
Boise merchants, educators, lawyers and bankers made a decision in 1934, that Coeur d'Alene businessmen had made the previous year, and the Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce would adopt in 1965. Casting their misgivings aside, civic leaders, convinced that Barnwell's college was an important economic and educational asset with considerable potential, worked to preserve the school. In so doing they followed not only their own predilections, but the advice of the influential president of the University of Idaho, M.G. Neale, who favored the continuation of the junior colleges in Coeur d'Alene and Boise.

The experience in the north Idaho city of 8,500 was similar to higher education's "trial run" in the capital city almost three times larger than Coeur d'Alene. A church-supported college founded there in 1907 had failed, and Nebraskan M.A. Brakemeyer, a university graduate and a member of the Chamber of Commerce, aided by J.J. Rae, superintendent of the public schools, opened Coeur d'Alene Junior College September 15, 1933, on the third floor of the city hall which also housed the public library. Their counterparts in Boise were banker J. Lynn Driscoll (like Brakemeyer from Nebraska, and a university graduate) and superintendent of schools, W.D. Vincent.

Driscoll, who had succeeded J.L. Eberle as president of the Chamber of Commerce by 1934, and the directors agreed in May of that year that the college should reopen in September. Reaching this critical decision, eight members of the Chamber formed a non-profit corporation, logically called Boise Junior College, Inc., with several of the incorporators serving as trustees. There were six at the first meeting June 7, 1934: lawyer Oliver O. Haga, chairman, banker E.A. Crooks, lawyer B.W. Oppenheim, Haga's partner J.L. Eberle, civic leader Ella H. Budge and merchant J.J. Chapman. Driscoll, also president of the public school board, attended this initial meeting as did Bishop Barnwell who was asked to lead a drive to obtain ten dollar memberships with the assistance of Superintendent Vincent and the secretary of the public schools, Clyde F. Potter.

H O M A G E F O R B A R N W E L L

Most of the trustees and incorporators were Barnwell's personal friends or parishioners who had been his advisors. In drafting a resolution of "Recognition of Service Rendered by Former College Board," which was spread upon the minutes of the June, 1934, meeting, the trustees did not identify these "public-spirited
citizens, so well known to them, who had cooperated with the Bishop the previous two years.

Barnwell told a reporter when the corporation was formed that he had always felt that the college was too big an enterprise for one man to operate. Fortunately, a number of concerned citizens had rendered assistance while credit for the day-to-day operation of the school was given to Dorothy Atkinson, the capable dean, and her faculty.

No longer president, the Bishop continued to enjoy casual contacts with faculty and students while working with the college Board until his departure the following year to take up duties in Savannah, Georgia. In the meantime, Atkinson resigned and Clement Sievers, psychology and education instructor who came to Boise in 1933 from Huron College in South Dakota, was placed in charge of the recruitment program during the summer of 1934. In August he decided to launch a business career and Superintendent Vincent suggested that the Board hire as dean Myron S. Clites, a recent recipient of a doctor's degree in education, who had been recommended to Vincent by the president of Indiana University.

As Barnwell prepared to depart several months after Clites arrived, he did not seem anxious to leave, some students recalled. “We hated to see him go,” remembered an upperclassman, because “he was a friendly, outgoing person,” which was evident at the student and faculty reception obviously enjoyed by the Bishop and his wife, Margaret. He would return to address the 1956 Boise Junior College graduates about a year before his death in Savannah at age seventy-four.

PASSING THE HAT

It was just as well that the Board hired a dean rather than a president since Superintendent Vincent, acting for the Board, supervised the institution, an
arrangement some faculty resented. Eugene Chaffee, offered the position before Clites was hired, turned trustee Ben Oppenheim down when he was told Vincent would have final authority in all administrative matters, and several instructors resigned because they feared the corporate experiment would fail.

The Board, employing local faculty replacements, had reason to be cautious since some prominent and influential people opposed their effort. The vice president of one of the banks, telling Driscoll he did not believe in higher education for the masses, not only refused to contribute to the college, but chided his competitor for backing the school. The publisher of the Statesman also turned Driscoll down, an unusual and exasperating experience for this plain spoken, aggressive forty-five year old Republican advisor to Governor C. Ben Ross. The Statesman’s Margaret Cobb Ailshie was afraid BJC might eventually be wished off on the taxpayers, and Driscoll admitted that public funding should be anticipated in the long run.

Unable to obtain substantial private funding, the Board financed the college with the sixty dollars a semester tuition, ten dollar corporate memberships (which dropped from about $1,300 in 1934-35 to less than $300 the next school year) and the contributions of a few generous individuals and civic organizations. “We passed the hat among the businessmen,” Driscoll recalled. Meanwhile, several women’s clubs joined hands to sponsor what they called the “Boise Junior College Jamboree,” similar to a fund-raising church carnival and about as successful.

Generating enthusiasm, if not much money (about $1,000 in September, 1935), the Jamboree was repeated in 1936, when the net receipts were near half the amount garnered the previous year. Thereafter, the Chamber of Commerce pledged greater assistance and the college survived without the nickels and dimes collected at concession stands. Aware of this help and grateful for it, the students dedicated their 1939 annual, Les Bois, to the Chamber. The economy was improving by the end of the depression decade, and a legislative statute providing the college with a reliable source of income was soon enacted. Prior to the passage of the junior college funding law, about ninety percent of the money expended came from the $120 per year student tuition.4

Unwilling to accept the deanship in 1934, Eugene B. Chaffee, born in Nebraska in 1905, accepted the presidency when it was offered to him in 1936. Raised on a small watermelon farm near Phoenix, Arizona, from 1913 to 1916, and then on a forty-acre homestead near Boise, Chaffee had planned to resign in order to complete his doctorate in Latin American studies when the Board decided to ask for Dean Clites’ resignation and appoint a president. Clites had proven himself to be a sincere, hard-working person who frequently counseled with Vincent. However, dissatisfaction was expressed from time to time on campus and at trustee meetings.

It was said that Clites “lacked experience,” and this was true when he arrived in Boise fresh out of graduate school; but the administrative arrangement dictated for the young school, a dean responsible to the public school superintendent, was awkward if not completely unworkable. Also, the departure of several faculty members after Barnwell resigned made Clites’ job more difficult. Their replacements were “chiefly part-timers,” too old in their attitudes, an original faculty member recalled, and unable to demand the best from their students or provide them with inspired teaching.

Rather than seek applications from experienced college administrators, the trustees, deciding local leadership would be best, asked Chaffee to preside for a salary set initially at $1,800 per school year plus expenses for summer responsibilities. Speaking for the trustees, Lynn Driscoll and Oliver Haga promised Chaffee a
"free-hand" as the first full-time president. In agreement, Vincent added, "If you don't take it, we will probably close the school," and Chaffee accepted.\(^5\)

The Chamber remained the principal guardian of BJC until 1939, when it became a tax-supported institution. This relationship between "town and gown," beneficial for both the city and the school, was not unusual. Idaho communities such as Coeur d'Alene and Pocatello in particular, like towns in neighboring states, rallied behind their colleges. Community pride was a factor, but the overriding reason for bracing local assistance during the depressed 1930s was the desire to reduce the cost of higher education by providing suitable facilities at home. When later asked why the Chamber of Commerce boosted the struggling college, Chaffee cited two principal reasons; prominent citizens had children of their own who wanted an education, and the executives of Boise corporations felt the school would help them attract and retain superior employees with college-bound children.

Once their local institutions were established, business people and churchmen were more than willing to place the financial burden upon the taxpayers of the state. This was true, in Utah, where the academies in Ogden, St. George and Ephraim, previously converted into sectarian junior colleges (Weber, Dixie, and Snow), were presented to the state during the 1930s.\(^6\) In Boise, the Chamber of Commerce and the taxpayers of the district supplemented student fees without state assistance for over thirty years. Like other successful college administrators, Chaffee, who developed strong ties within the community during his initial years, enjoyed the patronage of key business people, ministers, financiers, the leaders of women's clubs and other influential service organizations.

### Rounding Up Faculty

A believer in open-door educational opportunities long before gray hair became conspicuous among student bodies, Chaffee eventually fostered evening courses designed for mature, employed people, despite the shortage of funds. The total budget when he was placed in charge was slightly over $19,000, and faculty had dawn-to-dusk responsibilities as did teachers in most junior colleges.

Unsatisfactory working conditions while Clites was in charge, not the teaching load, prompted language instructor Camille Power to return to Illinois. Compounding Clites' problems, she remembered, was residual resentment within the community carried over from the Barnwell years. Some Episcopalians never forgave the Bishop for diverting church funds to the college and affluent people outside of the church favored the university at Moscow, while Mormons preferred Ricks College in the eastern part of the state.

Unfortunately, Barnwell had inadvertently alienated some parishioners while he aggressively improved and expanded St. Luke's Hospital. Aware of these adverse sentiments, Power came back as Dean of Women and teacher of French and Spanish after receiving a telegram from Chaffee. "I knew it would be all right under Chaffee ..., (who) made friends for the college," she believed when she joined E.J. Faust and Elsie McFarland in the language department.

McFarland, who had also left the college in 1934, because superintendent Vincent told her he was not certain the school would open that fall, had been teaching German and mathematics at a junior college in Mississippi. It was a "place of exile" she said, where smoking, dancing and card playing were not allowed. She was an uncomfortable Yankee in a community where many people perpetuated bitter, lingering Civil War memories.
While twisting the arms of several former faculty members, Chaffee sought funding for additional versatile and experienced teachers capable of enhancing the academic reputation of the obscure college almost unknown in some sections of the state. Norman Adkinson, with a Columbia University master's degree, who had been at Pocatello and then a Civilian Conservation Corps instructor at McCall, was employed to teach psychology and education courses. Mary Bedford, Charlotte Gaylord's successor as librarian, assisted Ada Hatch in English, and Bruce Budge, M.D., delivered zoology lectures. Calvin Emerson remained bursar and chemist, while Douglas Cruikshank (with a master's degree) drove south from the University of Idaho to instruct the engineering students previously taught by A.B. Carson.

Mary Hershey still held registration responsibilities, Helen Farrer taught dramatics and Lucille Robertson, wife of the first class president, guided women's physical education for two years. Music's Strachan, Foster and Kathryn Eckhardt were joined by A.C. Lanphere, formerly at Monmouth Conservatory, and Rosamond Salisbury, an Oberlin College graduate. Custodian Charles Brown made himself "almost indispensable," and Max Eiden remained in charge of men's athletics until 1938, when Harry Jacoby arrived. 7

ELSEWHERE IN IDAHO

"Cowboy Ben" Ross, colorful governor since 1930, had persuaded the Legislature to reinstitute the direct primary, enact an old-age pension law, and provide relief for
property owners with an income tax. Nevertheless, Ross lost in 1936 to Barzilla Clark, a Democrat. Neither Ross nor Clark intervened in the affairs of the junior colleges at Coeur d'Alene and Boise, since they subsisted on local funds. However, the two-year school at Pocatello where Ross had been mayor during the 1920s was a matter of concern.

Pocatello educators sought gubernatorial endorsement for an upper-division curriculum, but the Southern Branch ("The Twig") of the University at Pocatello with a four-year pharmacy program since 1930, otherwise remained a junior college several more years. Governor C.A. Bottolfsen signed the statute that enabled Boise Junior College to become a public school supported by district taxpayers, after a similar bill, passed in 1937, was vetoed by Governor Clark.8

The status of the other small colleges had not changed very much during the four years prior to Chaffee becoming president at Boise in 1936. The founder of the College of Idaho at Caldwell, William J. Boone, died that year. But this four-year school continued to offer elementary and high school teacher programs along with a liberal arts curriculum. Northwest Nazarene College at Nampa had also become an accredited four-year institution, as had the Methodist college at Gooding, home of the State School for the Deaf and Blind. The Normal Schools at Albion and Lewiston, each enrolling about 350 full-time students, were graduating elementary school teachers trained in the traditional two-year program.

The University of Idaho enrolled 2,700 students in the fall of 1936, and the professional schools there such as agriculture, engineering, forestry, mining and law were growing. Most students at all of Idaho's colleges, and those in the contiguous states, were career oriented during the 1930s. This was true at Coeur d'Alene Junior College more so than at Boise where the curriculum was designed to prepare students for upper division studies at a four-year institution.9

The college at Coeur d'Alene, and eventually Lewiston's, developed strong vocational-technical programs, as would Boise's one day, but there was little room for the laboratories and shops required and no money for expensive equipment while the college was housed in St. Margaret's Hall. Meanwhile, Chaffee, like Barnwell before him concentrated on the less expensive liberal arts. Business courses were not offered during the decade because there were two private schools downtown. However, the college would one day have an extensive and sophisticated business curriculum.

The two associate certificates granted during the 1930s were preparatory for the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) or the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) at a senior college or university. English composition was required of all freshmen and sophomores. There were separate "common" and chemical engineering studies, the latter requiring German, while pre-law students followed the B.A. curriculum. Medical and nursing majors had distinctive programs, musicians studied French or German both years, and all unimpaired registrants were expected to include a physical education class.

Journalism, radio and forestry were added shortly before World War II, along with several business and economics courses. "I didn't like the business students," a mathematics teacher candidly recalled. "They didn't want to study." Several teachers, she claimed, felt it was an uphill job to get anything across to them. This unfortunate tendency on the part of some arts and sciences faculty to consider business majors less than quality students surfaced occasionally as the business courses were gradually expanded.10
A NEW DEAL FOR THE COLLEGE

Just thirty-one years of age when he accepted the presidency of the college, Eugene Chaffee, whose only administrative experience had been on the secondary level at Ustick (west of Boise), assumed his responsibilities with confidence. With almost two hundred students that fall, served by a faculty of ten (plus organ, violin, cello, voice, and flute instructors) and housed in a physical plant donated by the Episcopal Church, the school was on a sounder basis that it had been during the previous uncertain years. Important to Chaffee was the friendship of Barnwell’s successor, Bishop F.B. Bartlett, along with trustees Ella Budge, J.J. Chapman, Lynn Driscoll, Oliver Haga, Ben Oppenheim and Harry Yost.

The life of the school seemed more secure, not only because the trustees provided stability, but also because attitudes within the community and throughout the nation had changed. While Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal agencies had not cured the depression, certain accomplishments and experiments had eased the anxiety of many citizens. More people were working, Social Security was instituted, the Wagner Act had given labor the right to organize, and the Rural Electrification Administration was making it possible for more people in agricultural states such as Idaho to pump water and utilize household appliances.

So important to the arid West were the investigations of the recently formed Soil Conservation Service and the dam building of the Bureau of Reclamation. Kenneth Robertson and other students found employment at Boulder (Hoover) Dam, where Boise’s Morrison-Knudsen Company was one of the builders. In the meantime, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation brought stability to banking, reducing the dreaded depositor runs that had ruined so many banks.

The National Youth Administration allotted funds for the part-time employment of 600,000 students during the 1936-37 school year alone, including about four thousand in Idaho enrolled in high schools as well as colleges. BJC trainees built thirty typing desks, and just before Pearl Harbor constructed a federally financed 120 by 50-foot concrete and brick machine shop on the airport campus. The money provided and the projects completed set the stage for bona fide vocational courses, although most of them were temporarily discontinued during the war years.

When Idaho’s NYA program was evaluated in 1941, fifty-two BJC students and more than a dozen supervisors were involved, about the same as the number of participants at each of the other small colleges, while there were nearly three hundred NYA students at Moscow, and more than a hundred at Pocatello. Approximately three-fourths of them said that their NYA job meant the difference between withdrawing or remaining in school. Anxious to continue their education, university-bound youths were repulsed by those individuals who contended that the United States might solve the depression through direct involvement in hostilities abroad.11

STUDENT STRIKE AGAINST WAR

Several students postponed their education when federal projects such as Boulder Dam on the Colorado River, followed by Bonneville and Grand Coulee on the Columbia River, created jobs. However, enrollment increased. Numbering nearly two hundred in 1936, the student body grew to almost five hundred taught by twenty instructors toward the end of the decade. Sixteen students graduated on the
lawn in front of St. Margaret's Hall June 6, 1939, and twenty-nine the following year. There were sixty-two graduates in 1940, and over a hundred the next spring. There were fewer graduates thereafter, until the veterans returned from the war.

The situation in Europe was precarious by the middle of the depression decade, but Boise and much of the nation remained largely undisturbed by the civil war in Spain, Germany's occupation of the Rhineland, and Japan's aggression in the Far East. A public school teacher who had traveled through western Europe the summer of 1938, spending much of her time in Germany where she photographed Adolph Hitler, told the women assembled at the college in December that the reports of terror in Germany had been exaggerated. At the same time, "we who have known the joy of freedom could not stand the repression of Hitler's government," the teacher admitted.

Substantial defense appropriations were not allowed by Congress until late in the decade, and preparedness through the expansion of the National Guard and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (R.O.T.C.) was not popular on campus before Pearl Harbor. In fact, the guiding principles of a student movement against war had been established by six hundred delegates representing many colleges and universities at the University of Chicago in 1932. And the following year, Oxford students vowed that they would not fight for "King and country in any war."

In 1935, a delegation representing 175,000 American students presented President Roosevelt an anti-war petition, the principal document of a so-called "student strike against war." There were more signatories (1,100) at the University of Idaho (including the Southern Branch at Pocatello) than at Harvard (600), Emory (250) in the South, universities in Missouri (800), Nebraska (500), Montana (500), Wyoming (750), or those in Oregon (1,000) and Washington (500). The University of Idaho had an R.O.T.C. unit with its roots in the 1890s. Students had volunteered for duty in the Philippines in 1898, and Mexico in 1916, while about 1,500 students and alumni went to France in 1917-1918. But the pacifists outnumbered the patriots in the 1930s. The Pocatello corps was not formed until 1951, and the program arrived in Boise much later although Chaffee asked for it in 1940. While there were "vigilantes" on campus, the military program was not adopted until the college became a university in the 1970s.12

VIGILANTES AND VALKYRIES

Some of Moscow's students who expressed opposition to war were from Boise, and a handful had attended BJC; still there was no significant pacifist sentiment in the city or on the campus. French, Spanish and German language plays attracted appreciative audiences, and the participants became better acquainted with these countries. Some scholars in Elsie McFarland's German language class criticized Hitler's militarism, and Camille Power's Spanish classes discussed the war in Spain, of particular concern to Basque students. History students examined both countries.

Members of the Radio Club were able to communicate across the nation, into Canada, and overseas with their station assigned call letters, W7EVV. There were also several service clubs, the first two being the Valkyries open to fifteen women, who among their activities operated a used book store, and the Vigilantes for twenty men. The latter name was judiciously changed to Intercollegiate Knights when the club became a chapter of this national organization. Decades passed before Greek sororities and fraternities were colonized.
Exemplary of representative government was the Associated Women's Club organized in 1934. However, the six student body presidents, Kenneth Robertson, George Taylor, William Joyce, David Bisby, Albert Bush, and Gilbert Meffan, serving from 1932 through the spring of 1938, worked with male dominated committees. Nearly all of the officers were young men until World War II, except class presidents who were frequently coeds. Only four women led the student body until the 1980s, while forty-six males presided. The first exception was Eleanor Burns of Boise, a member of the class of 1939, an education major who excelled in athletics and sang in the Glee Club.

The Executive Board, *Les Bois* pointed out, had full charge of the student body's meager funds. The officers met regularly each Wednesday afternoon, occasionally at Chaffee's apartment on State Street, next door to the city's only synagogue, when certain activities required additional planning. Entertaining the eight-member board was eased after his marriage in June, 1937, to Lois Bartón, who would later see her children, Lois Ann and Eugene ("Bart"), graduate from the college. In charge of the board when the Chaffees wed were President David Bisby, Vice President James McClary, who would become a trustee one day, Secretary Helen Harper and Treasurer George Doerr, plus a male and female representing each class, Alice Barber and Albert Bush for the freshmen, and sophomores Mary Crooks and Richard Adelmann.

Coach Max Eiden advised the three-member sophomore Tribunal elected each spring. Acting as a "coercive agent" responsible for the resolution of judicial problems, the Tribunal mainly apprehended and punished "window fracturers," according to *Les Bois*, edited by Margaret Kroeger and James McClary. The board chose the editors of both the Annual and *The Roundup*, the yell leaders and the activities managers.

The campus King and Queen, the football queen and captain were members of the sophomore class. Traditional by 1937 were Sneak Day in early May and Clean Up Day, when classes were cancelled while students polished the campus. The spiral fire escape was shined by sliding down it seated on waxed paper. "I can't remember what the campus looked like when we finished, but we had fun," one coed recalled. The crowning events for the sophomores were the annual spring formal dance in April at the Mode Country Club in South Boise (before the structure burned) and the final one usually held in Hotel Boise's Crystal Ballroom the June evening of the last day of school. Receiving well-deserved recognition during the closing days of the spring semester were the ten sophomores and twelve freshmen having the highest scholastic records. Important to those freshmen girls who became charter members in 1937, was the B-Cube Club which raised money for the football banquet.

In addition to the Executive Board and the Tribunal, the student body had a Social Committee by 1938, which took charge of homecoming activities such as the parade down Main Street in late morning, and the biggest bonfire that ever sizzled after the football game. The players in the BJC Club, the varsity lettermen, sponsored a dance in December, the Post-exam Jubilee in January and, unusual for vigorous young males, a silver tea for Boise women thought to be exceptionally helpful to the college, logically a Valkyrie activity.

Active among the academic organizations were the Associated Engineers, the Forensic Club, and the co-educational debate and declamation teams coached by Tracey Coker, who came to Boise from Gooding College. His debaters were in Caldwell for the 1939 Idaho-Oregon Speech Festival, and at Cedar City, Utah, where some of their opponents were from California, rather than Oregon schools.
Academic activities such as debate festivals, foreign language plays, other dramatic productions, and choir and string ensemble performances were not overshadowed by athletic contests in the 1930s. Complimenting the arts were the speakers and performers the entertainment committee brought to campus the 1939 fall semester. The two dollar season ticket included the deceptions of Harlan Tarbell, "America's foremost Magician," Russian violinist David Rubinoff playing his famous Stradivarius, the lecture of an oceanographer, the resounding performance of a fifty-piece symphony orchestra, and an F.B.I. G-man, who had been involved with the Pretty Boy Floyd and Lindbergh cases.

Yet without a notable football and basketball reputation, the pigskin Broncos were local youth coached by Harry Jacoby in 1939. According to historian Merle Wells, who had been secretary of the Forensic Club, the football team was "mostly taxicab drivers from around town." When Chaffee took over, it was decided that only students could play and that is when the losing streak began. The school was so small that half the men were urged to turn out for the team, and they were usually so over-matched spectators lost interest. Thus, student leaders finally voted to abandon football. "What with bad weather and poor gate receipts . . . nobody wanted to argue whether football should even be continued," wrote Mary Perkins in The Roundup. However, track's sprinters took second place in a triangular meet with Northwest Nazarene College and the College of Idaho at Caldwell in April, 1937.14

Relying on the income from tuition, Chamber of Commerce generosity, fundraising benefits and various donations, but certainly not athletic receipts, Chaffee spent much of his time seeking a sounder financial base for the college. The publisher of the Statesman had warned when BJC was incorporated in 1934, that it might one day become a taxpayer burden. And Lynn Driscoll had admitted this could happen as did other trustees who eventually worked to this end.

Disappointing was Governor Barzilla Clark's veto of a bill that would have created public junior college districts in 1937. Remaining convinced that the school could not become a permanent institution without tax monies, the trustees and chamber stalwarts continued to urge the passage of such a law. Their efforts were rewarded by the 1939 Legislature. The following year land was acquired and the college moved from its temporary home, provided without cost for eight years by the Episcopal Church, to modern quarters constructed with local and federal funds.

Recalling the constructive position his organization had maintained the previous five years, Chamber secretary Ned Harlan, addressing the student body in January, 1940, recalled that BJC was once an orphan, left at the tender age of two on the doorstep of the Boise Chamber of Commerce. Becoming the school's fairy godmother as well as stepfather, the Chamber had nursed it through a puny infancy, and "look what a lusty brat . . . it is today," eight years later.

By the end of the decade Boise Junior College was, as Harlan pointed out, a growing publicly-supported community asset; the founder's objective. Writing to Chaffee in April, 1939, from his office in Savannah, Georgia, Barnwell said, "When I remember the opposition we had in getting this thing underway . . . I think (the junior college statute) vindicates us all." During the 1934 commencement, the Bishop had said, "Fifty years from now I hope to be sitting on a cloud smiling down upon a great university and saying to myself and those around me, 'Just see what I started.'" Had Lynn Driscoll been able to return to Boise in 1984 with a message, he would lift his glass toasting the university while saying, "He is there and that's just what the good Bishop said."15