

James Glenn Driver

June 12, 1975

James Glenn Driver's first encounter with the College of William and Mary came in 1905 when as a freshman he arrived by train from his home north of Richmond. One of the advantages of William and Mary was that Williamsburg was right on the main C. & O. line. Students from the Northern Neck of Virginia could come by boat to Norfolk and then take the train up the Peninsula to Williamsburg. Walking up from the train, which stopped behind what is now the restored area near Lafayette Street, young Driver paused at Hall's Drugstore for his first Coca-Cola. Years later he himself would own two downtown landmarks, the College Shop and the Pocahontas Tea Room. That was in the future, however.

At the edge of the downtown area stood the college: the Main Building, where almost all classes were taught, the President's House, the Brafferton, the old Citizenship Building, old Ewell Hall, a small gym, and old Taliferro Hall. Mr. Driver recalls the college population being 7 professors and 120 students, and some of these faculty members disapproved of the athletic activities which students like Mr. Driver joined. Not only did athletes have to make up any work they missed (although

most games were scheduled on Saturday afternoons so as not to conflict with classes), but some faculty members gave athletes extra work. Notable in this latter group was the much-respected professor of English Dr. J. Lesslie Hall, one of the original "Seven Wise Men." Dr. Hall's attitude changed, however, when his sons, Joseph and J. Lesslie Hall, Jr., became William sports stars.

No student came to William and Mary as a recruited or scholarship athlete in those days. The teams were small and definitely nonprofessional in nature. The boys simply came to college and if they were interested tried out for one of the teams: basketball coached by F. M. Crawford, football and baseball coached by J. Merrill Blanchard, and track. In the early 1900s baseball was more popular than football here, Mr. Driver believes. For one thing, the baseball team was better than the football team, many players coming from the Northern Neck, where they played every Saturday afternoon at country stores. A lot of good country pitchers came out of this group, he added.

Basketball in 1905 was new to the college and new to the country, for that matter. In that year William and Mary fielded its first basketball team. Having played basketball at the Harrisonburg Y.M.C.A., Mr. Driver thinks he probably was the only member of the team who had ever played the game before. The team consisted of six members: the guards, forwards, center, and one substitute, and the guards were stationary defen-

sive players. When Mr. Driver returned as coach after World War I he came up with the strategy of alternating the players at these stationary positions to confuse the other team. Otherwise the rules have changed little. Basketball in the early days must have been rough, for Mr. Driver remembers being hurt more often playing basketball than playing football. Then, as now, the uniform afforded little protection, but on top of that it was not even intended to be worn for basketball: that first year the team had to make do with their track suits!

Equipment for football was no more sophisticated. Again part of the time the team had to use their uniforms from another sport; Mr. Driver recalls playing football in a baseball uniform. Padding apparently was not used here then, although later when he played on the University of Virginia football team, he did use small shoulder pads. Similarly helmets were not an indispensable part of the uniform: when Mr. Driver tried to play without a helmet at U.Va., as he had done here, university president Edwin Alderman held up the game for him to procure one. Apparently a U.Va. football player had died the previous year of head injuries, and the president did not want to risk a repeat of that. (It might be mentioned that Mr. Driver broke his nose twice playing football; the second time he had the dubious honor of having his nose broken by the great Jim Thorpe in a U.Va. game against the Carlisle Indians.)

Lest anyone wonder about the sharing of uniforms, it should be mentioned that many of the same boys played in more than one sport. Mr. Driver himself lettered in and in 1908 captained the baseball, basketball, track, and football teams, a diversity not unusual for the time.

Games were played mostly with area teams, since class schedules restricted far-flung travel. Transportation to such places as the University of Virginia, the University of North Carolina, North Carolina State, and to conference members Randolph-Macon, Hampden-Sidney, and the University of Richmond was by train. Often William and Mary played its home games in Richmond or Norfolk since they furnished better facilities than the college did.*

Sports facilities at the college were somewhat spare. At first the baseball diamond was on the site of the present Sunken Garden, with the football field beside it on the Richmond Road side and parallel to the road. While Mr. Driver was a student, T. Archibald Cary of Richmond donated the funds to build old Cary Field for football and baseball. Even with

*In one game in Richmond that Mr. Driver remembers the Indian baseball team defeated Harvard, "one of the best teams in the East," by something like a score of 14-0. In this game "Scrap" Chandler, later track coach at William and Mary and at the Norfolk division, hit a home run over the fence of Miller Field that went clear into the James River." Mayo

this facility, spectator comfort was not a consideration; the fans had to stand around the sidelines. Undaunted, both students and Eastern State inmates attended the games, with the Eastern State people being some of the more vociferous rooters. (There was no organized cheering.) One inmate Mr. Driver remembers in particular; "he thought I was the greatest baseball player in the world" (Mr. Driver hastens to add that he was only a "fair" player) and would attend all the games, cheering enthusiastically for his favorite.

As for the early Indian basketball games, they were held in the old gymnasium that was built a few years before Mr. Driver's arrival. It was touted as "the finest gymnasium in the South," but according to this player, "it was so small you could shoot at the basket at one end of the court from the other end."

Tennis was not yet an important sport, and whereas there "may have been a net up somewhere" when he was a student, the college had no tennis courts until the time when Mr. Driver returned as a coach.

Improvement of athletic facilities was not uppermost in President Lyon G. Tyler's mind. He was "more of a historian, more of a politician" and cared little for athletics. Apparently he cared little for pranks, either. Mr. Driver recalls that one time some of the students (not including himself) stole *the beloved* President Tyler's Thanksgiving turkey and took it to one of

the town's stores for the black man who worked there to cook for them. Somehow Dr. Tyler discovered the whereabouts of the purloined bird and went to the store in a rage: "You rahscals ('he always used the broad "a"!'), you rahscals--I'm not coming back to teach class until you give me my bird back." Since one of the boys needed credit for Tyler's course in order to graduate, the class petitioned the president to return and having reconsidered the situation, Tyler came back, but without the turkey.

Most of the time the students were more sedate, however. Athletes signed a pledge not to smoke, drink, or carouse with women; they were held to this by the honor system, which was "like gospel to us." (Their training rules, however, did not include living or eating together.) Submission was inculcated into the freshman "ducs," who had to bow before the statue of Lord Botetourt in the yard, as William and Mary freshmen would do for years. There was some hazing, but according to Mr. Driver, "it was not severe. There was more in relation to fraternity initiations."

College social life revolved around the five fraternities. "Unless you were a fraternity man you didn't get much consideration from the young ladies in town," he chuckles. Town girls pinned to his brothers in Kappa Sigma, called "Kappa Sig sisters," would act as hostesses at the fraternity house. (Pinning was not as serious then as it has been in recent years, when

it has been considered tantamount to engagement.) The Kappa Sigs lived in one of the nicer, more modern homes in town, situated on Palace Green south of what was then called the Audrey House and is now known as the Brush-Everard House. Between twelve and fourteen fraternity brothers lived in the house, and Mr. Driver quite proudly displays a picture of the entire group, which turned out at least three doctors, four educators, three lawyers, two career military officers, a banker, and a minister. Names such as Geddy, Lane, Harrison, Tyler, Macon, and Ruffin appear on the Kappa Sig roster.

An unlikely center of social activity was Cameron Hall on the Eastern State grounds on Francis Street. Dances were often held in Cameron Hall (Mr. Driver thinks the orchestra may have been made up of Eastern State residents), where students and inmates alike would dance.

Although not related directly to the college, one of the big social events in town ("One of the greatest gatherings of prominent people since the Revolution") occurred on May 7, 1907, the three hundredth anniversary of the first communion at Jamestown. At this time Bishop Ingram, the bishop of London, presented a Bible to Bruton Parish Church, ^(where Dr. W.A.R. Goodwin was the young rector) from Edward VII, and President Theodore Roosevelt sent a lectern upon which the Bible still rests in the Bruton sanctuary. One of those present was Bishop Randolph, William and Mary class of 1854, bishop of the local diocese. Another one of those present was

Jimmy Driver. Lacking horsepowered transportation to the celebration at Jamestown, Mr. Driver as well as other students walked down to the old church there. It was not unusual to walk that far; "in fact, I walked to some sort of celebration in Yorktown one time."

While still an army captain stationed in Utah in 1919, Mr. Driver was asked by the new president, J. A. C. Chandler, to begin a sports program at William and Mary. Recognizing the growing popularity of intercollegiate athletics, Chandler appointed Driver head coach and athletic director, with responsibility for managing the teams, arranging schedules, and selling tickets for football, baseball, basketball, and track. Having had coaching experience in the army, he decided to come back and coach for one year and was given faculty rank. At the end of that year the president wanted him to stay and told him he could earn extra benefits by running a bookstore/soda fountain/ specialty shop near the college; thus the College Shop came into being. The property on the corner of Duke of Gloucester and Boundary streets was purchased from Miss Annie Galt, a move that Thomas Henley Geddy, prominent towns-person, thought was a "good investment." "The college is growing," he told Driver. Employed to manage the College Shop, later a partner, then owner in the venture was Bob Wallace, who had played on the college football teams. The College Shop quickly became a student gathering-

place, one attraction being "the big window facing Jamestown Road where the boys could sit and watch the pretty girls go by." Rooms upstairs accomodated about ten boarding students.

Just behind the College Shop on South Boundary Street was another Driver enterprise, the Pocahontas Tea Room. Featuring "good food" served by a Mrs. Brooks and a Mrs. Henley, many students took their meals there. Students often ate in town; when Mr. Driver was a student he ate in a private home on Richmond Road, where he paid the grand sum of \$15 per month for meals featuring such specialties as fried York River oysters for breakfast.

A few years later Mr. Driver opened another concern, a pool room, on the site of the present-day College Shop. Disciplinarian J. A. C. Chandler encouraged him to start it because "he knew if I were in charge it would be run properly." The pool room operated until the Restoration came in.

During the time he was branching out into local business activities, Mr. Driver continued as coach and athletic director. With the baseball and track seasons overlapping he would have to run from one field to another, he said, but often he would use the captain from the previous year's team to help him coach. As coach he found better material than had been here when he was a student, since many players had had experience on military teams during World War I. After a few years he went to the University of Virginia and the

University of South Carolina as athletic director.

At each of these institutions Mr. Driver strongly supported the concept of sports as "part of college life, but incidental to academic work." His ideal of the scholar-athlete was represented by Robert K. Gooch, a University of Virginia athlete, who became a Rhodes scholar and earned his doctorate at Oxford. Agreeing with this statement in the 1907 Colonial Echo, "We read about evils and abuses in athletics . . . we are not a training school for professionals, nor do we harbor any," he volunteered that that was occasioned by an alumnus trying to pay a student athlete, and "the college wouldn't have anything to do with it." Mr. Driver has fought for nonprofessionalism in athletics and has been criticized for it, yet he has held onto his ideals for the William and Mary athletic program.