

Night Lights

CHAPTER IX

A chief feature of junior colleges, particularly public oriented junior colleges, is a school for the adult members of the community as well as day classes for the young people. Boise Junior College did very little in night school until the spring of 1938 when the American Association of University Women of Boise decided to sponsor college courses for the adults of the city.

This group gave two reasons for sponsoring a night school; "First—As a response to numerous requests from people in business and professional circles for college extension courses," and "Second—To acquaint the people of this community with the higher educational advantages of the Boise Junior College."¹

These courses were offered over a period of 15 weeks, one hour per week, at a cost of \$6.00 per individual course for which one credit each was given. The College was open three nights a week—Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and each course began at 7:30 p.m. They were taught by members of the junior college faculty and were open to both men and women.

The table below shows the courses offered and the instructors:

Adolescent Psychology	Norman B. Adkison
History of Idaho and the Pacific Northwest	Eugene B. Chaffee
Elements of Radio Telegraphy	Douglas B. Cruikshank
Elementary Meteorology	Douglas B. Cruikshank
Modern Literature	Mrs. Ada Y. Hatch

There were also a series of lectures this year on the history of the Basque people. These were conducted by Juan Bilbao, a fugitive from one of the Basque provinces during the Spanish Revolution. Mr. Bilbao has spent most of the intervening years in telling the story of the Basque people. Today, he is Coordinator of the Basque Studies Program at the University of Nevada.

Fourteen students were enrolled in modern literature,² ten in history of Idaho and the Pacific Northwest,³ and two in adolescent psychology.⁴ No records can be found regarding the enrollment figures for elements of radio telegraphy and elementary meteorology, and it is presumed that they were not taught this year due to a lack of student interest.

The ten students who took History of Idaho and the Pacific Northwest are a sampling of those who kept the night lights burning in later years. One was the wife of a prominent attorney in Boise and the rest were current and older students who had made grades of "B" or better in regular daytime attendance at Boise Junior College. This gave them the opportunity to take a course that would otherwise not have been offered. The first two months consisted of a general review by the instructor of the Northwest's history and the place of Idaho in that history. At the end of that period, each student wrote a paper on some particular subject that concerned the history of Idaho. For instance, Merle Wells, one of the students, wrote on the Mormon Question which he later expanded as a part of his doctorate thesis at the University of California. Another paper covered the history of Rocky Bar and the remaining papers were on Idaho history of the territorial period from 1860 to 1890.

Night school became an interacting cultural stimulus for those of various areas and background within a given class. Their minds were kept alive by working and developing a particular interest in a class studying similar interests with the resulting confrontations. This was the beginning of a mingling of older and younger generations in classes. The class members reported that it was a stimulating and illuminating experience. Each age group developed a solid respect for the other. They learned that there were other qualities that had a greater influence on their likenesses and differences—that were more significant than merely the difference in age.

Many attended these classes regularly without registering for credit, while others needed credits for upgrading themselves in their occupation. Still a third group who held part-time jobs might take day and night classes to advance themselves with credits for an associate degree. There have been many in this latter category.

Local business establishments commented favorably on their preference for such student employees in menial and the more sophisticated jobs because they seemed more dependable and better organized than most non-students.

Between 1939 and 1941, night school fell by the wayside because the tremendous needs of a new public college took all the available time of an administration loaded with new problems. This began in the fall of 1938. The president, who taught the history course referred to above, spent the fall of 1938 and the early part of 1939 in assisting the Chamber of Commerce with the drive to make Boise Junior College a tax supported institution. The problems that came along with the College's total enrollment growth from 250 in 1938-39 to 459 in 1939-40 and the problems surrounding the College during its first year on the new campus in 1940-41, occupied not only the time of the president, but other people who were almost as busy with the transition that was taking place.

The next night school developed in 1940 when Dorothy Landine taught freshman composition. In the 1941-42 school

year night school was headed by Dr. Francis Haines who had been selected in 1939 to teach history. Most of the courses given were concerned with Civil Air Defense and some 800 students were in attendance this year because of their concern over the international situation which was very tense during the fall and exploded into an attack on Pearl Harbor in the winter of 1941. Also in this year "Conan Mathews started three distinct evening classes in art. Camille Power opened a class in elementary Spanish, and Hazel Roe offered a course in typewriting for beginners."⁵

When war came to the campus in real earnest in the fall of 1942, there were too many other duties that pertained to the winning of the war to do much with the night school. For a period of three years no regular night school took place except for vocational courses that could be given in one of the buildings which had been an airplane hangar when the College campus was entirely an airport.

In 1945 "...sixteen students enrolled for a course in accounting under Merritt Nash."⁶ In the fall of 1946 the G.I.'s began to return and night school was once again expanded. "There were five recorded classes; accounting was continued, Hazel Roe taught shorthand and typing, K. E. Miller had eleven student shop machinists, Catherine Evans Vasquez had 36 in her class of elementary drawing, and Roy Schwartz offered a course in philosophy in which he had an enrollment of between 35 and 40."⁷

In 1947 there were 281 night school students and while this number fell to as low as 104 in 1949-50, the growth upwards started in 1951-52 when there were 555 students. This continued to increase each year so that by 1956-57 it had reached 958 and five years later had mounted to its all time peak of 2677 which included students at Mountain Home Air Force Base. The next highest point was in 1964-65 when there were 2615 students. The lowest figure between 1960-61 and 1967-68 was in 1966-67 when there were 2175.

As indicated above, the night school group has greatly expanded from its small beginning in 1938 and also includes courses given to air force personnel at Mountain Home Air Force Base, some 60 miles from the College campus. These extension courses were inaugurated in 1949 ". . . so that men in the armed service, stationed at Mountain Home, could receive college training. The subjects offered were literature, speech, history, French, and psychology. Classes were held at the base in Mountain Home and were open to both officers and enlisted men. College credits were given. The instructors were all B.J.C. faculty members."⁸

The night school has a real problem because there is still a feeling among some Boise citizens that night school must pay its entire expenses. For the first years after night school began, the instructor received 75% of the tuition and the institution 25%. Later, the tuition fees also had to pay the pro-rated cost of servicing the buildings and the cost of administration.

Night school has now taken on a new terminology nationally and in our own State where it is labeled Extended Day School. This means that night school is merely regarded as an extension of the day school and differs very little from the daytime period except for the fact that most of the students are business and working men and women. The author remembers a meeting that took place in Seattle, Washington in 1963 when the president of the State university made a speech on the tremendous difference between night and day school. One of the presidents from a junior college located in a rural area of that State answered him with this statement: "The only difference I see between daytime classes and night-time classes is that one group comes before milking time and the other group comes after milking time."

In general, the night school student has to rely on his greater accumulation of knowledge since he has less time than the day student to spend on study. He does, however, have a real opportunity to "catch up" in his field of study through his

work experience in today's world of rapid change. This is proving to be a prime reason for a greater number of adults as year succeeds year.

Many people who have attended the night school at Boise College have used this experience as a base to test their study abilities and then have gone ahead and completed their first two years of college and in the present day, requirements for their bachelor degree. This latter has of course assisted many a teacher who did not have a bachelor degree to add to his or her knowledge or credit total by taking courses in the evening that would otherwise be impossible to take. When that person approaches the number of credits necessary for the degree, he may request a leave of absence from his working position to complete his last semester toward a degree. This same opportunity has existed for many others in other professions.

¹*Evening Extension Courses for Adults*. Boise Junior College Spring Semester, 1938.

²Hatch, Mrs. Ada Y. *Grade Book*, 1938-39. Located in vault at Boise State College.

³Chaffee, Eugene B. *Grade Book*, 1938-39. Located in vault at Boise State College.

⁴Adkison, Norman B. *Grade Book*, 1938-39. Located in vault at Boise State College.

⁵*Boise Junior College Faculty Newsletter*. February 1958, Issue No. 14. p.1. Edited by Dr. Robert W. Gardner.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid, p.2.