

EDWARD P. SIMPKINS, JR.

Ed Simpkins' connection with William and Mary goes back over fifty years: from 1924 to 1928 he was a student at the college; after teaching one year he worked for Dr. Swem in the library from 1929 to 1930; and from 1954 to 1962 he served on the Board of Visitors. Because of the controversial nature of events of those years, Judge Simpkins was careful, yet even-handed in his assessment.

The interview was taped in Judge Simpkins' office in Hanover Courthouse, and the transcript was reviewed by him as well.

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Interviewee Edward P. Simpkins, Jr.

Date of interview April 20, 1976

Place Hanover Courthouse, Virginia

Interviewer Emily Williams

Session number 1

Length of tape 65 mins.

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as worker in college library	4 mins.
as member of Board of Visitors - appointment	2 mins.
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Edward P. Simpkins, Jr.

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Williams: Judge Simpkins, to start off today, I wanted to ask you just a little bit about when you were a student at William and Mary in the mid-'20s. Why was it you chose to go to William and Mary?

Simpkins: I don't know exactly. I had always been interested in history in high school. I read about the different colleges, I read more about William and Mary, its age and being the oldest school in the state and so forth, and I went down there and liked the place, and so I enrolled and that's about it. Of course, in those days you didn't have the problem you have now (not as much as you had a few years ago) <sup>about entrance.</sup> It wasn't hard for students to get into William and Mary then because they needed students.

Williams: What kind of school did you find it to be? Could you briefly characterize it?

Simpkins: The first week I was there was the fall of '24 (September of '24) and I was sixteen years old. I was homesick and I didn't have any money. the school was small then, but coming from a small high school, to me it seemed very large.

I think we had -- I would say we had between four and five hundred students. There was one girls' dormitory, which was Jefferson Hall --

Williams: Jefferson Hall.

Simpkins: --and three or four boy's dormitories, the work was new to me and hard for me. The first few months I wasn't too happy with the place, but as I got to know people and got interested in the work I got so I was crazy about it, but I wasn't at first. I think that is normal for everybody who goes away to college.

Williams: Probably so.

Simpkins: I lived in Taliaferro. It's not still standing is it? It was several years ago. It wasn't called Taliaferro, but it was still standing.

Williams: It became the fine arts building?

Simpkins: I think so.

Williams: Then that was torn down.

Simpkins: Right across from Taliaferro was a hall called Ewell Hall, which was a huge old <sup>barn structure</sup> right across Jamestown Road from Brafferton. [OK] Ewell was torn down a few years after I left, but Taliaferro stayed there ~~as another building~~ until the '50s or '60s anyway.

Williams: In the '60s, I think.

Simpkins: I don't want to say too much in answer, so you just cut me off when you think I've answered your question.

Williams: Well, you went on to become a judge. I wondered if you could

evaluate the kind of preparation you had at William and Mary? Did you take the pre-law course at William and Mary?

Simpkins: No. I had what we called a state scholarship, whereby you agreed <sup>(maybe</sup> it's still in existence) to teach in the public schools of Virginia for two years, then in return for that you had a reduction in tuition, <sup>maybe</sup> all tuition. I was interested in history. I was interested in going to law school, but I didn't see any way I could go. So I took a major in history, with a minor in government and a minor in education to get my collegiate profession<sup>al</sup> teacher's certificate. I had to teach for two years, so I got a job through Dr. Hoke, who was the dean -- Kremer Hoke<sup>st</sup> in Danville, Virginia, <sup>st</sup> George Washington High School, teaching history. I taught one year. I had worked for Dr. Swem in the library as a student assistant, and I also worked in the dining hall as a waiter. I'm not a white jacket man,\* but I could be. Dr. Swem <sup>wrote me a letter and</sup> said, "I want you to come back down here and work for me." I said I couldn't go because I had to teach those two years. But somehow Dr. Swem got Dr. Chandler, who was the president, properly I hope, to waive that other year of teaching if I worked for the state -- worked for the college. So I went back to William and Mary in June of '29. I graduated in '28 and taught school in Danville, went back in June of '29 to work for Dr. Swem -- work as assistant librarian.

\* Member of the Order of the White Jacket.

I was scheming all the time to get to law school if I could; Dr. Swem wanted me to go to Columbia on a scholarship to be a librarian, but I finally worked out a way to go to law school. So I went to law school in September of '30. I was at William and Mary for four years as an undergraduate and then <sup>roughly</sup> for fifteen months as an assistant to Dr. Swem in the library before I went to Harvard Law School.

~~the reason~~ -- We had a man there by the name of George Reilly -- I don't know if you have come across him in these interviews or not -- he was a leader on campus. He was two years ahead of me. He was a good student, and he had gone to Harvard Law School two years ahead of me, and he had worked for Dr. Swem some, too. So I started scheming with him on how to get to law school and I got there. It was strange, I guess it's not a coincidence, but another thing happened: J.R.L. Johnson, who is the rector of the board now, took my job as assistant to Dr. Swem in the library in the fall of '29, and then after two years he decided he would go to law school, so he came to Harvard Law School. So there were three of us in a row who worked for Dr. Swem as his assistant, and all three of us went to law school <sup>at the</sup> same place -- and I think Dr. Swem tried to make librarians out of all three of us. I know he did J.R.L. Johnson, and I know he tried to make one out of me and he didn't succeed. But that said <sup>way might</sup> that not look good either, because everybody was crazy about Dr. Swem -- everybody was. He was one of the finest men I've

ever known. He was a real student and a real gentleman and he knew how to get along with young people, and yet he was very old and set in his ways, but he got along well with everybody. He was working on what we call the Swem Index. (You know what that is.) He was working on that when I worked for him, and he was working on that for some years after that. I didn't do any work on it. But he was a wonderful librarian and a wonderful scholar and a wonderful person. I knew him real well even though I didn't stay down there until the time he died. I think he lived until his nineties.

Williams: I think he did. Yes, I think he did.

Well, this is skipping a <sup>of years,</sup> number, but in the mid-'50s, you were appointed to the board of visitors. How did that appointment come about?

Simpkins: Well, I wasn't recommended by the Society of the Alumni (that's the way most of them come about). I wasn't particularly interested in being on the board, and I didn't seek it. Now there are such things in these <sup>Counties</sup> of Virginia as local politics. I had been <sup>commonwealth's attorney of</sup> this county, Hanover, for twelve years, and I had not run again. (This is sort of background on why I think the appointment came.) Mr. Edmund Dejonette was a member of the house of delegates from the district in which Hanover was at that time. I was a good friend of Mr. Dejonette's, but local politics being what it was and what it still is in a lot of areas, there were certain groups and factions in the county. A lot of people

thought that when I didn't run for commonwealth's attorney in '48 that I was thinking about running for the general assembly, which I was thinking about. I had about decided not to do it because I didn't particularly want to do it, but I was having some pressures. However, about that time Mr. Dejonette told me that Governor Stanley was looking for somebody to go on the William and Mary board and asked me would I like to have the job, and I said, "Yes, Edmund, I would like to have it". And Governor Stanley appointed me. And of course, I never ran <sup>for</sup> in the house against Mr. Dejonette. I don't think I would have anyway, and I don't mean to infer that Mr. Dejonette was trying to get me out of the way, because he probably could have beaten me anyway. He was a good friend of mine, but there was talk around the county. I was put on the board, and I liked the job very much. I didn't always get along with certain other people on the board, but I liked the job.

Williams: That wouldn't be unusual anywhere in life I suppose. Now when you were on the board -- I <sup>have</sup> had some people comment to me and I would like to get your reaction -- that the "mood" on the board -- that's the word most commonly used -- that the "mood" of the board was not good.

Simpkins: I think I know what they're talking about. I'm not exactly sure when I went on the board. I don't know whether your records show it or not. I think I went on in '54.

Williams: I have written down '54.



Simpkins: I think it was '54. ~~After Dr. Chandler~~ after Dr. Chandler (J.A.C. Chandler), Mr. Pomfret was president, and then Mr. Bryan. No, Mr. Bryan was president, and then Mr. Pomfret, and then Admiral Chandler. I went on the board approximately a year or so, it was a very short time -- after Admiral Chandler became president. Shortly after I went on the board they had -- I don't know what to call it, it wasn't a riot -- they had a lot of dissatisfaction -- the students were very dissatisfied --

Williams: Yes, yes.

Simpkins: -- with what they said -- the way the college was being run.

Williams: Yes, yes.

Simpkins: And Jimmie Robertson (James Robertson from Norfolk) was the rector. John Garland Pollard, Jr., was on the board. Mrs. Philip Hiden was on the board from Newport News; Dr. Hudnall Ware, J.D. Carneal -- I don't remember exactly who else at that time, but I think this dissatisfaction, as outwardly shown, had come to the attention of the board before I went on. you asked about the mood -- the only way I can tell you is this way: Shortly after I went on, before I got my feet on the ground -- if I ever got them on the ground--and was in a position to draw any conclusions on my own -- the board appointed a committee (I've forgotten the exact wording of the resolution, I've looked up nothing for this ~~at all~~) -- to investigate, I would say, the situation which existed,

the rector of the board appointed a committee,

And Jimmie Robertson appointed Dr. Ware, who was a friend  
 of mine, J.D. Carneal from Richmond (both of them were from  
 Richmond, you see), Mrs. Hiden from Newport News, and John  
 Garland Pollard, Jr., <sup>of Lancaster.</sup> I don't know whether the rector  
 named me chairman of the committee or whether the committee  
 elected <sup>its own;</sup> I was <sup>made</sup> ~~electe~~ chairman. And I don't want to  
 say things that are unfair to anybody, but during that inves-  
 tigation I got the impression (I could be more specific,  
 but I ought not) that most members of the board felt that  
 any criticism of the administration was a criticism of them  
 personally, and they didn't have a very open mind  
 about investigating what they had asked us to investigate.  
~~This, I think~~ I'm going to say this -- I don't know whether  
 any other college <sup>Minutes</sup> have reflected this or not; this com-  
 mittee had hearings in Williamsburg in the Wren Building, <sup>[Warner]</sup>  
 Dr. Moss got to be very critical in the press (if I recall)  
 about his views about what the committee was doing. I got  
 real concerned, even though I was chairman of the committee,  
 about what we were doing. The president, Admiral Chandler,  
 was sitting with the committee. I felt that was wrong, be-  
 cause we were in essence investigating the relationship  
 between the administration, and the students, and he was  
 prevailed upon not to sit with us. We got around to writ-  
 ing a report, and we had difficulties. The report was pre-  
 pared by me, and I don't -- I wish I had a copy of it. I  
 couldn't find a copy in my records. There's a copy in

Williamsburg somewhere -- there should be. We were not critical in any way of Admiral Chandler, with one exception.

we thought the students had gone too far in certain ways, and we said so. (I say "we" -- the report that I wrote.)

There was one statement in the report I prepared that referred to what we felt (or I felt in preparing it) was basically a lack of communication between the administration (specifically the president) and the student body.

that went into that report, and then we had a meeting of the five of us, and we split. We might have changed it some after that. I'm sure we went over it and changed it, but John Garland Pollard, Jr., and Mrs. Hiden, and I voted to submit a report which had that one statement in it that might have been -- I didn't feel it was critical, I thought it was just a fact -- still feel it was a fact. And Dr. Ware and Mr. Carneal would not vote for that report because of what they thought was <sup>an</sup> unjustified criticism. I personally feel -- felt then and feel now -- that while they were sincere, it was because of their personal friendship with the Admiral. We submitted our report, and they submitted -- I think now, I'm not absolutely sure about this because ~~it all comes back~~ some of it comes back -- they submitted a minority report, I think (I'm not sure of that) but we submitted a report to the rector, <sup>Mr. Robertson.</sup> At the next meeting of the board -- I forget how many people were on the board, the records will show -- and I don't know what the college <sup>or board</sup> report minutes

show on this (I never bothered to check),  
 but at the next meeting of the board <sup>the board</sup> voted to reject the  
 majority report and the minority report, if there was one.  
 the whole board to me was very foolish. The whole  
 board labored hours in that room trying to write a report  
 about the investigation or a report of the situation. (It  
 couldn't be a report of the investigation because they  
 hadn't made it; the committee had made it.) that board  
 report was adopted, and I did something that I've always  
 regretted -- and this will be in there -- I voted for that  
 revised edition, and I should have voted against it. John  
 Garland <sup>Pollard</sup> had nerve enough to vote against it. And I remem-  
 ber Mr. Moss got on us pretty tight about that -- about  
 only one member of the board having the courage to stand  
 up for his convictions. I've always regretted that I  
 didn't vote with John G. Pollard against that report be-  
 cause I felt it was -- my part should have been done. And  
 of course, as a result of that <sup>the</sup> Admiral and I -- he didn't  
 like me very much; I don't think  
 he does now. I can't help <sup>it.</sup> that's the big thing that  
 happened on the board. That's when I first went on the  
 board, and I was on the board <sup>for part of</sup> three terms, I think. Yes,  
~~for eight years, but I'm not sure of this.~~ I finished  
 the unexpired term of someone, and when you do that, you  
 can have two full terms. I was on the board until '63.

So I had to have an unexpired term and two terms.

(Enumeration of <sup>governors</sup> made Mr. Simpkins' appointments). That

was the highlight of my actions on the board. ~~After that,~~

~~I was on the board -- I said what I thought I should say,~~

but the mood of the board at that time was to support the administration against the students, regardless. <sup>[That was] what</sup> I

thought was going on, and I didn't like that very much.

I do think that Admiral Chandler did a good job in running the school in many, many ways. He served a purpose that needed to be served. He was very strict. He had come from

a military background, and that had something to do with it.

I think he would have been much better <sup>off</sup> if he had been more cooperative <sup>with and</sup> <sup>more</sup> communicated <sup>more</sup> with the students because

right after that the riots all over the country on the

same issue really started, you know, <sup>we</sup> never had

them at William and Mary -- except for that. I don't think

they were riots when they first broke out, but <sup>there</sup> it was right

much controversy. That was the thing about my service on the

board that bothered me. Of course, later on there got to

be another controversy in the state about the state schools,

which I had something to do with.

Williams:

Before you get into that, let me ask you something about

an intervening time that sort of ties in. <sup>have</sup> I had people who

were on the board in the '60s <sup>to</sup> say there was a great stress

an unanimity of the board, so what you were saying sort of

bears upon that.

Simpkins: That was the argument of the board on this issue that I've talked about. "We want a report that we can be unanimous on. And here <sup>we're</sup> getting a report from a committee, getting two views or two reports from a committee, so let's write a report that all can be unanimous on, and that was the spirit in which the older members of the board -- I mean old in service, I was very new --, were working to get this new statement, this resolution of the board which was published as the official results of that investigation. They didn't get unanimity because Pollard wouldn't go along with it. But I was young, and I've regretted every<sup>#</sup>day since then that I didn't stand <sup>with Pollard</sup> ~~apart~~. But we all had to be unanimous. We had to present one solid front. I don't believe in that.

Williams: I've wondered about ----

Simpkins: I don't believe in it on a college board, <sup>have</sup> if you had it and everybody communicates their views and everybody agrees, it might be wonderful, but with<sup>out</sup> ~~a~~ little dissension or little other view in most organizations, things are wrong. That's the way I feel about it. And I never did fear difference; I never did fear dissension. I think lawyers handle that better than people who aren't lawyers. I see it in courtrooms every<sup>#</sup>day -- lawyers fight one another like dogs and cats, but they're still friends. Well, in some professions, they don't understand that, if you are against me, you're against me. Well, I don't operate that way.

But I think Jimmie Robertson and I were the only two lawyers on the board. Now I differed with Jimmie sometimes, but the results were always different than our differing from certain other members of the board. Jimmie and I were friends before; we were friends throughout the whole controversy; we're still friends. And I could say that of the other members I differed with. I felt that we were friends, but I felt that they put too much emphasis on the fact that "you have to agree with me; we've got to be unanimous," and I don't follow that reasoning. That was true.

Williams:

Someone on the faculty -- I don't remember who it was, it may have been <sup>in</sup> some of Dr. Moss's writing for the newspaper even -- said the situation you're talking about showed up a split on the faculty between those who wanted William and Mary to be a small, liberal arts school and those who favored training in the technical field. Did that carry over to the Board of Visitors? Did you see a split like that on the board in the '50s? Now I know that the board turned down a school of education and a school of business there in the '50s, and I wondered if there was such a feeling.

Simpkins:

I wouldn't say that I was aware of it too much if there was. I wouldn't say that it was something that was obvious. I mean there were differences on the board about that problem, but I didn't think it affected the actions of the board too much, Although they did do what you said they did.

- Williams: Why do you think they did turn down the two professional schools? In the time between the controversy over the students and the colleges that seem to have been one of the big flaps on the board.
- Simpkins: I don't really know -- I would be guessing . I couldn't put my finger on the various members of the board <sup>that were</sup> on the one side <sup>or the other.</sup> I wouldn't want to say; I would be guessing totally. But I wasn't too much aware of that, maybe the other things were overshadowing that in my mind, and I wasn't reacting like I might have been reacting.
- Williams: Did you yourself personally think that William and Mary should go into schools of this nature? I know it's hard for you to speak for other people. Let me ask you to speak for you, then.
- Simpkins: You're speaking of what schools now?
- Williams: Education and business in the mid-'50s, when they were proposed by the Admiral.
- Simpkins: They were proposed by Admiral Chandler and the board turned them down.
- Williams: The board turned them down in about '57.
- Simpkins: I think -- I'm not sure on this. My attitude generally was -- I can't speak specifically <sup>my memory of</sup> on those particular things, but my attitude was that William and Mary ought to become excellent in liberal arts before trying to expand into professional schools. And that being my attitude I probably



voted against those schools, but I don't know that I did that. I don't know exactly how it came up.

~~Because~~ that's still my attitude. I'm not sure that William and Mary should be going into too much Ph.D. work. - That's another matter. I think they had gotten a wonderful standing in liberal arts by this time, but they didn't always have. the law school didn't become a source of contention while I was on the board, but I can see possibilities of its having been a source of contention and of its still being a source of contention. I don't think you can spread your money too thin.

Williams: One person who did come on the board in this period, whom I've identified as a real force (and I've talked to him as well), and that's Judge Hooker. I wonder if you would give an assessment of how great a force Judge Hooker was on the board?

Simpkins: Well, now here again I might say too much, but I'm going to say what I think, and I'm honest about it. Judge Hooker came on the board after I did. He was not on the board when this committee did its work about the student dissatisfaction. He was not on the board when that resolution was passed by the board. He came on - I think <sup>relatively</sup> a short time after that, and I believe he was still on when I went off. I'm not sure of that.

Williams: Yes, he was.

Simpkins: Judge Hooker is a very strong person. He has very decided views, and he knows how to get his way. And that's complimentary, ~~he knows and~~ he's not underhanded and he ~~is not~~ doesn't act in an improper way. He hits the issues head-on, and he hits with a hard blow. Now he's also a diplomat; it doesn't sound like he can be both, but he is. Now what specifically did you ask me about this?

Williams: I asked you how great a force he was.

Simpkins: He became a very strong force on the board, ~~and he became~~ and he had the ability to differ, as most lawyers do, with people and still get along with them if they weren't ~~it~~ would get along. Judge Hooker and I were allies on this board many times. We usually stood together, and we stood against the Admiral sometimes. I was trying to think of some incident, but there are a couple of incidents I don't think I ought to tell you about; it might look too personal. -- of things that occurred on the board. I remember <sup>a few of</sup> these. Judge Hooker came from Stuart, Virginia. I think his brother, Murray Hooker, who is dead now, had been a great power in Virginia politics for years. I think he's dead now -- I think he was dead when Judge Hooker came on the board. Judge Hooker was on the <sup>[state]</sup> Corporation Commission when he went on the William and Mary board. Judge Hooker was very friendly to Governor Stanley. They came from the same part of the country, and they had been <sup>political</sup> lengthy friends.

I don't think -- now this might not be strictly accurate, but this is my feeling -- that Governor Stanley was too well pleased with the way William and Mary was going under the Admiral, And I have a feeling he put his friend Judge Hooker on there to keep an eye on William and Mary. And I think Judge Hooker did a good job of it. ~~He didn't~~ he just had <sup>the</sup> an ability to move things along the way he thought they ought to go, and he retained the friendship of Admiral Chandler, which I -- well I guess I did, too, to some extent, but I don't think he felt it very strongly.

<sup>[Hooker]</sup> he still got things going on the board, and I think he <sup>was</sup> satisfied <sup>^</sup> <sup>Governor Stanley.</sup> I don't see much of Judge Hooker now, but I'm still very fond of him, and I think he did a very good job. He at least kept the board from being a rubber stamp and a group that ~~was~~ just unanimously stamped everything the administration wanted to do. If he wanted to question something, he questioned it, and if he didn't agree with it, he said so. Now some people accused him of being <sup>right</sup> ruthless in his methods sometimes, but I never found <sup>him</sup> ~~it~~ so.

That's about all I can tell you about that.

Williams:

<sup>I stopped you</sup> when you were getting ready to start a few minutes ago about the period of the Colleges of William and Mary --

Simpkins:

Well, later on in the '50s, <sup>you see,</sup> William and Mary had under its control what was then R.P.I. (now V.C.U.) and Dr. Hibbs was the provost. And also <sup>under</sup> ~~in~~ its control, <sup>was what</sup> we called the Norfolk branch of William and Mary, which is now Old Domin-

ion, the State Council of Higher Education, <sup>which I</sup>  
<sup>leave</sup> happened to <sup>lead</sup> the William and Mary <sup>board</sup> <sup>and serve</sup> on for ten  
 years) -- then the State Council of Higher Education was a  
 new organization, and it didn't have much power. The power  
 it tried to wield was resented very much by the colleges;  
 I don't think it is now, at least not openly like it was  
 then. It was felt that three major schools -- V.P.I.,  
 Virginia, and William and Mary -- it was felt by some that  
 they had sort of agreed among themselves, let us say,  
 that they would have spheres of influence in the state;  
 that V.P.I. would take the western part of the state and  
 that would be its sphere of influence ~~as the leader~~ <sup>(in</sup>  
<sup>fostering new two-year schools and branches,</sup>  
<sup>in extension work)</sup> Virginia would take the central part  
 of the state, and ~~that~~ William and Mary would take <sup>everything</sup>  
 from Richmond east <sup>(the eastern part of the state)</sup>. Now I  
 could see, or I thought I could see, what was going on, and  
 I didn't think it was ~~altogether~~ right. We also had this  
 organization called VIMS at Gloucester Point <sup>which</sup> got into  
 the act, <sup>and</sup> then William and Mary changed its organization  
 -- that was done by legislative action, and I think it was  
 done as part of this expressed ~~scheme~~ <sup>sphere</sup> of influence theory.  
~~To abolish or change the chancellor's job~~ <sup>the</sup> chancellor's  
 position at William and Mary <sup>had</sup> always been an honorary  
 situation. Colgate Darden had been chancellor; I don't  
 know who else exactly, but the duties of the chancellors' office

were changed, and the chancellor became the active head of the "William and Mary system," we called it, or it was called. Admiral Chandler took that job and resigned the presidency of William and Mary.

Williams: I assume this prior action was with his blessing.

Simpkins: Oh, yes, it was with Chandler's blessing; in fact I think with Chandler's nudging. Chandler became chancellor and the chief executive officer of the William and Mary system, and <sup>"Pat"</sup> Paschall became President of William and Mary. Well, I was still on the board, and the way that started to work I became very much opposed to. I was not the only one opposed to it.

Williams: No.

Simpkins: You have heard in some of these interviews.

Williams: Yes.

Simpkins: I became very much opposed to it. We had a situation in which <sup>st</sup> the ~~meeting~~ <sup>meaning</sup> of the William and Mary board, the chancellor was present at all times, but the presidents of schools were called in to the board meeting when something about <sup>their</sup> ~~that~~ particular school came up. And here was the ~~Board~~ of William and Mary -- the historical William and Mary ~~sitting~~ <sup>and</sup> and that's what it was the board of, and yet Dr. Paschall was sitting out in the hall. I didn't like it, and I said I didn't like it, and something was done about it, too. The William and Mary system was wrecked; the legislature did that. (Of course, that didn't endear me to the Admiral, either.) When Albert's Harrison became governor, in his inaugural address (I can't quote it, but) he made a recommendation concerning the William

and Mary system (now I'm not going to be more specific than that) the legislature agreed with it, and the chancellor's job was abolished <sup>and</sup> with it, the Admiral's job <sup>that</sup> happened soon after Harrison became governor and then of course shortly thereafter, V.C.U. spun off, and Old Dominion became a university of its own. Now I don't know exactly when Richard Bland became a school. I'm not sure.

Williams: Well, Richard Bland and Christopher Newport were made part of William and Mary system when it was set up.

Simpkins: Well, I don't know whether it would have been in existence when this sphere of influence idea came up or not;

~~It may have been, but you see what happened also under this~~

~~sphere of influence theory, in my mind and I think it turned~~

~~out that the legislature did, in abolishing the so-called sphere of influence theory~~

shortly after Harrison became governor, there was a commission appointed to study the higher education <sup>of a system</sup> of Virginia. I

went off the board (the William and Mary board) shortly after

~~Governor Harrison became governor.~~ We had a board meeting, a

very controversial one, shortly before I went off. It in-

involved this change over from the chancellorship system and

the three presidents -- it involved that problem, and I think

that was one of the last board meetings I was ever in, but

what I'm coming to <sup>is</sup> was shortly after I went off the board the

legislature broke up this system, not just at Virginia, but

the same thing was going on in the western part of the state.

V.P.I. was putting its little colleges around. So was the

I think this  
is said more  
clearly elsewhere

University of Virginia. Well, shortly after Harrison became governor, I <sup>was</sup> ~~got~~ appointed to the State Council of Education. <sup>[Higher]</sup>

I was off the William and Mary Board by June, and I was on the State Council by September. And one of the first things that happened,

the State Council of Education and certain other people <sup>new</sup> appointed a commission to study the state educational system, out of which came the report to Harrison about the establishment of the community colleges, out of which came the abolition of these two year schools, with the exception of Richard Bland. All the others were put into the system as community colleges and taken from under the control and domination of the three big schools. It took a little time for that transfer to take place, and maybe all of them haven't transferred over yet. Richard Bland hasn't.

Williams: No.

Simpkins: But there were others that did (became community colleges). If you still had the <sup>old</sup> system of domination by a senior school in the areas of the state you'd never have a community college system, because that became a big fight in the legislature, too,

Williams: Sure.

Simpkins: Which schools were going into the community college system. Of course, they kept Richard Bland out. I never have quite known how.

Williams: I was going to ask why.

Simpkins: I think I know. Roy Smith, who is on the council now, I

think he took my place when I went off in '73; I was on for ten years),

Roy Smith was from Petersburg, a very able man;

he was chairman of the appropriations committee in the legislature, and he had a lot of influence. I think his influence had a lot to do with keeping William and Mary strings on Richard Bland.

I have some wonderful memories of William and Mary, particularly some of the people who were there. Dr. Morton -- I took a history major as I told you -- and I can see Dr. Morton now standing up lecturing. You know, he was slender and rather gaunt looking sometimes. Everybody <sup>who</sup> knew <sup>him</sup> was crazy about him. I don't think the freshman <sup>e</sup> appreciated him <sup>in</sup> those days, you know, the head of the department taught freshmen. They don't anymore, but they did then. I was interested in history, and I particularly liked Dr. Morton. I took all the history I could get under him. Then I was crazy about Dr. Swem. Colonel Lane -- we used to call them the "big four." (In composition this isn't going to look good.) Dr. J.A.C. Chandler was president, he was a man of real ability, and he built William and Mary up. I wouldn't say <sup>he built it up</sup> academically too much, but he served a need that existed.

Mr. Bridges was registrar. Dr. Hoke was dean (of course, we didn't have but one dean then) and Colonel Lane was treasurer. We used to call them <sup>the</sup> "Big Four." I think that was a misnomer -- it was the "Big One" (and that was J.A.C. Chandler) and three smaller "Big Ones." But they were real able people, particularly Dr. Chandler. He knew how to get things done, too.



He really knew how to get things done. ~~Then~~ of course, Dr. Matton was a professor, not an administrator -- he was a good professor. Dr. Guy came there shortly after that. I didn't take any chemistry, but I knew Dr. Guy. There was a fellow in the history department named Ecker who was a real good professor. ~~and~~ Miss Althea Hunt was there; I had some English courses under her and was in some plays. She was a wonderful teacher, I thought. Then Miss Kathleen Alsop was Dr. Chandler's secretary. She was a capable woman.

Dr. Chandler could never have done what he did without Miss Alsop or someone of equal ability. Wilder Tasker was the coach (football coach); he was pretty good. We had a lot of people when I was there in school -- that got to be known over the state pretty well. Carl Andrews was a fraternity brother of mine. I don't know whether you've interviewed him, but you're probably going to.

Williams: Not yet, but I am going to -- yes. We've had several letters back and forth.

Simpkins: Edwin Lambert, who was superintendent of schools in Norfolk for <sup>thirty</sup> years, was a roommate of mine. John Todd, who got to be a rather well-known dentist in the state, was in school. "Pat" Paschall was there after I left. ~~He wasn't there~~ maybe he was there when I was in the library.

But I don't get back down very much now. Things have changed so, and I've got other interests. And I stayed away -- not from the school, I don't mean that --- but I stayed away from parti-

cipation in the college affairs while I was on the council because people have a tendency to think that when you go on the state council you're representing a college. Well, that's not it at all, and it shouldn't be it. It's a different type of job. You're looking at the whole state system, and you shouldn't be favoring a school because you happened to have gone there or happened to have been on its board. I don't think anybody on the council does. I have to say that some of the schools and their officials try to influence members of the council using <sup>the argument</sup> "your loyalty to your alma mater." Well, nobody at William and Mary ever tried that on me, to their credit. It wouldn't have worked. But Dr. Paschall, even though he was a good friend of mine and I was his supporter and he appeared before the council many times on things that got to be controversial in which William and Mary was involved, ~~he~~ never indicated in any way to me any feeling <sup>of</sup> "I want you to be loyal to your alma mater." He would have been above that; he wouldn't do a thing like that, but you'd be surprised that some people from certain other schools tried to influence their alumni on the council by that argument. It usually backfires. But certainly no one from William and Mary ever did that.

I have the highest regard for Paschall in every way.

Williams: When he was nominated as president, you were <sup>on the board.</sup> Could you cite some of the considerations that went into making the decision to make Dr. Paschall president, now that you've mentioned him? What did you see as his strengths <sup>the new</sup> as president of William and Mary?

Simpkins: Well now, of course, he had been sitting with the William and Mary Board as the superintendent of public instruction. Of course, he sat with all of them (all of the boards in the state). I think that's been changed. I <sup>don't see how a man</sup> understand <sup>^</sup> could do a very good job <sup>in</sup> there. But he was, I felt, in a rather unique situation. He was an alumnus of William and Mary; he had the support of the alumni organization; he had been superintendent of public instruction, and he knew the educational system of the state; and he had been sitting there with the William and Mary Board ever since he had been superintendent (and I don't know how long that was -- I think all the time I was on the board, he was sitting with us). He took his job very seriously; and he came to the board meetings, and he knew about the problems of William and Mary from first hand knowledge, and then, too, Paschall -- his strong <sup>est</sup> point or one of his strong points, I thought, and I think it turned out to be true <sup>^</sup> was his ability to get along with people. His attitude of the relationship of the administration with the faculty -- I don't know whether it deteriorated later, I don't know if it did or didn't <sup>^</sup> but his attitude about the rights of the faculty, so to speak, was entirely different from the Admiral's attitude. William and Mary was a state school, and we needed appropriations. He particularly had <sup>an</sup> ability <sup>^</sup> in the halls of the legislature to get things for the schools of Virginia, and he transferred that ability to get things for William and Mary. I'm talking about material things. You know

that. It happened. <sup>all</sup> those things are my reasons for supporting him. ~~And~~ I knew him personally and I admired him.

I think those were the reasons of most of the people <sup>had</sup>. during J.A.C. Chandler's time the plant was built up a lot, and during Paschall's time it was built up a lot; <sup>between</sup> those times it was built up very little. The Admiral got some buildings -- I think money for the library may have been appropriated during his time.

Williams: I think you may be right.

Simpkins: But I don't get back down there now. I know Dr. Graves -- I just <sup>have</sup> met him and know him, and I think, from what I see <sup>he's</sup> doing a good job. But the school is so different now from what it used to be, I wouldn't dare express an opinion about what's going on now because I'm not informed enough.

Williams: It wouldn't be fair to ask. You know, something that I still wonder even after talking to a goodly number of people who were on the board at the time, and I'll ask it of you: it puzzles me how the separation of <sup>the</sup> colleges could have been accomplished over the strident objections of the majority of the Board of Visitors at William and Mary. How do you account for it?

Simpkins: You mean the separation of V.C.U. --

Williams" -- of V.C.U. and Norfolk in 1962 that abolished the chancellor's position as an administrative head, returning it to the honorary position. How do you account for it?

Simpkins: The influence of a good <sup>with</sup> government, the legislature, <sup>the</sup> legislature came to the conclusion, I think, that I came to: that this <sup>of</sup> sphere influence <sup>business</sup> was no good. And I don't think it

was good. That's the way I feel about it, <sup>Now</sup> but I know that Governor Harrison recommended this result in his inaugural address, and it went through the legislature just like that. I think there were personalities involved. I think some of the presidents got along better with the legislature than some others. <sup>I won't say more than that.</sup> I think that some others had shown their aggressiveness a little too much and the desire to have their own way a little too much and maybe their military background a little much. I think there were personalities involved, I really do. But it went right through. Of course, there was a split in the William and Mary board about that; that's what that last controversial meeting was about. Bill Arthur was on the board at that time, too, wasn't he?

Williams: Yes.

Simpkins: You told me in your letter that you talked to Bill Arthur.

Williams: Yes,

Simpkins: Yes, Bill was on that board, and if I remember, Bill wasn't on it when I went on it. He was on it when the big change-over to the chancellorship and from the chancellorship ~~and~~ [was made]. <sup>my</sup> memory is that Bill and I were in agreement on these things. That's my memory -- I don't know what he says, but that's my memory, that we felt this system was wrong, too. I know he didn't think much of the president of William and Mary sitting out in the hall; I know that.

Williams: I know that as well. You have said that this put the spheres of influence idea to rest.

<sup>1</sup> If you were on the state council in the '60s, you saw what seems to me to be the remnants of this idea with VARC.

It was to be William and Mary's, then U.Va.'s, V.P.I.'s, and William and Mary's, then went back to being William and Mary's.

Apparently  
 ^ this was a bone of contention among the three colleges that you've mentioned.

Simpkins: Very much so, very much so -- right. Of course, VARC came into existence -- I'm just speaking from memory -- shortly after this chancellor's system was broken up. <sup>Maybe shortly before, but</sup> Shortly after, I think, I think that the Navy Department -- it wasn't the Navy Department, it was --

Williams: NASA.

Simpkins: NASA -- that they offered this reactor, <sup>isn't that</sup> ~~do you know~~ what it was?

Williams: Yes.

Simpkins: -- to William and Mary,

and certain other powers in the state in their jealousies didn't want William and Mary to have it alone. <sup>it was</sup> it was accepted by the governor on behalf of the state <sup>for</sup> ~~by~~ the three schools -- I'm not sure that's the proper explanation, but when it came, it came to be jointly used and controlled, etc., etc., by the three schools -- (V.P.I., Virginia, and William and Mary), and that resulted in the establishment of VARC, Virginia -- something.

Williams: -- Associated Research Campuses.

Simpkins: Yes, then VARC -- got to be controversial <sup>before the</sup> ~~toward~~ council --

Williams: In what way?

Simpkins: Well, "controversial" is not the <sup>proper</sup> ~~right~~ words, but the operations of VARC, or some phases of it, came to the council. I'm not sure -- I might get VARC and VIMS mixed up. They're entirely different -- I mean the problems with them.

You see, VIMS was also triply<sup>6</sup> controlled, and all of the faculty ~~at~~ VIMS were listed on the faculty at Virginia, V.P.I., and William and Mary, and I think VARC was the same way. ~~the~~ Director of VARC, who had been the Director of the State Council of Higher Education, was controlled, directed, and employed by the three presidents. (Speaking from memory is hard to do, because you can make mistakes) but anyway, that was changed as to VARC, and VARC was put under William and Mary exclusively, I think -- wasn't it?

Williams: Yes, it was.

Simpkins: But, I don't think VIMS ever has been. But there was some controversy -- ~~I~~ <sup>maybe</sup> guess that's <sup>not</sup> the proper word -- about each one of these three schools carrying the people (who actually do the research and work at Gloucester Point) on the faculties in the catalog in Charlottesville and William and Mary and V.P.I. certain ~~standards~~ <sup>standings</sup> and certain accreditations and so forth consider faculties, and it was felt it wasn't representative of the true situation. But VIMS is still around, still operating the same way, as far as I know. But ~~you can get a degree~~ by doing certain work at VIMS, you can get that degree from <sup>any</sup> ~~either~~ one of the three schools, can't you?

Williams: Right.

Simpkins: I don't think that looks very good. I really think VIMS ought to be under William and Mary. It's Tidewater -- it's close.

Williams: But apparently VAPC was set up with the idea that William and Mary was going to control it <sup>by</sup>

Simpkins: And then it got controlled <sup>at</sup> the three and then it went back to William and Mary.

Williams: Yes, and exactly how the other two got into it is not entirely clear.

Simpkins: Well, it's not entirely clear to me either, really. I think that the influence of certain alumni of the two other schools with the state administration, which had to in effect accept this thing on behalf of the state <sup>for its schools,</sup> caused <sup>and</sup> Virginia V.P.I. to get in on it. I remember one <sup>little</sup> incident about it, but I'm not going to talk about it, but that leads to my conclusion that that's what happened.

Have you got any more questions you want to ask?

Williams: I was going to say that you've had a long association with the college, and I appreciate your taking the time --

Simpkins: I don't know how this is going <sup>to sound</sup>, when you transcribe it, and I hope I didn't say anything that would offend anybody. I didn't mean to, but when I read it it might seem too strong in certain <sup>a</sup> couple of places.

Williams: I hope not. I hope not because you've been very candid ...

Simpkins: It's hard to remember the details.

Williams: It is. It is difficult --

Simpkins: These are impressions that you keep over the years.

Williams: Exactly, exactly.

Simpkins: Although there are specific incidents which I do remember and I'm not going to tell you about because they are controversial



things. I don't think it would be fair because some of the  
people are dead, and they <sup>not going to</sup> are be interviewed. I don't  
want to do that.

Williams: Well, I appreciate your even-handed judgment on this, very much.