

Historical View of the New Campus

CHAPTER IV

The Boise College campus has much historic significance. It is located just across the river (the south side) from where the town of Boise was located in pioneer days. Here was the ferry used by those coming into the city to make the crossing to the town from the Old Oregon Trail. Even before this period the fur traders and the emigrants on this trail between 1811 and 1863 usually camped here before trading with the Indians who occupied primitive Boise, or as they called it, Cop-cop-pa-ala—"The Much Cottonwood Meeting Place."

The children of the city's residents used this area by the river as their place to play where fancy could run riot. This, and the life of a child in Boise around the turn of the century, is so well told by Mrs. Alice Lessinger Hanley in her letter of May 31, 1957 to President Chaffee.

"It's a very wonderful thing to know that so many are receiving an education right on the very spot where I got mine. Not in the same way of course, but to me I couldn't have had a finer.

I know more about the strip of land B.J.C. is built on than anyone living today. From the time I was five years old until I was married and long after, it was my Kingdom, or so I called it.

I knew it when it was flooded with water in the early spring, later smelling of fish and rotten bark and refuse of a receding river. Along its willow banks were deep pools where we used to swim and sandy beaches where we dried in the sun, and life was a lovely thing—vacations a year long and I hadn't a worry in the world. Such is youth.

A few weeks ago I came down from Garden Valley to see Boise's "African Violet Show." Words can't describe the change of everything I remember of my Kingdom. I leaned on the car and closed my eyes to visualize this strip of land as I remember it 50 years ago.

I could see the cottonwood grove across from my mother's place. Here I visited the nests of dozens of birds—canary, robin, hawk, finch, woodpecker, peewee, killdeer, owl, and even a humming bird.

As a young Indian I stalked rabbits with my homemade bow and arrow; the arrow was made from a cattail with a nail in the end; caught carp in the sluggish water of the sloughs; and even took a canoe from a boyfriend of my brothers and kept it hidden one long summer and in the tall cattails of the slough we traversed the hidden waterways, completely hidden from anyone but my mother's ducks. Our wigwam was made from willows cut by the crews of men hired by the city to clear a place for a huge septic tank for the sewer system.

Two gun clubs were close to where I leaned on the car; one, the Boise Gun Club, the other the George A. Anderson Club. As I was forever snooping around, they gave me a job of keeping score. If they missed the clay pigeons I was to put down a goose egg(0). My dad worked the lever that sent out the ducky birds for the men to shoot at. The next day we children combed the rocks and sand for birds that weren't broken and sold them back to the Club for a few pennies.

Back of the American Legion Building was one Mike Fitzpatrick's cow pasture. Mike was Irish and a very good

friend of mine as was his youngest daughter. Once he caught me up a tree where his bull was wildly pawing ground to get at me. I had put my dog on him. I almost lost my friend then. He had come for his cows. I remember how ashamed I was when he told me if I ever did that again I was no friend of his.

Near the pasture was the Chinese garden where each Saturday we bought vegetables for mother. Once my brother and I crawled two blocks to steal watermelons only to find they were squash. We excited the Chinese dogs and were fired upon by a shotgun blast. It wasn't aimed at us I am sure now, but fired in the air to frighten us and it certainly did.

In one place on the strip was a very deep pool. Here we swam when we had to break ice to get in. Thin ice, but ice nevertheless. Being constantly in the water made our skin almost scaly. My hair braids were never dry and my mother complained on what she'd do if I didn't stay out. She finally did. She had my hair clipped. I looked terrible but felt fine.

Where B.J.C. conservatory stands was once a small island. On it lived Sage Brush Ann, a poor forgotten soul. Once when it was terribly hot, Sage Bush Ann was cutting sweet clover along the roadside. She looked so tired we asked her in to have lemonade. She did and told us she had been the mother of nine sons; some were good farmers and two quite prominent. What shame caused her to be forsaken and live alone in her tarpaper shack and pick the dump over, we never knew.

Often we children took lunch to our father who worked across the river on the Aveline Brothers cordwood drive. We took a willow-shaded trail that led around the west end of the strip, across the 9th Street bridge, and through the dump which later was Julia Davis Park. The office of the Aveline Brothers camp was where the band shell is now. On way back we combed the dump for treasures of childhood, arriving home with a bucket of colored glass, much to our mother's disgust.

Gypsies came each year to the strip. One band camped near Broadway Bridge and we would stand just out of the light of

the camp fire to watch the gay dancing. If they saw us we were royally welcomed and soon were good friends. Their horses were beautiful and the black eyes of the men softened whenever they saw a good horse or a pretty woman.

South of the American Legion Building was the Gottleib Bahler dairy—a very fascinating place at milking time. Here, too, the other band of gypsies came in the fall. One little girl with enormous black eyes was named Pansy—I never see pansies unless I think of her. She used to send us cards of far away places each year. Oh, how I wanted to be a gypsy, and how I missed her!

Gradually the dumping started on the strip—later it was partially leveled for Boise Airport. Two neighbor boys took to hanging around the hangar and finally were mechanics. Today and for many years, they are big men in Boeing Aircraft.

Another boy, young Harry Musgrove, took up flying. His ship crashed on a solo flight and he burned to death about where the Health Center Building is.

Here also, Mayor Pope shook hands with Maurice Belfonte and extended the city's greetings while Governor Baldrige congratulated Dieudonne Coste just after they landed from Denver on their Good Will tour of America. My father and mother being French, were very interested in them.

Yes, B.J.C. today means a lot to all young folks. To me it's an education in memories. I have only to close my eyes and I can feel the hot sand on my bare feet, also the stickers that grew, the mosquitos and flies and best of all, the cool smooth feel of water on my hot back.

Yes, the strip is now all education; things change, life moves on. To me in my 63rd year, I dream of walking in the rain, the smell of sagebrush, and to see the gold of buttercups."



EUGENE B. CHAFFEE 1932 to 1970.
President 1936-1967.



STUDENT ACTIVITIES



Scenes from foreign language and student plays





Head Coach Lyle Smith, 1947-1967

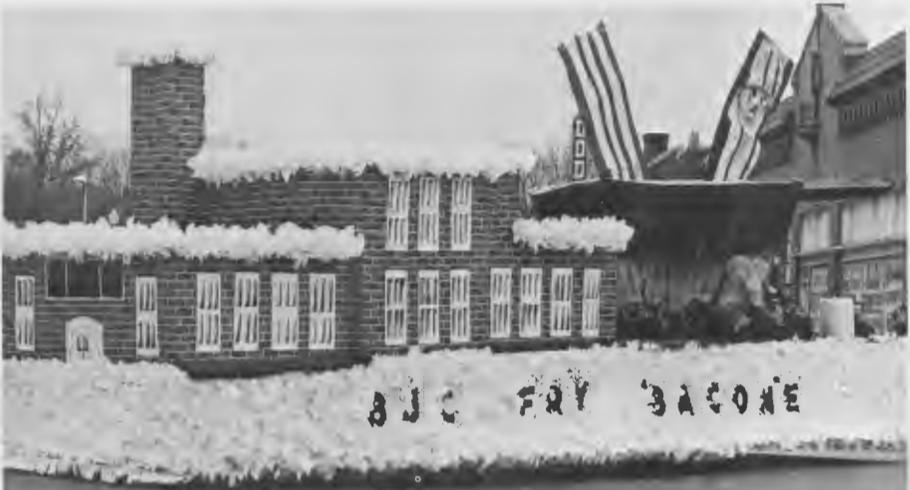


Coach George Blankley, 1948-1962

Governor Robbins looks on while Carl Burt presents potato masher to Oscar Worthwine, B. J. C. board member from 1945 to 1957.



1958 N.J.C.A.A. trophy



HOME COMING ACTIVITIES





Dr. Bruce C. Budge



A polio shot for Miss Boise of 1957



Health Center



Driscoll Hall



College Courts—married student housing



Genevieve Turnipseed—Director of Dormitories and Dean of Women from 1951 to 1958.



Students relax and study in Driscoll Hall.



(Above) Head table at 25th Anniversary of B.J.C. (From left) Board trustee Don F. Daly 1950-1960, Mrs. Laura Moore Cunningham, Mr. & Mrs. H. W. Morrison, Mr. & Mrs. J. L. Driscoll, President and Mrs. Chaffee, Board trustee Harry Yost 1937-1953.



(Left) Dr. Joseph Spulnik, Chairman of Physical Sciences 1947-1968 now Dean of Arts and Sciences, was chairman of the 25 Year Anniversary.

(Right) Long-time faculty members. (from left) Mrs. Lucille Forter, Mrs. Camille B. Power, Eugene B. Chaffee, Dr. Elsie Buck, Mrs. Ada Y. Hatch and Mrs. Mary Hershey.

