

E. RALPH JAMES

This interview was recorded in Mr. James's Hampton law office as he approached his sixtieth class reunion, having attended William and Mary from 1912 to 1916. At that time he lived in Surry County, and to come to school he had to catch a train to Richmond, then one to Williamsburg, or take the train to Norfolk and catch a boat to Newport News and another train to Williamsburg--an all-day trip. (North Neck students had to be let out a week early for vacations because the steamer left only on Mondays, and the trip took a week.)

Mr. James was most willing to describe his student days, his seven terms in the General Assembly and legislation affecting the College (and the Colleges) of William and Mary, and his service on the Board of Visitors from 1966 to 1970. In addition, he added several passages, and these are noted within the transcript.

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 Date of interview March 15, 1972  
 Place 25 N. King St., Hampden, VA.  
 Interviewer Emily Williams  
 Session number 1  
 Length of tape 79 mins.

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as affected by World War I	3 mins.
as teacher training school	3 mins.
living conditions	3 mins.
academic preparation	1 min.
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professors, relations w/ students	6 mins.
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rules	1 min.
athletic teams	10 mins.
as state legislator	2 mins.
position at W & M	
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- graduate work	2 mins.
- low degree	3 mins.
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E. Ralph James

March 15, 1976

Hampton, Virginia

Williams: Mr. James, you said you came in 1912 as a student at William and Mary, so you saw pre-World War I William and Mary and then you saw William and Mary just as World War I was getting started. What changes did you see in those four years that you were there? Or did you see changes? Did the college change while you were there?

James: I didn't notice much change in the operation of the college during the four years I was there (which began in 1912 and finished in 1916). World War I came along: ~~My~~ class was the most recent class out of college, and practically everyone ended up in service. That was true also of the class that followed me. I think of my class ~~in service~~ there were two that were either killed in action <sup>in service</sup> or died as a result of injuries of some kind. But as to the operation of the college during those years everything was pretty much on <sup>an</sup> even keel. There were not many changes of any kind in those days, either in college or out.

Williams: Could you describe what kind of a place William and Mary was if you had to describe it about 1915, we'll say.

James: Well, William and Mary in those days ~~was~~ very different from today. You remember at one time William and Mary was about to close its doors for lack of funds, and Dr. Lyon G. Tyler went before the legislature of Virginia (and I do not know

when -- <sup>it was in the early 1900s</sup> At that time William and Mary was a private institution, and at that <sup>point</sup> time the legislature made certain grants to the College of William and Mary, provided that the College of William and Mary furnish teachers for the public schools of Virginia. They had a two-year teachers' course at William and Mary. In fact, I have a teachers' certificate which I had after two years; I did practice teaching in the old Matthew Whaley school in Williamsburg. In those days a number of students would come to William and Mary, stay two years, get a teaching certificate -- teacher's diploma, <sup>it was</sup> they were called -- go out and teach school a year or two and make enough money so they could come back and go to college another year, <sup>Then</sup> and they would go out and teach school a couple of years again and get enough money to come back to college. A number of them extended their education over perhaps six to eight years in that way. It was kind of a work-study program, you might say, self-imposed; no provisions for it. ~~Ⓢ~~ I think that was the case ~~true~~ because in those days William and Mary was a poor folks' college. William and Mary furnished education for lots of boys in Virginia who would not have been able to go to college <sup>had it not been</sup> except for the low cost. The private colleges in Virginia of about the same size at that time were Randolph-Macon, Hampden-Sydney, and Richmond College. I know I considered going to both Randolph-Macon and Richmond College, and the cost was so much more than William and Mary that that was one thing

that dropped them out of consideration. At one time, about the time I graduated and for some years after that, at least 50 percent of the superintendents of schools in Virginia <sup>and quite a large number</sup> ~~were~~

of school principals were.

William and Mary graduates, ~~and quite a large number of school~~

~~principles,~~ ~~of course,~~ Today William and Mary has outgrown

that they do not want to be known as a poor folks' college, and they don't want to be known as a teachers' college, but so far as service to the state was concerned I think in those days they rendered a greater service to education in Virginia than they really render today.

Williams: What were your living conditions like if it was a "poor boys' college?"

James: Well, the first year I lived in Taliaferro dormitory, which has been torn down many years ago. All the rooms had a double bed, and we slept in a bed with someone else. We had a bathroom ~~restroom~~, at the end of the hall on each floor. <sup>it was very</sup> crude-- the old wooden floors-- <sup>sometimes</sup> you could see through the cracks down into the floor below. I was a state student. They designated ~~the teachers,~~ those who took the teachers' course as state students, and when you came you <sup>agreed</sup> ~~signed up~~ to teach two years in the public schools in Virginia. <sup>you had</sup> preference of living in the dormitory; <sup>if</sup> anyone couldn't get in the dormitories it would be those who were not state students. I remember that my room and board cost twelve dollars a month, and I paid one dollar a month for laundry. They had colored women who lived in town who did the laundry. We'd

put our laundry in bags -- dirty laundry -- and set them in the hallways <sup>o</sup> they would pick them up on Monday mornings; they'd bring them back Saturday and dump them all on the bed at the end of the hall, ~~near where the steps came up~~. The first room they'd just dump them all on the bed, and everybody went in and tried to pick out his own clothes or else some equally as good as his!

Williams: What kind of preparation did you have academically? I noticed on your diploma back here <sup>[on the wall]</sup> that each of the professors signed it.

James: That is correct. You know, I would say that probably the greatest thing that impressed me and that I got out of college was <sup>the</sup> association with the professors. In those days professors were looked upon as great men, and they were really great men in the minds of the students <sup>o</sup> the students had great respect for them <sup>^</sup> very different from today. If ~~you~~ a student passed a professor on the campus or even downtown on the street, ~~a student~~ <sup>he</sup> always tipped his hat to the professor just like he would tip it to a lady (and everyone wore hats on campus in those days). It might be interesting to know that in those days -- well, today you always hear of freshmen in college. They were not freshmen in those days; lots of sch<sup>o</sup>ls they were "rats" and various other names, and William and Mary had a name all of its own: Freshmen were known as "duc<sup>s</sup>" and we had "duc caps" <sup>o</sup> duc s had to wear their caps at all times on the campus and downtown.

~~At~~ ~~those~~ Those were the days of hazing, too. Great hazing in colleges in those days -- some very tragic things happened at many schools in the country. William and Mary never had any severe hazing in those days. There were rather innocent forms of hazing. One <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ to seek out a freshman and make him sing to a group; ~~pick him up maybe around~~ after lunch or before lunch as you congregated around the dining hall waiting for the door to open they'd pick out a certain freshman and make him sing. That was one of the forms of hazing. Another one was -- and particularly in Taliaferro where we had the double beds ( Taliaferro was the only dormitory that had double beds. Ewell was next to it and the first floor of Ewell was the dining hall, and the two upper floors were dormitories; they had single beds), and in Taliaferro they would make two duc)s sit on the side of the bed, right next to each other, and upon signal they would go into combat. <sup>usually</sup> you'd think of the winner being on the top, but the winner had to be ~~on~~ the bottom. You'd tussle on the bed, and the object was to hold the other one on the top because there were two or three upper) classmen standing by the bed with their belts in their hands, and whoever was on top was the one <sup>who</sup> ~~that~~ got the belts. Now, ~~because~~, there were a few extremes in hazing for freshmen who were real fresh and didn't know their place in college life, and ~~then~~ they were either taken to the lake or to Cary Field at night. They were taken to the lake and thrown in the lake, or

they were taken to Cary Field and came up with a pretty rough beating but hazing in those days <sup>[Let William and Mary]</sup> was pretty tame compared with many other schools. Talking about the professors -- I said we had great respect for those professors. there were some great teachers there: Dr. Tyler, Dr. Hall, Dr. Garrett, Dr. ~~Stuffs~~ <sup>Ritchie</sup>, Dr. James Southall Wilson, Dr. Clark, Dr. ~~Richey~~ <sup>Ritchie</sup>, Dr. Bennett, and Dr. Crawford. ~~Most~~ <sup>Four</sup> of the "seven wisemen" were still there. I believe that ~~six of the "seven wisemen" were still there when I went to college; I don't remember the one that was missing then.~~ there was a friendly relationship with the professors. It was a small school, only about 250 students, all boys ~~and we had a great~~ ~~They gave tests.~~ We always had monthly tests. I think that was mostly the basis for your grades, that and ~~your~~ your written work and your answers to quizzes in class. It was a great practice of students in those days ~~that if~~ a day or two after the monthly test <sup>to</sup> ~~they would~~ go down to the professor's home to see if they could find out how they came out on the test. They would usually be posted on the bulletin board, but it would take about a week for them to be posted on the bulletin board. We used to go to professors' homes for that purpose, and it had a dual purpose. It gave us an opportunity to visit with them, and then you would always get something to eat. Of all the professors, I suppose Dr. Van Garrett was the most gentle. we always wandered down to Dr. Garrett's home



after our monthly tests and didn't always wait for that.  
 Many Sunday nights we'd go down to Dr. Garrett's home because we knew that Mrs. Garrett always had jelly and cake waiting for the students. I think that the relationship between the students and their professors was something that I do not believe ~~that~~ we have in the colleges today, particularly in the larger schools. There's a reason for it, of course. There<sup>are</sup> just too many; they don't have time for it.

Williams: It's good to talk to someone like you who can tell about an era past like that.

James: Dr. Hall. You've probably heard lots of Dr. Hall, Dr. John Leslie Hall.

Williams: Do you have a favorite Dr. Hall story?

James: Well, he was quite amusing. He liked to tease students, and I always remember one saying of his. ~~He would ask you a question~~  
 he had a class in English grammar in which we had about <sup>[books]</sup> eight or ten English grammar. a favorite question of his on a test was: "What does Nesfield say about the word 'than'?" We had to study all of those grammars. He always asked questions in class, and when you missed the question he always had some reply. I remember that he would ride you a little bit when you missed the question, and he would say, "Well, brother, if that's the best thing you can do, you'd better pack up and go home. You can't make this class unless you do better than that." And then he had a favorite expression when you'd answered a question wrong; he would say, "Gone, gone, gone."

Gone where the woodbine twineth and the <sup>h</sup>wangdoodle  
 moaneth for its first born." Whatever that meant we  
 never knew, but that was one of his favorite expres-  
 sions when we missed a question in class. Then I know  
 he used to tell us that a person was never called by  
 a last name until he attained greatness, <sup>you speak</sup>  
 of Washington or Lee or any president of the United States  
 -- they're called by their last name and he said that one  
 of the greatest compliments that was ever paid to him ~~and~~ <sup>was when</sup>  
 he was in Richmond <sup>some</sup> on occasion and he was walking by Mur-  
 phy's Hotel <sup>it</sup> was warm and the window was open, and he  
 heard somebody say, "There goes old Hall." And he said he  
 looked up into the window and there was one of his students  
 who had never been able to pass English--he flunked every  
 time he took it -- and he said that was the greatest compli-  
 ment ever paid to him when he was called "old Hall." He  
 had then reached <sup>the stature of a</sup> celebrity!

The Brafferton was a dormitory in those days: four rooms  
 on each floor; twelve rooms in Brafferton. Freshmen (or duc's)  
 were not permitted to go into Brafferton; only upper classmen  
 lived there. They were not permitted to go in there unless  
 they were invited or had permission, and if a freshman was  
 caught in there he was made to ride the banister rail from  
 the second floor down to the first forward <sup>not backwards,</sup>  
 as youngsters go down the rail <sup>which</sup> was quite dangerous  
 sometimes because you'd go right through the open door onto

the sidewalk. Of course, Henry Billups became a legend at the college, and students never had a greater friend than Henry Billups. We went to him with a lot of our troubles, and he could help out. He was known as "Dr. Billups, professor of boozology," and it was claimed that no one could graduate from William and Mary until they had completed his course in boozology. That was overemphasized. It was known that on occasion Henry would procure intoxicating beverages for students if they wanted it, but very few ever wanted it. It was more a myth than reality, but ~~Dr.~~ Billups was quite an institution.

~~They had~~ There was a kind of fatherly guidance over students in those days. Some of the rules were perhaps stricter than they have in most prep schools today. For instance, when a student went to college he was not supposed to leave Williamsburg except to go home at vacation time or unless he had permission. I know that William and Mary used to play certain football games at Newport News. They would play Richmond down there sometimes; They would play Randolph-Macon. Sometimes they'd play games up in Richmond that the students would want to go to from the college. Well, we could not leave Williamsburg without getting permission from our parents. We would write home and have our parents write a letter to us saying that we had permission to go to Richmond or Newport News on a certain date or certain occasion, and if you delivered that to Mr. Bridges, who was the registrar, then you automatically

had permission to go but unless you did that you were not supposed to leave Williamsburg. I think that rule was also violated sometimes, but not so much as you might think.

There is one thing about the college I think that a great number of students -- all recent students, I'm sure -- are misinformed <sup>(about)</sup> the athletic teams at William and Mary are called Indians. I think most people believe that the designation as Indians goes back to time almost immemorial, which is not true. The William and Mary teams were not known as Indians until 1916. Much earlier than that -- before 1912 -- the William and Mary athletic teams were known as Farmers; we were referred to as the Farmers because it was country in those days. About the time I went to William and Mary there was a change in that name. Richmond College and William and Mary, as you know, have always been intense rivals, <sup>very intense</sup> more so in those days than now, ~~very intense~~. The Richmond College teams were known as spiders. There was a great Negro preacher by the name of John Jasper, a Baptist preacher, and he had a great sermon entitled "The Sun Do Move" as a result of that (John Jasper, this <sup>Baptist</sup> colored preacher and Richmond College being a Baptist school) <sup>[students]</sup> William and Mary commenced to call them the Richmond Jaspers, and the athletic team became known as Jaspers. They didn't like it, and they retaliated against us -- we assumed the name -- not voluntarily, of course -- of Loonies, because the Eastern State Hospital for the insane was just around the corner from us in those days (it was

all in town) <sup>1</sup> and we were known as the ~~Loonies~~ and that was very, very embarrassing. <sup>1</sup> in 1916 a very versatile roommate of mine, William Durham Harris, from Virgilina, Virginia <sup>1</sup> (after graduation he settled in North Carolina, was president of a bank in Asheville, North Carolina, at the time he died at a relatively young age) <sup>1</sup> <sup>who</sup> but he was a very literary person <sup>1</sup> ( <sup>is</sup> my recollection that he had been editor of the literary magazine and also the Flat Hat ) <sup>1</sup> and ~~he~~ came up with the idea of "Indians." He and I lived in ~~the~~ Brafferton dormitory, and he wrote an article for the Flat Hat on <sup>1</sup> "why not Indians?" <sup>1</sup> and set forth that Brafferton dormitory had been the first Indian school in America; <sup>1</sup> and it was appropriate that the William and Mary athletic team be called Indians, and he followed that up, <sup>1</sup> he also wrote for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, reported on the athletic events. He was their sports editor for William and Mary <sup>1</sup> and I remember that a little article came out in the Richmond Times-Dispatch which simply said, "Dubbed Indians." From then on, from 1916, William and Mary athletic teams became known as Indians, and it's not true that it goes way back beyond. Somewhere at home I have -- I've looked for it and can't find it -- a little newspaper article that came out in the Richmond Times-Dispatch, and if I can find it I'll send it to you.

Williams: Sure. I'm glad you included that because no, I don't <sup>1</sup> <sup>think</sup> that is generally known, not at all.

James: The feeling in athletics was very intense in those days.

~~I go to the athletic events now~~ <sup>2</sup> you go to a basketball game now, and you can look and see that 25 percent of the student body is ~~not~~ there. ~~I mean that there's only 25 percent present.~~ You go out to the football games, the same thing.

It was considered a matter of disloyalty when I was there if a student <sup>didn't</sup> go to a game ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> in fact we always had a committee who just before the game started would go around through the three dormitories, and if any student was found in the dormitory they were dragged off to the game. Everyone attended the athletic events. ~~And there seemed to be~~ <sup>in</sup> in those days, of course, we didn't have athletic grants, athletic scholarships. The coaches simply took whatever showed up. There was no recruiting; there was a call in the fall after we got there, ~~there was~~ a notice posted, an announcement that those who wanted to try out for the football team would come to such-and-such a place. <sup>there</sup> there was a great feeling then of accomplishment when a <sup>person</sup> made an athletic team. I remember there was a coach that was not in college when I was there; he was there shortly after I left, Wilder Tasker. (He recently died up around the Northern Neck of Virginia. I had lost track of him; I didn't know where he lived or I would have been up to see him) <sup>he</sup> he produced some great teams at William and Mary. Art Matsu, who's still in the coaching business -- he brought Art Matsu to William and Mary, and Meb Davis, a great forward passing combination



Williams: Would you please insert here the humorous story of the "shirt-tail parade"?

James: In my college days student conduct was ultraconservative compared with today. However, even then there were some activities that were considered liberal and sometimes radical. Student activities or entertainment were rather few. There was the silent movie theater in Williamsburg, the college German Club held a mid-winter dance, and there were the dances at commencement time. In the Spring, the Ben Greet Shakespearean actors usually came to the campus for two plays, one as a matinee and the other at night. There were two literary societies, Philomathean Literary Society and Phoenix Literary Society. They held separate meetings on one Saturday night each month, at which time each had a declamation contest, oratorical contest, and a debate. Once a year there was a joint meeting which was public and in which the two societies contested in the three categories. Athletic celebrations were limited to cheering rallies and shirt tail parades. Communications were limited. There was no television or radio. When our athletic teams played away from home, we would get the results about eight or nine o'clock at night by telegraph. If we had won, it usually resulted in a shirt tail parade down Duke of Gloucester Street. There was a girl's boarding school in Williamsburg known as Williamsburg Female Institute. The ~~membership~~ <sup>student body</sup> did not exceed fifty ~~students~~. Students would make dates with the girls, and all dates were confined to Saturday night from eight to ten o'clock P.M. and were all together in the parlor of the girl's school under the supervision of one of the lady teachers of the Institute. I remember that on one occasion after a special football victory, being particularly elated, the parade not only went down Duke of Gloucester Street, but to the Institute. We marched in



single file into the large parlor, never stopping, but making a complete circle of the parlor and then leaving the building. That was considered horrible, and on Monday morning, classes were suspended at the College while Mr. Hunter, the President of the Institute, presented the matter to a special meeting of the faculty. Mr. Hunter demanded that the guilty students be shipped from College. The faculty was in a quandry as to what to do, since the offending students could not be identified, except by the William and Mary students and their dates, and it was not likely that they would offer any help. The final disposition of the charges was that all offending students offer an apology to Mr. Hunter, either in writing or in person. There were perhaps fifty to one hundred students involved, and we were all afraid not to apologize and yet felt required to do so. To apologize would reveal our identity; not to do so might result in our identity being otherwise discovered and different punishment being involved. We passed the word around, and it was decided that the apology would be in person, not more than two students at the time, and drawn out over several days. It became so time consuming for Mr. Hunter that he phoned President Tyler and asked him to tell the students to stop coming over to the Institute; he did not want any more apologies as it was taking too much of his time. So the end result was not too bad, but we never had another shirt tail parade at the Institute.

*The Bell Foundry signal that during period was seen and the girls were permitted to run off to their rooms*

Williams: Can you think of any other amusing or unusual incident?

James: There is one incident that happened at William and Mary while I was there, the liking of which I am sure never happened at any other college. When I arrived at William and Mary, strictly a boys college, I observed an advertisement of ladies' corsets in all William and Mary publications, The Flat Hat, The Literary Magazine and Colonial Echo. I soon learned that George Clinton Batcheller, a New York philanthropist, had made and continued to make numerous contributions to the College. He was a manufacturer of ladies' corsets. Knowing this, the business manager of the various publications always solicited advertisements from him, and he always responded.\* In my <sup>Sophomore</sup> ~~junior~~ year, <sup>1913-14,</sup> the editor of The Flat Hat, who was unpredictable at times, wrote an editorial in The Flat Hat highly critical of any person who would advertise ladies' corsets in the publications of a boys' school. Copies of these publications always went to the advertisers, and I am sure that when Mr. Batcheller received his, he must have exploded. I do know that when the editorial was read by the members of the faculty, there was much consternation. A special faculty meeting was held, and the editor of The Flat Hat was forced to resign. The attitude of Mr. Batcheller toward William and Mary cooled in spite of efforts by the President of the College to try to right the wrong which had been done. The College had previously expected that it would be generously remembered in Mr. Batcheller's will, and when he died, Dr. John Leslie Hall, the Dean of the College, was sent to New York to represent William and Mary at his funeral. All

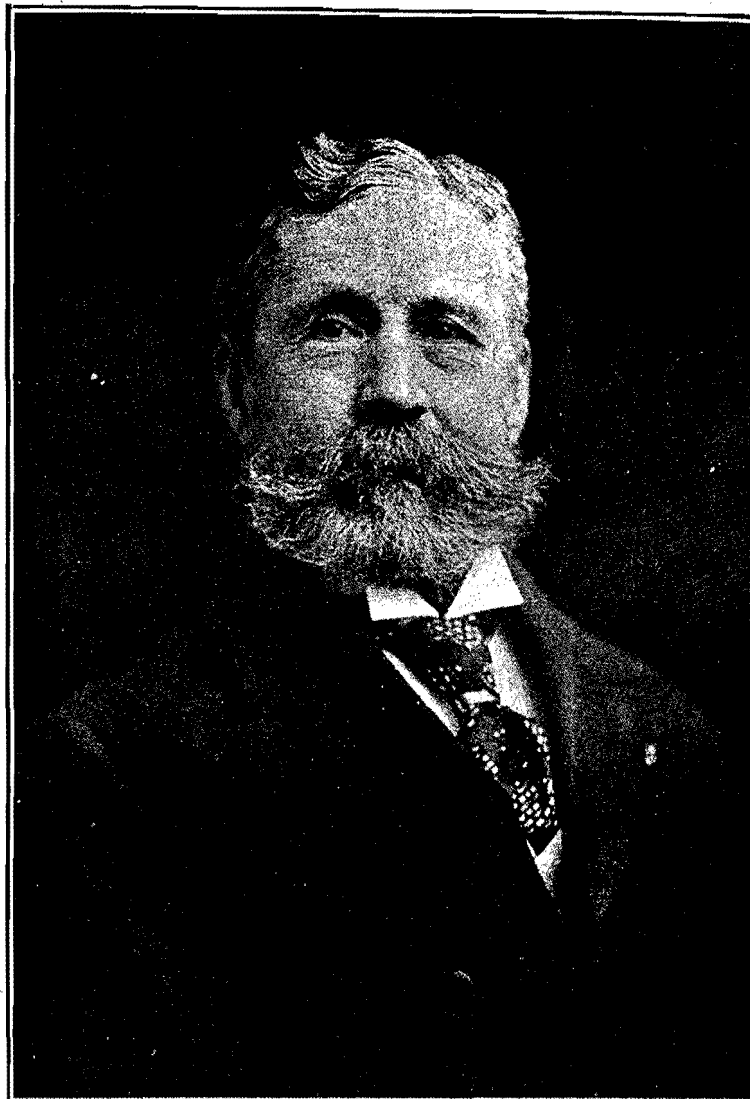
of the efforts to regain his admiration for the College had failed and William and Mary was not mentioned in his will. It is an unusual story, and I still often wonder why the editor of The Flat Hat took it upon himself to be so critical of one of his advertisers, and I also wonder just how much in dollars his thoughtless action may have cost the College.

Miss Williams: I have made copies of the advertisement from my Colonial Echo and am enclosing them herewith.

\* The 1913 Colonial Echo also contained a full page photograph of Mr. Batcheller as well as a two page story written by him entitled "Have You the Dictionary Habit" which is quite interesting. For all of this I am sure he paid the per page charges.

I am giving to you a copy of the 1913 advertisement, photo and two page article; also a copy of the 1914 article (series 1913-14) which was his last.

1913  
Colonial Echo



Sincerely & Cordially Yours,  
Geo. Clinton Batchelder.

## Have You the Dictionary Habit?



MENTAL storehouse, filled with discriminating words made familiar by frequent use, is a valuable personal possession, yet comparatively few of us give any special thought or time to the increase of our vocabulary. We are not sufficiently acquisitive or inquisitive concerning our own language. Most of us go on, year after year, using the same old words, phrases and metaphors, instead of making a conscious effort to acquaint ourselves with the new words that are constantly brought to our attention in reading and conversation. The acquisition of new words has a broadening influence upon the mind, for new words are needed to express new ideas and new ideas mean mental growth. To be inquisitive as to the exact meaning of a word, to delve into its derivation and assure ourselves of its correct pronunciation and use, means the formation of the dictionary habit. This is the straight road to quickening our interest in words and makes for an enlarged vocabulary.

With the present multiplicity of papers, magazines and books, too rapid reading is the natural, though unfortunate, result. Hasty reading debars us from carefully observing the words. We grasp the general idea, as that is all we think we have time for. We are satisfied to take most words for granted. As a proof of this, try reading slowly and intelligently for a single hour, with a dictionary at your elbow. Do not let any doubtful word escape you. The chances are you will be astonished at the number of words you have been obliged to look up in that short time.

How many people will you find who can correctly define the very commonly used adjective "lurid"? The average person will give a meaning wide of the mark. To most of us the word suggests a brilliant sky or a blazing fire. Your dictionary will tell you that "lurid" means pale yellow, wan, ghastly, dismal and gloomy! Could anything be more at variance with the popular idea of this adjective? This is only an instance of what surprises await us oftentimes by resorting to the dictionary.

The dictionary habit will eventually show its effect in our speech. We shall speak with more knowledge of the fine shades of meaning which distinguish words usually considered synonymous. We shall have a wider range of syno-

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nyms and antonyms. A splendid exercise in mental alertness is to practice thinking quickly along these lines. Let a single word set your mental machinery at work!

Mental alertness in reading the daily papers is an important factor towards increasing our vocabulary. I know a keen-sighted reader who fairly pounces upon an unfamiliar word as though it were a nugget of gold! If a dictionary is not at hand, the word is jotted down that its spelling may not escape him. He often copies the sentence in full, to be sure of the context. Not infrequently a search in an encyclopedia will follow the reference to the dictionary. Now, no person with this acquisitiveness and inquisitiveness regarding words can fail to make gigantic strides toward an ever increasing vocabulary. The single word is the nucleus around which, by a little study, we group science, history, art—we know not what—until we begin our little line of research.

Take the word "silhouette," for instance. This takes us back to French history when Etienne de Silhouette was Minister of Finance. So derided was he by the French nation, because of his parsimony, that this cheap, shadow type of portrait was contemptuously called "silhouette," and has so continued to this day.

Our recently completed Grand Central Station in New York, advertised as a practically "stairless station," has brought the word "ramp" into prominence. Outside of the field of architecture, this word was, previously, little known. The average person asks himself: "What is a ramp—what does the word mean?" Your dictionary explains just why this word is used to designate an incline, leading from one level to another, taking the place of stairs. The French verb from which it is taken means to climb gradually, or to clamber upward like a vine. Certainly this tells the story of the modern ramp, simply and satisfactorily!

Modern science of all kinds, the far-reaching uses of electricity, the tremendous interest in automobiling and aviation, are introducing to us an incredible number of new words. If we would be abreast of the times, we must take these into our vocabulary. This should not be done ignorantly, regardless of their derivation and technical use. We should make it our business to familiarize ourselves with the most frequently used terms in connection with whatever is new and interesting in our modern life. The latest editions of dictionaries and encyclopedias are ready to help us. But we must do our part. No one else can do it for us.

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# CORSETS



who has held that position as well, You know, it's been said that when it comes to <sup>the</sup> state, William and Mary has to take a backseat to U.Va. and now to V.P.I. How would you, having been in the General Assembly, respond to a statement like that?

James: Well, when I was there it was disappointing to me that we did not have more members in the General Assembly. ~~Richmond College had more~~ (University of Richmond had more there) and ~~of course, Virginia had more, because at that time, of course,~~ I could account for both Richmond and University of Virginia [graduates in the legislature] because it was only in later years that William and Mary had the law school. The law school at William and Mary (the rejuvenated law school) is not too old, you know, I suppose that had something to do with it. ~~But~~ <sup>through</sup> we had very few from William and Mary in there, but we tried to hold our own, ~~very well~~. I think we made out <sup>all</sup> right. William and Mary usually got its share of appropriations.

Williams: Now you were in the General Assembly when the Colleges of William and Mary were set up, when Christopher Newport <sup>and Richard Bland</sup> came into being ~~and Richard Bland~~. I wondered if you recalled what factors there were influencing the set-up of this system. I have the impression -- and you may not be aware of it or I may be wrong -- <sup>[that]</sup> William and Mary was not all that enamored of taking on the two two-year colleges. So I wondered what kind influence perhaps the Peninsula delegation and the Petersburg delegation had on that.

James: Well, about that time we reached the conclusion in the General Assembly that the present state schools in Virginia couldn't grow ~~be so~~ much larger and that it was not desirable that they become larger, and we did not see where the state could provide the funds to start absolutely new schools. You remember that at one time some years before that practically all at once we created teachers' schools at Radford, at Harrisonburg, and Farmville <sup>[at]</sup> <sup>^</sup> ~~was~~ (the oldest one), but then we all at once created two or three more and started them from scratch, but that was some time before my time in the legislature, but we realized that there were demands for more room for college students, that the state did not have the resources to go out and build an absolutely new campus which would ~~provide resident students~~ provide dormitory space and all that. A move started to build colleges in Virginia in the population centers where the students could live at home and go to college, and those who didn't live at home and couldn't get in a residential college could find a place to live in those large residential areas and go to school. that's the way Christopher Newport was started. Christopher Newport at Newport News, Richard Bland at Petersburg, George Mason in Northern Virginia, ~~and then there was another one,~~ Clinch Valley, out at Wise, Virginia, and then there was another out about Roanoke or Lynchburg or somewhere. I've forgotten the name of that one. It never worked out as one

of those junior colleges and went into the community college system. The larger state schools had nothing to do with taking them on. Christopher Newport and Richard Bland were just assigned to William and Mary; George Mason and Clinch Valley were assigned to <sup>the</sup> University of Virginia; and V.P.I. had the one out around Lynchburg or somewhere (I've forgotten the name of it). Yes, William and Mary had just taken over those two schools when I went on the board at William and Mary, and from the outset they were matters of very much contention, as the result of which we had a study made, and that study so far as William and Mary ~~was~~ concerned <sup>on</sup> concluded that we should get rid of them as soon as we could. Sentiment seemed to change some way, and I remember that each member of the board was instructed to destroy the results of that study and never let it be known that such a study was ever made, so perhaps I've violated a little confidence here in saying <sup>anything</sup> about that. But it was always a matter of contention. It was a matter of ~~the board~~ some ~~one~~ on the board who felt that it was better for William and Mary not to become involved in that operation, and I was one of them, and there was much feeling in the communities of Petersburg and Newport News that they should be on their own. Of course, I think William and Mary was a great deal of help to them. First they were junior colleges, and without the assistance from William and Mary I do not think they would have ~~ever~~ become full four-year colleges as soon as they did, but I still think it's a good

Who decided  
and why was it  
decide to  
retain one?  
(see p. 16A)

There was a much friendlier feeling towards Christopher Newport College than towards Richard Bland. I think that feeling was due entirely to the fact that the educational qualifications, standards, and accomplishments at Christopher Newport were very much higher than those at Richard Bland. I do not think there was any question of preferring one area over the other, though Christopher Newport was more accessible than Richard Bland. There was a feeling that there was no way that Richard Bland could be an asset to the College. I am happy to say that as things have turned out, a much better job has been done at Richard Bland than could have been foreseen at the very beginning. Giving credit ~~to~~ where it is due, I think what has been accomplished at Richard Bland has been largely the result of the efforts of <sup>The President,</sup> Col. Carson. Christopher Newport really never presented too great a problem, but there were some of us on the Board who felt that William and Mary would be better off without any branch colleges. We also knew that authority once obtained is difficult to turn loose, and we knew that some day Christopher Newport would come into being as a full four-year college and we feared the conflicts that might take place at that time. The real impetus for the separation of Christopher Newport from William and Mary came from citizens of Newport News who wanted to have something they could call their own. Hampton did not become involved in the controversy because Christopher Newport is located in Newport News, and in the meantime ~~the~~ Thomas Nelson Community College had been established in Hampton, has thrived, and is doing an excellent job. It has had a competent administration and a very good governing board under the excellent leadership of Melvin Butler. I think Scotty Cunningham, the first president of Christopher Newport, had an early desire to see the College separated from William and Mary, but he kept aloof from the

controversy, though I always felt that the slow movement towards separation probably influenced his acceptance of the offer from what I am sure he considered greener pastures. His successor, Dr. James C. Windsor, has done an excellent job and is a competent and capable college administrator who is most highly respected in the community.

thing for them to be separated, and I was in favor of the separation coming long before it did.

Williams: While you were on the board you were <sup>[in favor of separation]</sup>.

James: Yes. Now the community colleges -- they sprang up in the same way. They have not been under the auspices of any other college, but they've sprung up for the same reason: that we just did not have the resources to go out and build complete new colleges with dormitories, ~~and that~~ we would just have to put them around in the populous areas where students lived or where students could get to them.

Williams: Now the first thing that happened to this colleges system was that William and Mary got rid of the Norfolk division and R.P.I., not entirely of some of the William and Mary people's own will. The General Assembly legislated the separation of the colleges. I wondered if, having been in the General Assembly then, you could identify some of the factors at work on the General Assembly in this separation of R.P.I. and Norfolk?

James: Well, it <sup>was</sup> mostly from the communities themselves, ~~and~~ it's only natural -- a youngster is dependent upon his parents when he's young. When he grows up to be a man or a woman ~~they~~ wants to get away from that parental protection and take care of <sup>himself</sup> ~~themselves~~, and as R.P.I. grew and as Old Dominion grew. Richmond wanted a school <sup>of</sup> ~~for~~ its own, <sup>and</sup> Norfolk wanted Old Dominion <sup>for</sup> ~~for~~ itself, ~~and~~ it's only natural for them to turn loose, and I think it's a good thing for it to

happen. We do not have a system in Virginia <sup>like</sup> they have in some states. For instance, in North Carolina you have <sup>the</sup> University of North Carolina, and they have branches at several places, it's my recollection; I know there's one in Greensboro, and I think there's one in Charlotte, and I do not know about others. You go out to California and the University of California has branches all over California. Here <sup>in Virginia</sup> we just haven't gone into that kind of a system ~~in Virginia~~

Williams: Would you say that the Norfolk delegation was more interested in the separation than the Richmond people were?

James: I would say so, yes, because <sup>the</sup> Richmond school started out differently from Old Dominion; Old Dominion started out as a branch of William and Mary is my recollection. Richmond (was different) (Virginia Commonwealth) That started out as the Richmond Professional Institute, founded by Dr. Hibbs, and it was a private school. ~~It~~ <sup>it</sup> stated out as a private school and soon merged into William and Mary; it started out differently, ~~and~~ there was more demand for the change in Norfolk than there was in Richmond.

Williams: How much influence did Governor Harrison's support have on the General Assembly? He made his first speech to the General Assembly and came out in support of the separation, and after that, as one person put it to me, there wasn't enough room on the bandwagon for it. How much influence did Governor Harrison's speech have on it?

James: Well, I'm sure he had considerable influence because Governor Harrison was a good governor, ~~and~~ he was a conservative governor, and he had much influence on the General Assembly. But the General Assembly, I think, most always was receptive to demands of that kind, unless there was some good reason why guardianship should be continued over them, and I think that Christopher Newport would have been separated from William and Mary long ago except there was a feeling among certain ~~states~~ <sup>persons</sup> at William and Mary that they didn't want to turn loose. People get authority over things and things under their control, and some people don't want to turn it loose, and then there was certain sources of influence in Newport News that didn't want it turned loose. For instance, Mr. McMurrin, who ~~was~~ in the General Assembly of Virginia when I went there, and he's still there -- he has always wanted Christopher Newport to continue under the wings of William and Mary, ~~and~~ that's because he felt the prestige of William and Mary was a great help and ~~gave~~ <sup>gave</sup> a lot ~~to the~~ <sup>of</sup> prestige <sup>to</sup> Christopher Newport, ~~and that was his main reason that~~ ~~he~~ wanted Christopher Newport to be helped along and carried along by the prestige of William and Mary, ~~and~~ <sup>[of separation]</sup> he has never been in favor. There's lot of people that wanted to make the change before, but until this session of the General Assembly they could never bring him around to it.

Williams: What about the other state-supported schools? Do you think



maybe there could have been an element of jealousy in thinking William and Mary was getting sort of an "empire" in eastern Virginia?

James: No, because I think when we put these junior colleges under the guidance of the older schools in Virginia I think <sup>we</sup> were <sup>^</sup> embarking on something new to Virginia ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> they all looked <sup>upon it</sup> as a source of further power and prestige, but as they got into the actual operations I think that ~~wanted~~ <sup>wanted</sup>, and I believe that for the most part most of the schools -- Virginia and V.P.I. and William and Mary -- have always been willing to get rid of those additional duties or responsibilities. ~~Of course,~~ <sup>There</sup> was considerable jealousy ~~back~~ <sup>at</sup> one time, particularly about <sup>a</sup> school <sup>to</sup> be created on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, as to under whose sphere of influence that would be: V.P.I. or William and Mary or <sup>the</sup> <sup>^</sup> University of Virginia. But I think it ended up as a community college in my recollection; I'm not very familiar with the Eastern Shore school.

Williams: I've talked with a number of people who were on the Board of Visitors at the time that this happened. Were they also trying to influence their local legislators? Did you find this as a factor?

James: You mean to get rid or to keep?

Williams: Either way, <sup>actually</sup> <sup>^</sup> because I know the board was not of one mind on this.

James: Well, there was much division on the board, but once the board

made a majority decision at William and Mary I do not know of any individual who did anything to try to upset the decision made by the majority of the board.

Williams: Then it was just a few years later that you yourself became a board member at <sup>\*</sup>William and Mary. Let me ask you first why was it that Governor Godwin appointed you to the board?

James: You would have to ask Governor Godwin that.

Williams: But I may never get a chance to ask Governor Godwin. Why do you think Governor Godwin appointed you?

James: I don't know. I know that Governor Godwin had previously ~~be~~ ~~fore that~~ made an appointment of someone to one of the college boards -- not William and Mary -- and whoever it was did not accept it. I know who the person is, but I've forgotten <sup>what</sup> board it was ~~but he refused the appointment~~. One day I had a call from Dr. Paschall, who told me that Governor Godwin wanted to appoint me <sup>to</sup> ~~on~~ the Board of Visitors of the College of William and Mary but that he did not want to appoint me unless he knew I would accept it, ~~and~~ he asked me to think about it and to let him know, and I said, "All<sup>#</sup>right, I will call you back tomorrow." I thought about it, and the next day I called Dr. Paschall, and I said, "I am not seeking the appointment, but if Governor Godwin wants to appoint me, I consider it a great honor and an opportunity to serve the college that I dearly love, and I shall be glad to accept the appointment." That's all I know about the appointment, except that it was made and I accepted it. And I enjoyed very much my service on

the board, which was only for four years. I know that I was recommended for reappointment by the alumni board of the college, but there was a change of administration, in which a Republican governor came in, and he made it known that he was going to replace as many Democrats as possible on the various boards. His idea was to get Republicans on the board, and he did that regardless of consideration of qualifications, and I was replaced. William R. Savage of Suffolk, who was superintendent of schools in Suffolk, was replaced, and two others were replaced; I can't think of who they were just now, but I'm pretty sure <sup>there were</sup> ~~it was~~ two others.

Williams: Do you think it's important to have board members nearby -- you being from Hampton; you mentioned Mr. Savage from Suffolk. Is it a help to have board members nearby, or does it matter?

James: I think it is a help, and I'll tell you why. The four years that I was on the board were years of great student turmoil, and I was on the board. I could get to Williamsburg in thirty minutes. Harvey Chappell in Richmond was on the board; he could get there in an hour. When I first went there Ernest Goodrich of Surrey was the rector of the board, and he could get there in about half an hour, and the three of us were used, I suppose, as a committee of various kinds more than any other persons on the board because we were able to get there and lend help and advice

to the president or to wh<sup>m</sup>ever needed help. And I think it is essential that there be nearby members on the board. ~~Well,~~ Part of the time I was there we had a member from Newport News, Bill Bowditch, and I was from Hampton. Bill Bowditch is going off now, and Herb Kelly in Newport News is going on. ~~and~~ I think when it comes around again we ought to have a member from Hampton. I hope that there will be a member from Hampton going on the board.

Williams: You mentioned student unrest. Let me ask you if you had to pick out the most important issue in the four years that you were on the board, what would it be? You've mentioned that one.

James: Well, ~~the issue over~~ Christopher Newport and Richard Bland were constant issues before the board. Students' rights was continually before us, and also there was some controversy as to just how far we should go into graduate work <sup>at</sup> the doctorate level. You know we came somewhat under <sup>^ [State]</sup> the Council of Higher Education, <sup>[they]</sup> made decisions as what you could do and couldn't, and there was a little bit of friction at times with them as to when we wanted to offer a doctorate in some particular field and they felt that it shouldn't be, that the University of Virginia provided enough of that and so forth. But I think the issue of students' rights was probably the most controversial thing that happened while I was there. I think that it could have been handled a little more *strongly* than it was handled. Some of us

were in favor of doing that. I'm in favor of students' rights, but I don't think they have all the rights, and I don't think that they can run the college, and we saw the results of that. There wasn't but one college president in the United States that really stood up and asserted himself in the whole thing, and <sup>he</sup> ~~that~~ was the president of Notre Dame, and the only one that took any stringent action in Virginia was <sup>The</sup> ~~the~~ president of V.P.I., <sup>Dr.</sup> ~~Dean~~ Hahn, and he didn't do it until his back was up against the wall; <sup>he</sup> ~~he~~ didn't voluntarily do it. The students had <sup>seized a</sup> ~~ceased the~~ building and occupied it, and the only way he could get them out was to call in the police, and after he did that and asserted himself he became the most popular college president in Virginia. There's just no room for that kind of conduct on behalf of students, and of course, there's been a change from that in very recent years. It's partly due to the fact that the Vietnam War is over and due to the fact that we probably had a little different student during the Vietnam War years from what we have now and from what we had before. There isn't any question about the fact that we had many students in colleges during the Vietnam War that were there to escape going into military service, and which I think was very deplorable because I do not know any greater service that a person can render <sup>his</sup> ~~their~~ country than to serve in the armed forces. I do not know where you can get a better education than you can in the armed forces. The things that

you go through in the army -- it's an education within itself. It prepares you for lots of things in life, and I wouldn't have missed my military experience for anything in the world.

Williams: I know that often students came before the board -- if not before the board, informal sessions before a group of you, as you spoke of. Do you feel that they got a sympathetic hearing from the board?

James: I would say it was fair. I wouldn't say it was always sympathetic.

Williams: Did the board members have <sup>the</sup> feeling -- now I'm asking you to generalize on the people you knew; that's kind of a hard thing to do. Did they have the feeling that they were just taking up entirely too much time with students?

James: I don't know that they had that feeling. I'm sure that we did take up too much time, but we accepted it as one of our obligations and never worried about the time that it took.

Williams: You mentioned also that one of the important issues was expansion into graduate education. How did you yourself feel about this expansion? You've talked about a William and Mary that you knew as a student that was very, very different.

James: Well, I felt that we had a very good administration there ~~and~~ (Dr. Paschall and Dr. Jones and the other vice-presidents) <sup>e</sup> and usually those things were studied and investigated, and when matters of that kind came up I had to rely pretty much on their recommendations. As to students, I had my own

ideas because I'm a disciplinarian, and I think there's no better training of any kind than to have to move by rules, learn to live with other people, with consideration of ~~the~~ other people ~~and~~ the students in those days just like the radicals through the country, ~~they~~ wanted their rights. They were fighting for student rights, but along with that they didn't think that anybody else had rights. As I say, this year is my sixtieth anniversary, <sup>[of graduation from William and Mary]</sup> Maybe I'm getting old, but I pride myself still on some of my young thoughts, but I can't follow some of the things that are permitted at the colleges today -- and that includes William and Mary.

Williams: And I know that these were difficult years, too. One thing that I found in my reading that you seemed to be very interested in and that was changing the law degree. William and Mary had been giving a bachelor of civil laws, and there was discussion for a good while about changing it to a J.D., which they finally did. Now did you have a particular interest in making this into a J.D.?

James: Well, when that came up none of the schools in Virginia seemed to want to go along with it ~~and any of the law schools in Virginia were not interested in it.~~ The only argument that I could find in favor of it was that <sup>you got</sup> ~~it gave you~~ (they claimed) ~~that you've got~~ a better job with the government with the J.D. than you did with a B.L.; that was the only argument I could find <sup>the law schools in Virginia more</sup> ~~or~~ less decided that they would not go along with it, ~~that~~

~~they would ~~not~~~~ . Then <sup>there commenced</sup> ~~they seemed come~~

to be a little break and I had an occasion to meet the dean of the law school of Ohio State University (<sup>it</sup> ~~that~~ had recently made the change) and I had quite a discussion with him, in which he pointed out what he considered some advantages of ~~it~~ and the fact that it was going to be adopted, [it was a] question of time, and you might as well go ahead and do it.

And so after discussion with him -- I've forgotten his name now, [I] <sup>#</sup> saw him and discussed <sup>#</sup> it with him personally -- I felt the thing to do was go ahead and make the change.

~~Of course,~~ We have a provision where you can get your old degrees rewritten; <sup>they</sup> have that at Richmond. I got my law [degree] at Richmond, but I've never requested <sup>[rewritten]</sup> mine, I'd rather stick to the old one I have; it doesn't make any difference to me.

Williams: There was one more issue I had wanted to ask you about, ~~and~~ ~~that's~~ something that's been a real concern here on the peninsula; that's VARC. Has VARC, do you feel, fulfilled the expectations that it seems many people have had for it here?

James: VARC, to me, has been a disappointment. I had a hand in the very beginning of VARC. The folks from the NASA at Langley got in touch with me, Dr. Thompson, <sup>[Floyd]</sup> ~~and~~ Melvin Butler, and Dr. <sup>John Duberg</sup> ~~A~~ (he's still out there) ~~I can't think of his name now,~~ a very good friend, there were three or four -- and told me about this and what it could mean to this area and to Virginia.



~~and~~ they wanted to know how they could approach Governor Harrison. Governor Harrison then had been elected but had not taken office ~~and~~ he had a temporary office in the law library building in Richmond, state law library (Supreme Court building, too.) And I said, "Well, I will make an appointment for you and take you to see him." And I made the appointment with Governor Harrison and took the group up there ~~and~~ until that time he had never heard about it and didn't know what it was all about. We went up there quietly; there was no publicity about it. After hearing from the people from Langley he was completely sold on it, and he promised to do whatever ~~it~~ was necessary for the state to do to support it. They didn't want any money; money was available from the federal government.

Williams: The state didn't want any money or NASA didn't?

James: NASA did not want the money. They <sup>#</sup> just wanted to know they were being supported; ~~and~~ they saw a role <sup>o</sup> and when that came [up before the legislature (the resolution of support for it)] there <sup>the</sup> was <sup>^</sup> feeling at NASA that William and Mary, being close at hand, should be the guiding light in the operation ~~at~~, V.P.I. and Virginia, being the engineering schools in Virginia, the technical schools, felt it was more in their field than William and Mary <sup>'s</sup> and <sup>there</sup> that became quite a bit of difficult rivalry: who's going to operate VARC? <sup>o</sup> who's going to be responsible for the operation? And as a result it became a triumverate, a three-way operation: William and Mary,

V.P.I., and the University of Virginia, which I think was a very bad thing because <sup>[of]</sup> ~~divided~~ authority, <sup>and</sup> ~~divided~~ responsibility, <sup>and</sup> ~~jealousies~~ between the three institutions, <sup>and</sup> ~~it~~ did not get the attention that it should have received. Then ~~of course~~, you know, eventually it was turned over to William and Mary because I think that the heads of V.P.I. and Virginia saw the futility of an operation which they were trying to maintain in a three-way proposition. But I don't think VARC ever reached the potential of what was contemplated and what was expected of it.

Williams: Had you been in on the separation when V.P.I. and U.Va. got out of it?

James: That took place while I was on the board.

Williams: What in those early days then did you see that VARC could do <sup>that you don't think it has fulfilled?</sup>

James: ~~Of course~~, <sup>it's</sup> all beyond me; I'm not an engineer, and it goes so far beyond me that I didn't know then and don't know much today about the technical operation, ~~of it~~. ~~I did have clearance for it. I was appointed~~ <sup>they</sup> wanted somebody on the board to be appointed as a special representative from the board to VARC with whom they could communicate matters to be considered <sup>[by the board]</sup> in reference to VARC. <sup>I became that representative,</sup> It took special clearance <sup>so</sup> ~~on that~~, and I did get the clearance for it, <sup>and</sup> it was opened to me for anything I wanted to find out about it or know. ~~much about it~~ But it's so highly technical . . . . I don't believe it was <sup>of</sup> used by <sup>the</sup> other schools <sup>or industries as was contemplated,</sup> in ~~with~~ us. When it was

I think that I had something to do with the separation because I was not bashful about letting it be known to our Board of Visitors that I did not think the management of VARC by the three institutions was working to the satisfaction of anyone. Divided authority did not produce a competent and effective operation. Jealousy between the presidents of the three institutions was detrimental to the good relationship of the three schools. I think that the presidents of the three schools soon realized that and ~~that~~ all began to seek a solution, perhaps each with a feeling that their particular school should take over. We naturally felt that if the divided authority was eliminated, and the jealousy done away with and if either of the schools should have sole responsibility, then it should be William and Mary because of the location. Dr. <sup>Paschall</sup> ~~Pasquell~~ was ~~also~~ of that opinion and Dr. Hahn of VPI was quite a help <sup>to him</sup> in bringing it about.

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set up it was supposed to be something that would be used by other schools and industries all over the country, and I don't think it ever came into its full potential, though I'm sure it's served a useful purpose.

Williams: If you had to identify the reasons why it did bog down, what would you cite?

James: Well, I wouldn't want to say it was all due to mismanagement.

It might be that it was something <sup>that</sup> could not fulfill the purpose for which they thought it would be <sup>built</sup>. We see lots of installations of various kinds built today, and by the time they get them built they're either out of date or else they find out they can't do what they thought they were going to do with them. First thing you know they're tearing them down and doing something else. It's a technical thing; I really ought not to make any statement of any kind on it, but I do know that the jealousies among the three institutions in reference to the operation was highly detrimental.

Williams: I also sensed <sup>that</sup> there was some unhappiness with Dr. McFarlane when he was the director.

James: That is true.

Williams: I'll let you stand on that. In summary, let me ask this about the board you served on from '66 to '70: would you say this was a board in which there were many different viewpoints, in which there was a great deal of give-and-take, or on the other hand was it a group ~~that you observed~~ that had in mind a single purpose and in which there was a great deal of unanimity?

James: Well, I think <sup>these</sup> ~~it~~ was a great deal of unanimity.

We were practically all alumni of the college, and we were all deeply interested in the college. There were varying experiences, and some of us were conservative, some of us were middle-of-the-road, and some of us were liberals. (I can remember one particularly ~~that was~~ <sup>who though</sup> born and raised in Virginia and had gone to the college; ~~he~~ <sup>he had</sup> spent many years in a certain northern state. I used to differ with him very much on his liberalities. I used to tell him he <sup>'d</sup> lived in New York too long.) But I'd say on the whole they were all interested in the college and willing to give whatever time it took.