythe School is answered in No. 12 above. Yes, I think the School could have been preserved and more closely associated with law instruction had I been in Williamsburg instead of Washington. Some aspects of the interdepartmental cooperation remained after its dissolution. When I returned to William and Mary in 1946 as Chairman of the Department of Economics I taught Labor Law until retirement in 1958 and published Labor Problems and Labor Law in 1950 and Labor and the Supreme Court in 1957 (Revised in 1961). The Departments of Government and History, also Business Administration, offered some carefully selected courses which were open to candidates for the law degree. Syracuse University has for many years set the pattern for success in a cooperative organization of the Social Science departments.

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14) You, Dr. Moss, and Dr. Phalen were on a faculty committee that went to the Board of Visitors to make recommendations about the type of man to succeed Dr. Pomfret after his resignation in 1951. On that same day the board selected Admiral Chandler as president, although the decision was not announced until a few days later. Do you recall how your committee was received by the board? Did you have any inkling that the board would totally disregard your advice?

Our Committee had considered over fifty names, had simmered the list down to five, and was prepared to present to the Board of Visitors the merits of each of the five. We were given no opportunity to present these names. In a word, our Committee was ignored by the Board. No, we previously had no inkling that the Board would disregard our advice.

15) What was your own reaction when you heard of the board's action in selecting Admiral Chandler?

Disappointment and resentment toward the Board's high-handed action, for our Committee was convinced that we had more talent, experience and fitness for the post among the five potential candidates we wished to present to the Board.

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16) I have been told that the faculty and the Board of Visitors had little or no contact both prior to and after 1951. Do you agree that this was the case? Was 1951 an all-time low?

Yes, I would say that the faculty and the Board of Visitors had little contact during the latter part of President Pomfret's administration and even less while President Chandler was in office. It is my judgment that 1951 was an all-time low during the 31 years of my connection with the institution.

17) Why was it you joined the local AAUP early in its existence here at W&M?

Perhaps for social reasons mainly. It was a small group at first. As the years wore on I cared less for my connection with the AAUP, for its policies were often in conflict with my thinking. The only other organization where I found congenial contacts with my colleagues was the Faculty Club, in the late 1920's a most restrictive organization, open only to faculty men, with those excluded who were thought to be less desirable. When I joined it around 1928 there were only 14 members.

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18) What ~~relation~~ did the president (J.A.C. Chandler) object to about the AAUP?

The AAUP was a thorn in the flesh to President J. A. C. Chandler. Why? In a word, it interfered with his well established and practiced policy of employing and dismissing faculty members at will. I say this with no dislike for Dr. Chandler--merely a statement of fact. In truth, my relation to him was always one of cordial cooperation, and I admired his managerial ability and his success in obtaining funds for the College through the state legislature.

19) Did Chandler know meetings were being held at Dr. Goodwin's, and if so, did he feel Goodwin was operating behind his back? (I was under the impression that Goodwin and Chandler worked hand-in-glove.)

I know nothing of meetings held at Dr. Goodwin's. Like yourself, I too was under the impression that Drs. Goodwin and Chandler worked "hand-in-glove."

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20) Did the college encourage you in your role as a labor dispute arbitrator?

I joined the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in 1947 and arbitrated cases in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, West Virginia, Tennessee, and Georgia, until 1962.

President Pomfret indicated no interest in this extra-curricular activity, but President Alvin Chandler, without solicitation on my part, was most helpful both in turning cases my way through recommendation but also in arranging for my absence from College duties so as to provide freedom to me in arbitration activity. He advised me at one time that he considered my arbitration work an asset to the College.

21) What would you say was the most important development in your thirty-plus years at William and Mary?

The most important development at the College of William and Mary during the period from 1927 to 1958, in my estimation, occurred during the administration of President John Stewart Bryan, when he endeavored to restore the emphasis on liberal arts, stemming the tide toward professionalism, first because of his belief in the value of such an emphasis and second his conviction that such an emphasis was in accord with the traditions of the old institution.