

ORAL HISTORY: CHARLES PACKARD, former Associate Director of R.L. West with Dick Matthews, Special Collections Librarian

Matthews: Hello, I'm Dick Matthews, a member of the staff at Trenton State College. With me this morning is Charles Packard, another librarian, former Associate Director, who retired two years ago after 34 years service. This conversation is part of an on-going library sponsored, campus-wide oral history project which began last year and involves taped interviews, either audio or video, with retired Trenton State faculty. So far we've been able to talk with and interview Vernetta Decker, former Presidents Edward Martin and Clayton Brower, athletic director Earl Dean and former science professor Victor Crowell. And we had planned to interview James Forcina before he died last summer. Of course with all this we're very thankful to the Media Department, the Media and Technology Center, for all its efforts in this project and making the entire program possible. Former Director Warren Nutt was initially involved in the idea, and we got started that way, and his successor Michael Wodynski has encouraged the project, which we hope we'll be able to carry on for years to come. We're also thankful to the people who are helping with this program today: Roger Lienhardt, the television coordinator, and assistants such as Rich Albe, Bob Maarburg, and Ray Slabicki. Thank you very much on behalf of the library. Now, let's back to our guest of honor, Charlie Packard. Well, Charlie, you've got a couple of claims to fame, and the first one is this matter of 34 years. Now how many people do you think have been here a longer time? Now remember, I checked the book and the history of the College, and I've noticed that in the first hundred years at Trenton State some 570 people were appointed to the faculty. Over 500, not many people lasted as long or stayed here as long or contributed as much as you did, so do you have any ideas who have been here as long?

Packard: Oh, there have been plenty who have been here longer. Dorothy Ferguson Harp in the library put in more years, she was here more than 40 years. Connie Johnson preceded me here at Trenton State. Roy Van Ness came here when did, and he's still going strong. Certainly Earl Dean was here as long as I. Bill Carpenter—quite a number.

Matthews: Nobody mentioned the years. The individual who came closest to you was Sara Ingalls. Sara came right after the Civil War, and stayed until 1913. If I have my arithmetic right, it was about 47 years. It was interesting, two other people came at that time. Austin Apgar and Elizabeth Johnson, all three of these people came in 1866. and all stayed for a long time, and on the honor roll, Lillie Williams and Dickinson Farley. That's a familiar name, isn't it?

Packard: Yes, because it was his son, Richard Blossom Farley, who did the mural that's over the old lobby there in the old building. Yes, his father was penmanship instructor. We dropped that title some time ago.

Matthews: Then, Charles, you and Alice Brewster, they were here for a long time. Connie just retired last year and Roy will be here, well, for some years more. Well, let's start with you now. I'd like to find out what the campus community was like and a little bit about your own background. How did you happen to come and wind up here at Trenton State?

Packard: Oh, that's a rather story, particularly in the library. But, to be reasonably brief, I started library work the latter part of my time in the Service in the Western Pacific in the library at Saipan. I came back to New Jersey after I was discharged. I had graduated from Montclair State before I went into the Service, so I was looking around for a teaching job. A small military academy in Oakland. Then I was supposed to go up there and teach and work around the library and live in the dormitory for a hundred dollars a month and room and board, and I thought maybe I ought to learn a little bit more about librarianship, so I came to Trenton State that summer, 1946--they were running a library summer school that year. That's got a rather long history. The buzzer went off in my room one Saturday morning, and I went out to the hallway to the phone, and the proctor said "Dr. West wants to see you in his office away," and I couldn't imagine what West wanted me for, so I went over, and he offered me a position in the library. Let's see, West offered me a position as Assistant Instructor and at that time the salary scale for that rank was \$1,800 a year to \$2,400, with \$100 a year increments, so I came to the library and stayed.

Matthews: Well, that's wonderful. You know you have another claim to fame, not only your length of service. I don't know if you know it or not. After the length of service, you know what that would be? Well, how about being the first male librarian here at Trenton State?

Packard: Yes, that's true. And I'm not sure if I wasn't the first male librarian within the college system in the state. But I'm not certain about that.

Matthews: Well, I was looking through the history of Trenton State, and in the back they list faculty members by departments, and it's interesting, there were no librarians listed at all until 1916. I don't know who ran the library, and they began bringing in some ladies, and these names are totally strange to me. Thelma Gillette, Ruth Dobbs, Rachel Benson, Anna Scofield, and then we got to the first really important librarian, Lillie Dodgson who spent 20 years here.

Packard: Yes, she'd gone, she'd retired before I came here. Well, Dorothy Ferguson and Doris Perry worked with her.

Matthews: More strange names, Cora Hughes, Bessie David, Lois Donnelly, Louise Achille; that was the staff in those days. Now when you got here, I'd like to show you a picture in the 1946 Seal because it has a picture of the four librarians, the ladies who were here.

Packard: That '46 Seal was in June and I didn't start until September. Yes, Mary Gaver was the librarian then. And when I came there was Dorothy Ferguson and Doris Perry, and Anne Moss, and there was one other library staff member at that time and that was Janet Heath, but she was not faculty unfortunately, a Civil Service appointment.

Matthews: Did she stay on or did you actually replace her?

Packard: Well, she worked that first year I was here, and then she retired at that point, and West had the

position transferred from Civil Service to faculty and slipped me in. The first year here essentially my pay came from the Federal government; it was the Aid to College Faculties for the returning veteran population.

Matthews: A couple of years later they got a picture of you in the group, a picture of you librarians, and this time of course you're a part of it.

Packard: Yes. I was taking care of what was at that time known as the Children's Room in the library, and it is now the Kennedy Room in the old section of the library. And it was pretty much the same group, Dorothy Ferguson, Mary Gaver, Anne Moss, Doris Perry, Cynthia Hamm, she came the year after I came.

Matthews: I have some open books. This is the last one here, but this is a very interesting picture because---let's talk a little bit about the building as you found it. There have been changes made of course. I think that this would be an example of what happened. It's quite interesting, a scene unrecognizable to me.

Packard: You'd recognize the mural. Well, that mural has got an interesting history, because it was on the back wall of the auditorium of the old school on Clinton Avenue, and it was moved up here. The artist, Farley, superintended the moving, but the back wall of the auditorium down there, the top was oval in shape, so when the picture was brought up here, and put up there, he found his old paint notes and went in and up there and in that time he squared off the two upper corners.

Matthews: The subject of that mural was the selling of the land of a portion of New Jersey.

Packard: Yes, that's Governor Bernard of New Jersey, and it's the sale of the last Indian lands in New Jersey to the whites, and took place up on the Delaware River somewhere around Easton I believe, in the 1700's.

Matthews: Now, let's continue with that and here is a picture of the interior of the old library.

Packard: The old building was constructed both as a library and a classroom building, so the back portion of the building was classrooms, there was no way to get through the lobby portion and there was a stack area in the basement and then continued up on the main floor and then the stack balcony that ran across to the back of the building up to the wall that is now the Reference Room, and the circulation desk was immediately in front of that facing toward the two doors, the front doors. At that time we had one 60 tray catalog that was on one side of the lobby and the display case on the other side. That took care of matters very nicely.

Matthews: Would you care to identify those two staff members? We don't know who the customer is.

Packard: I don't know who the customer is, but Mary Gaver is over there doing something, and I remember her checking in and checking out a book. That's a little amusing, but some time, I am not sure what year it was, the Signal had a cartoon in it which showed a rather wide-eared young man standing at that desk with a tomahawk just by his head there.

Matthews: I recall seeing that cartoon. It may take a little leafing through. Of course, that is just why you are here to tell us about some of the situations back in those days. The library staff collection itself wasn't very large. I took a look at one of President West's reports in one of the catalogs, and we had about 50,000 books and about 10,000 pictures, a lot of pictures and about 8,000 pamphlets. We had a lot of those. When did we start our record collection?

Packard: Not really that early, but as a collection, our first record player came from , was given to us by Sigma Tau Chi, and it was just a small collection of records, oh maybe 30 or 40 albums altogether. But it was purely recreational.

Matthews: Hell, you mentioned Sigma Tau Chi, and they were very helpful to the library, they were part of the number of donors who helped our collection in special ways, we probably didn't have too big a book budget...

Packard: No, it was about seven thousand dollars a year when I came.

Matthews: Of course, you probably had to pay attention, we had to buy books which were particularly supportive to the courses in the curriculum, so we didn't have a lot of leeway.

Packard: Back in '46 books were not as expensive as they are now. Oh, think we probably did quite well, on what money was available at that time. And Sigma Tau Chi. I had the privilege of standing in front of Kendall Hall once a month in the assemblies with the can in the hand and taking donations from the students and that was given to the library, a fund to buy extra books and that helped.

Matthews: Yes, I understand that was Lillie Dodgson's idea.

Packard: It was an ongoing affair when I came.

Matthews: Yeah, I would compare it sort of to our 14 day books now. In other words, these books I think were an important dimension to our collection. Do you remember if they were displayed anywhere? Did we have any particular place?

Packard: They were in what is now the periodicals reading room. There were display shelves to the left of the door in the Kennedy Room, and each week's cataloging would come upstairs on Friday afternoon to be placed on those shelves with reserve cards and they would stay on display for a week and if anybody wanted one, they would take the card and slip it in the book and when the week was over, the new bunch came up and they would be available to be checked out.

Matthews: They weren't marked in any way special. In other words they were really held out of circulation for about a week. Well, that of course was a big help. Do you recall some other donors at that time? Back in

the late thirties a man named Paul Frankel who lived up in North Jersey and was the uncle of a lady who graduated from here in 1940, he bought some old textbooks from

Packard: There were a few other things as well. I'm trying to remember that woman's name , but he was a collector of sorts, I've seen some of his other things, he came from West New York, and I'm not sure but what he didn't give us that 1580 Psalm book.

Matthews: Oh, yes, exactly, it was published in 1580 and Gordon Myers took a look at it about a year or so ago, and we've been in touch with the niece, Gloria, and she's still up there, I think living in that same house in West New York, and I believe she told me that Mr. Frankel himself was self-educated and became interested in collecting after service overseas in World War I. And when he came home he kept on with this and eventually helped us out, and we have a number of these books, I would Ray they ... would you say they were old spellers and children's school books, in the 19th century primarily, arithmetic books and spellers?

Packard: Well you know more about that collection because I never really paid much attention to it.

Matthews: We have quite a few of them. Oh, there are some smaller collections, the Alice Brewster Drama Collection, some that the sorority groups set up, and then some alumni groups, special collections.

Packard: Well, yes, the Seashore Alumni group, they used to donate children's books every year.

Matthews: Yes, in memory of Annie Shoemaker, a member of the class of 1909, that's right, and you remember the science collection that was set up by an organization that was called the New Jersey Bookmen's Club.

Packard: I think that's an organization of book publishers, and sales representatives.

Matthews: What do you say we shift gears and talk a little bit about the College and the campus as a whole outside of the library. What did the campus look like when you came here right after the war?

Packard: Those of us who went to Montclair came down here, and we would see this campus and thought we were rather fortunate with the lakes and whatnot, the campus has expanded over the years, but the basic features are still here. Of course, Quimby's Prairie in front of Green Hall between the library and Kendall Hall at that time still had lovely old oak trees around the perimeter, and those we've lost over the years to windstorms and hurricanes and snow, so that's practically desert now. Bliss is still there, alongside the addition now, and Kendall, Green Hall, the library, Norsworthy, and the Allen, Brewster, dormitory complex, but a number of things around here...

Matthews: I don't remember seeing any pictures of Quimby's Prairie when it looked like that, there seemed to be a lot of pictures taken of the old campus, and then of course there was a road running from Lake Ceva right up to the doors of Green Hall and that road was there as recently as 20 years ago. And there were trees lining

that road too, between what is now the Humanities Building, Holman Hall, and Crowell Hall.

Packard: There may have been a road there sometime, but not within my memory. It came from behind Green Hall, same as you do now, go down to the dormitory complex, the road where Norsworthy is on the lake and also down past Brewster. Of course, at that time approximately where lot 12 is now was the Old Inn and dining facility, and across the road from that was what was known as the brown bungalow, and it was in that area now where the education building is that they put up the two barracks buildings and the single story housing for veterans after the war, and they were there until 1955.

Matthews: I think they might have disappeared when Centennial Hall was built. I think that was built for the students from that, from those wooden barracks.

Packard: The barracks first housed veterans and their families and the one facing the front lake was used as a girls' dormitory for awhile. But the barracks themselves didn't disappear until the education building was built. But the single story housing, four room apartments they were, sort of like duplexes, they had been built or put on campus by the State Department of Economic Development, and the State owned them, the college administered their renting and their upkeep, but the State sold those about 1955, and most of them were just jacked up and hauled off for summer cottages down the shore.

Matthews: You didn't live there right away. Tell me when you came here when you were a bachelor, did you live over in Russell Dey's house?

Packard: About a year.

Matthews: When did you come down? Did you have a chance to live in the barracks before you were married?

Packard: No, I didn't live in the barracks at all. I lived in the single story housing. Bobbie and I were married in December of 1947 and she came down in September.

Matthews: And you lived there until....

Packard: Lived there until they disappeared.

Matthews: Yes, and then you bought your house in Pennington. Do you recall any of those hard-bitten veterans?

Packard: Some of those hard-bitten veterans as you want to call them, were faculty and some you know right now. It was like a mixture of students who tended to be older after having been in the Service than the student

is today. And young faculty, the Hausdoerffers lived there for a while, Ernie Sixta, Roy Van Ness, Bill Goldstein, Bob Helbig in music, Alan Lutz was in there for awhile. There were a couple more that were here for a year or two.

Matthews: Do you remember a student named Bill Hoagland?

Packard: Yes. There was another one, Ray Smith. They played basketball. Walt Mastick came back as a student. He lived in the barracks, he had the first television set on campus, but then he went on and taught for a while, and then he came back to college. We had among that group Liberty Bonds Bailey---his actual name! Nice great big tall fellow. We never kidded him about his name, for some reason his mother named him Liberty Bonds Bailey, and he's retired now. He was teaching in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, for a good many years.

Matthews: What kind of life did you have up there in..., let's see, you didn't have to worry about studying.

Packard: I went to school part-time, library school at Drexel. Yes, I did have to study I you consider that. And there was no foolishness about release time for going to school and studying. We had a forty hour week, and we had to go down to Philadelphia during the day and you had to make it up the next day.

Matthews: Did you have to take off an entire morning?

Packard: Yes. There were some courses down at Drexel you could not get on Saturday. I took a cataloging course that was given in the morning and then I had to rush back.

Matthews: You had to do this I suppose for several years? Then later I guess you went out and got a geography Master's degree.

Packard: Yes. I took an Ed.M at Rutgers and then I started for fun with the geography. I didn't take another degree. I had about 30 hours in arts and sciences with geography.

Matthews: I kind of remember you doing that in the sixties.

Packard: I think it was '66, and Bobbie told me it was time for me to quit.

Matthews: In the old days here after the war, did you do things socially? I suppose it would be natural to do so, for instance I noticed down where Packer is now, behind the new dormitories, there is something called a woodland picnic grove.

Packard: I don't think that was used much. I think it was used more before the war. There was a stone fireplace over there, and we used to go once in awhile, but there was also on the island of Lake Ceva picnic

area with a fireplace, and we used to picnic over there once in awhile.

Matthews: I noticed they had an archery range at one time. I was quite surprised at that until I saw in the a couple of weeks ago that they had an archery program here for a couple of years.

Packard: That archery program had been here for quite some time.

Matthews: I guess I just hadn't been aware of it. How about this, Charles? We had a medical unit. I noticed a little building on a 1946 map something called a "Medical Unit." Was that the forerunner of what's now the facilities for nursing in Norsworthy?

Packard: No, Norsworthy was there already to the best of my recollection. Now, for awhile they were in the brown bungalow that was across the street from the old inn. So far as I know it's always been there in Norsworthy.

Matthews: So if I showed you a campus map, you would be hard-pressed to identify the Medical Unit. Now, what kind of parking facilities did they have?

Packard: Oh, no problem parking. No. For those that had cars there was plenty of parking space. In fact, the back of one of the dorms—Centennial—the dining hall, in that area there were garages and occasionally one became available. And for a few years there on the East side of Green Hall, there were parking places marked out. And they were reserved--everyone of us had our little signs--one for Packard, this one for so and so and such and such. No, we had no problem parking.

Matthews: What about the students? Did they need cars?

Packard: Of course, the resident population were housed out here, the rest were commuters, and I don't remember that---. Well, you're old enough too. A car, just before the war and for a while after the war, was a pretty expensive item. Not too many students could afford them.

Matthews: You needed a car. I was going to ask if you thought you needed a car.

Packard: Well, you needed a car, though bus service was a lot better then than it has been in recent years. Well, with a family and shopping, you needed a car...

Matthews: So that's what things were like in the post war era.

Packard: Well, you probably looked that up and you know more about that than I do.

Matthews: Yes, in 1946 and 1947 we had about 850 students with 250 men and that must have been quite a jump. I suppose the number of men increased dramatically then because of the returning GI's.

Packard: The faculty, if you counted it up at that time, amounted to about 72 when I came.

Matthews: Yes, let's talk a little bit about the faculty, starting with President West. He was, as we all know, our first designated President. His predecessors were called Principals. And it's interesting, I think I noticed that he is also the last President who did not have an earned doctorate. After he obtained the position, he got the doctorate.

Packard: West had an honorary degree from Rutgers but he was too busy doing the job I think. He had his Master's from Harvard.

Matthews: He'd come from downtown---

Packard: He was from the State Department of Education.

Matthews: His old background was from a State Normal School up in Maine. Then he went on to Harvard. What kind of gentleman was he? You once told me that he had a happy faculty--if he had to turn you down, he was nice about it.

Packard: Yeah, I'd say about Roscoe that you could go in his office and get turned down and *come* out smiling. A real case, an unidentified successor, you could go into that office at that time and get a yes and come out ... Mr. West was a rather mellow autocrat, I think might call him.

Matthews: Yes, I heard that about him. Legend has it that not only were there weekly assemblies at which students had assigned seats, but also that all faculty members were expected to be on campus five days a week for the full working day until 8:30 or 9 o'clock. Do you recall that situation?

Packard: Yes, we were, at least those in the library were required to be. And most of the others. Of course in the compulsory assemblies faculty usually attended and were expected to show up as well. And we would close the library doors for those assemblies and go over. There was only one problem with them that I found, they came right after lunch and some of them--you had a great tendency to fall asleep in the middle of them. Not only the students but the faculty as well.

Matthews: You had interesting off-campus speakers as well, didn't you? Eva LeGallienne, Pearl Buck, Ogden Nash, James Michener.

Packard: West went out of his way to bring good people in, no doubt about it, and he enjoyed those assemblies. And he always enjoyed reading poetry. Most everyone of those assemblies seemed to have some

poetry in it.

Matthews: You know, Charlie, we only have a couple of minutes left.

Packard: Oh, yes, well you wanted to talk some about physical changes in the library. The first big change came in 1960. At that time I remember going over to the President's office to meet with Cleve Westby who was the building man for the State Department who had built a number of buildings and some of them not too great. I remember Cleve saying to Felix Hirsch and I, "Tell me your problems." So we said to him, we've got problems, but we've got the solutions. Here they are. That was not Westby's general way of doing business, but I guess we were the first real librarians that he'd been dealing with. When we got down to the architect's, what we had planned went through, and that was moving into the back of the building, moving into the basement,--there was an old cellar in that basement before we moved in, putting that staircase down through that front lobby, and changing things around generally. And then it was only 8 years later that we got started on building the annex. You were here.

Matthews: I remember how much you were involved in that.

Packard: I had a ball. That was one of the best times I spent in years, working with that building and the contractors and the workmen.

Matthews: Did you wear a hard hat once in awhile?

Packard: You know very well when we had the retirement luncheon of mine we gave Sy that hard hat. A nice yellow foreman's hat.

Matthews: I hope he still has it.

Packard: I don't know, but it does not make a great deal of difference.

Matthews: I've got to get you back, we've got so much more to talk about. We haven't gotten into talking about campus change.

Packard: I told you I'm so busy with retirement I feel that I couldn't go back to work if I wanted to, so you may have to postpone another session for a couple of years before I can get back.

Matthews: Luckily you down here from your ancestral home up in Massachusetts, your son works here in the Trenton area, and your daughter lives down in Maryland, so we can count on you for a return to here.

Packard: I'll be back sometime, Dick. I don't know exactly when.

Matthews: I guess you came down here this time primarily for your old 40th class reunion at Montclair.

Packard: I have a two year old grandchild down in Maryland that I haven't seen yet. That was one reason that I came down. I did go up to Montclair for a day to see some of the old timers.

Matthews: You had experience at one state college as a student.

Packard: When I first came on as faculty, West introduced the new faculty to the student body from the of the auditorium, and he introduced me as his spy from Montclair. If you go over the faculty lists for the past few years, we've got quite a good number from Montclair now on the Trenton State faculty.

Matthews: Especially Jessie Turk, your old classmate. Is Jessie planning to retire yet?

Packard: I don't know, I haven't even seen her.

Matthews: Jessie is ret this year.

Packard: I tried to get in touch with her yesterday, and wasn't able to.

Matthews: On behalf of the library and the College, Trenton State, Charles Packard, thank you very much. We all thank you for sharing your thoughts and recollections with us, and we look forward to your return.

Packard: Maybe your memory is a little bit better this morning than mine. I've enjoyed it and you're very welcome Dick.