

# *Summer School*

## CHAPTER VIII

The need for summer education courses was demonstrated in Boise many years prior to the founding of Boise Junior College in 1932. There were summer schools maintained in the capital city by one or the other of the Lewiston or Albion State normal schools and by the University of Idaho. These summer schools were primarily for the purpose of assisting young people who wanted to become teachers to help prepare themselves for teaching duties. Almost none of the summer students attended for any reason other than to be able to teach in Idaho and to improve their current teaching proficiencies.

In the early 1920's it was possible for a graduate from high school to teach after attending a single summer school sponsored by either of the two State normal schools indicated above. Often a young person would attend one of these summer schools in Boise and at the end of that brief educational period would be certified to teach in the elementary grades of the Idaho public schools. This was true of the author's sister who attended Albion State Normal School in the summer of 1920. In fact, in 1927, after graduating from Occidental College the previous June, the author attended one of these summer sessions himself to conform with the requirement of the late 1920's in Idaho

curriculum and State school law. These classes were always conducted in the local high school for a period of six weeks.

Some 15 years after the author attended such a summer session, Boise Junior College, of which he was president at that time, offered summer education classes about six months after Pearl Harbor. On April 20, 1942, he presented a program to his board of trustees at a meeting held in the Hotel Boise. As a result, "President E. B. Chaffee was authorized to establish a summer school at the College on a cooperative basis by a split of the fee of \$3.00 per credit hour, the District to receive 25% of the summer school fee and the instructor 75%."<sup>1</sup> Five days later, the following item appeared in the Idaho Daily Statesman:

Summer school courses in many regular college branches will be offered at Boise Junior College . . . The decision to offer summer school work was prompted by the need now existing for intensive training in lines connected with the war activity.

The summer session which will begin on June 8 will be a full term in length, and because of the intensive training to be given, students will be able to complete a full year's work in some of the courses and at least two terms' work in others.

The following courses will be offered this summer: General<sup>1</sup> Chemistry in which a full year's work will be completed for which 12 college credits will be given; Organic Chemistry in which 9 credits will be given for a full year's work; Beginning and Advanced Shorthand and Typing, in which two terms' work will be completed; Freshman Composition covering two terms' work; Contemporary Civilization, two terms; History of Idaho and the Pacific Northwest, a one term course; College Algebra and Trigonometry, two terms' work; Music Fundamentals, three terms' work; Applied Music, 1 or 2 credits; various courses in Education Curriculum, including Introduction to Education, Idaho School Law—Civics and Manual, and the Use of Visual Aids in Teaching, all covering two terms' work.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. C. T. Edlefsen, head of the Business Administration Department, was appointed dean of this first summer school and all inquiries regarding it were directed to him.

When the summer session began on June 8, there were 58 students in attendance, and 15 classes were offered. The size of the classes varied from 12 in Chemical Warfare which had a particular appeal as the nation was in its first months of the war, to four in English Composition. Actually, the Chemical Warfare

class which proved to be the greatest drawing card in 1942 was never offered in subsequent years. It was conducted by Dr. Joseph B. Spulnik of the Chemistry Department and was a natural because of the great scare that had occurred during the previous winter because of Pearl Harbor. In the spring of 1942 the whole city of Boise had been blacked out under the direction of a civil defense group, some three months prior to the approval of the college course. This group had been formed in Boise immediately after the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. The College was equipped with blackout screens and the president himself was designated to oversee the effectiveness of the practice blackout as he stood on the top of the Administration Building's tower on a lonely night in February, surveying his designated section of Boise—south Boise—where the College had been located a year and a half earlier. Thus a war was responsible for bringing the first summer session to Boise Junior College.

This original session had a two-fold purpose: (1) to offer short courses in a period in which the war would naturally cut down the length of time men could attend while waiting for the selective service to take them, and (2) it offered the opportunity to increase the annual salaries of the College teachers who were rapidly being siphoned away from colleges and universities in the United States by various defense industries.

Summer school enrollment remained static during the next few years as none of the men had yet returned from military service. The summer of 1946 brought a big boom, with a total of 195 students—145 men, mostly veterans, and 50 women. This dropped about 30 percent to a total of 133 in the summer of 1947.

An innovation in summer school was offered in 1956 when the College made it possible for those under college age to secure an education in foreign languages, often not available at any other time to people who wanted to speak more than the mother tongue. A course in French was offered in 1956 and Spanish in 1957 under the leadership of Camille B. Power and was limited

to ten youngsters between the ages of 5 and 8 years of age. Their parents were urged to audit the course so that they could assist their children with home study.

This course made it possible for children, during the more formative period of their lives, to study a foreign language at a time when there was less pressure to get into community activities or to specialize in a field that they would later be going into as high school and college graduates. It also offered an opportunity for those who were planning to teach a foreign language in junior high school or high school to do their practice teaching at an available time—the summer period.

Enrollment did not grow rapidly in the years immediately following World War II though in the summer of 1951 there were 237 students. The following summer the total fell to 97. It remained around the 200 mark for the next five years, but in 1960 there were 305 students with a gradual increase to 507 by the summer of 1964. This was the last year which covered only the freshman and sophomore years and the following summer the total increased to 645 when the upper division program was launched on June 1, 1965 for the ensuing years.

The 1967 summer school enrollment reached the 1316 mark, with 100 of these attending the session held at Mountain Home Air Force Base and the following summer 1400 students enrolled. The actual nose-count figures for 1969 are not available, but the total number of summer school students was in excess of 1800.

From 1944 to the present (except for the summers of 1951, 1952 and 1968), Dr. A. H. Chatburn has been the director of the summer sessions. This came about through his position as Chairman of the Education Department and the fact that many of the summer students were people interested in education for State teacher certification. Since 1960 Dr. Chatburn has witnessed a 600 percent increase in summer school enrollment. A gradual increase will probably continue yearly unless a war intervenes and reduces markedly the number of men who can attend.

<sup>1</sup>Boise Junior College Board of Trustees meeting, Minutes of April 20, 1942.

<sup>2</sup>*Idaho Daily Statesman*, April 25, 1942.