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## UA68/8/2 J. Marshall Hughes Oral History

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Produced by Oral History Committee  
Department of History  
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LEE ROBERTSON: This is Lee Robertson interviewing J. Marshall Hughes at his law office at 439 Park Road, Bowling Green, Kentucky on Tuesday afternoon, November 25, 1980. And Marshall, a Western Kentucky University graduate and a native of Muhlenburg County, our questions are going to center around you as a member of the Barons Club. So my first question to you, Marshall, is how in the world did the Barons, an active group, select a country boy from Muhlenberg to be one of their members?

J. MARSHALL HUGHES: Well, that's the truth. We had, we had an initiation - no, no this was rush. I guess I want to talk about rush first. We had a rush procedure where they would invite people they knew and let's see who was from Muhlenburg County? Quisenberry. I don't know if you remember Quisenberry.

LR: I knew a Quisenberry that was a basketball coach.

JH: I don't know if Quiz was a basketball coach or not. He's with IRS now, I think. Anyway, Quisenberry was from Muhlenburg County and they sent me an invitation, along with a lot of other folks, to go out to a - the first party we had was at Baron Camp, I believe. I'm trying to think if we went <sup>to</sup> Baron Camp first or if we went to some other, some place in town.

LR: Go ahead and get you coke and drink it as you answer that question.

JH: But anyway, we either went to a place here in town for the first rush or we went to Baron Camp. Now back then, remember when Jim Taylor ran the -

LR: Western Hills?

JH: Western Hills?

LR: I do.

JH: I think we might have gone out there for the first rush party, and the second one we went to Camp. It was either the first one was Baron Camp, out at Bob Hose's place down on Scottsville Road, or the second one was at Western Hills. Now that's the way I remember it.

LR: What year did you come over to Western?

JH: '61. I started Western in '59 and pledged Barons the first part of '61. Fall of '59 I started.

LR: I asked you how you got in, and then I ask you this - How did the Barons go about selecting prospective members?

JH: I guess I sort of answered both of them and can go ahead on the second one. Well, they would take you to the rush parties, kind of like they have now. Seems like the rush parties are the same. They would eliminate so many from the first and so many would eliminate them from the first, after the first party. And then the Barons would send invitations and people that didn't want to come back wouldn't. And of course, and the ones that the Barons had selected to come back and the ones that wanted to come back, that the Barons had selected, would come back. And they would go through a second informal party. And this was a - I'm trying to remember, I think one of them we had dates. The first one was just informative.

LR: How did a Muhlenburg County boy get a date?

JH: That's the truth, buddy. That's the truth, that's the truth. It was hard.

LR: Well listen, as you went through those parties, then, finally they accepted you in because you became an active member. Tell us about the initiation program.

JH: Okay. Now the Barons were like the other fraternities at that time, they had a pretty rough initiation. It's not the same as they have on the national level. They paddled you, you had to keep a log book of your activities, which they do at the present time. You got demerits and you got a lick for every demerit you got. Normally I'd say we'd get fifteen to twenty licks every, we'd meet once a week. You'd get fifteen to twenty demerits, licks once a week. You then had to, gosh, you had to wear, I remember we had to wear all kinds of unusual clothing. We had to wear panties, that we had to get on scavenger hunts. We had to go to certain dorms or certain sororities and get panties. We had to wear a burlap sack throughout the pledgship. And had to wear the same pair of socks, and one of the socks had a hole in it, and you were never to take the socks off. So you had to wash your feet with the socks on. It got a little rough near the end of pledgship, I tell you.

LR: I want to ask you a question about this panty deal. Now you were talking about wearing some ladies panties. Did you have to wear that as underwear or over your trousers?

JH: As underwear.

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LR: As underwear.

JH: We wore it as underwear.

LR: And did you have to prove that? Or did they take your word for it or did you have to show some of the actives that you ...

JH: Oh, now they weren't bashful.. We had to show them all of the time. We had, they would put us through various things out at Baron Camp during pledgship, they'd make us take our clothes off and run around outside. And we had to, we had a creek out there we had to go swimming in. It was kind of chilly, too. I remember the day -

LR: That didn't bother, though -

JH: That didn't bother the actives a bit.

LR: Break the ice and jump in.

JH: Right.

LR: Dr. Lowell Harrison is a member of the HIstory Department and Jim Bennett, also a professor in the History Department, are doing this Oral History Program and the chuckle in the background this interview is Dr. Harrison being here. So, Dr. Harrison, you may want to ake some questions along as we go. And if you do, you just ask them. But I want to make this comment right now while we're getting onto our next question, Marshall, and we hope you've got enough time to stay with us a little while. But I had lunch today with a Baron. And I didn't know I was having lunch with a Baron until I mentioned the fact I was to be

interviewing you, Marshall, at 2:30 today. And it was Robert L. Preston.

JH: Bob Preston, sure.

LR: Now lives in Nashville and was a Bowling Green boy. And he was the one that told me about the panty deal. And he went into it in a little more detail than we've gone here or that we will go here. But he also reminded that he was in a, Dr. Harrison, in an education class but with Dr. Whitley. And Dr. Whitley, if you can remember, was kind of blunt. And Dr. Whitley knew this part of the initiation, the panty part of it would naturally be the thing that Dr. Whitley would, so he made a comment. And he said, "We have one of our class members in the back room that is wearing panties because he is getting initiated into some kind of scrub outfit." And he kind of embarrassed the heck out of the ole Preston.

JH: If you can imagine that.

LR: And Preston said he finally just rared up and said, "Dr. Whitley, your exactly right. I've got on my panties." And he showed them. And he demanded equal time to defend his Barons Club, which Dr. Whitley gave him. And he said he gave him a week to prepare it. He got up and was able to defend some of the good things that the Barons did. Is there anything else about the initiation program?

JH: One thing I remember, the worst thing that happened to me while I was pledging was when they gave us - what kind of - it's you drink it and it makes you go to the bathroom, there's no question about. Oil.

LOWELL HARRISON: Castor oil?

JH: It wasn't Castor oil. It was, they put it in a beer and gave it to us. And made us chug-a-lug it. And then they took us out Richardsville Road on the other side of H.A. Honaker's house which is almost by the feed mill out there, before you go up and turn left to go to Richardsville, and chained us to a tree. And of course, one of the boys with me just went to the bathroom all over himself, and it was terrible. I mean it was terrible. We went up there, had our heads taped too. That was the bad part of initiation. They taped, I must have had fifty or sixty little tapes put in my head and it was terrible. That hurt man, it really did hurt badly. Then they chained us to a tree and left us out there. Had no idea where we were. Had to go to the bathroom every four minutes. Finally, walked up to Mr. H.A. Honaker's house, out there on Richardsville Road. And I happened to know him when he came to the door with his pistol in his hand and had his dogs barking. And I said, "Mr. Honaker, Mr. Honaker don't you know me?" He said, "Son, I don't know who you are but don't move." I'll never forget that. And I finally told him who I was and he brought us in and cleaned us up real good and we called someone to get us. That was one outstanding thing in my mind.

LR: Marshall, are you able to remember any of the students or any of that joined the Barons Club when you did?

JH: Yeah, my pledge class was Frank Cole who is in insurance business in Madisonville, he has his own insurance agency over there. And Winstead Hall, who is with Ford Motor Company. He's been with them for about the last seventeen, eighteen years in Louisville. That was my pledge class.

LR: Just two of you, three of you?



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JH: See, we had a constitutional limitation of twenty-one members. We could only have twenty-one members.

LR: So, and that were actives.

JH: Uh-huh.

LR: Which means then the upperclassmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors made up the other eighteen. And you only went to twenty-one.

JH: That's right.

LR: Well, well then there wasn't many.

JH: No, never did have a large club.

LR: Okay.

JH: We had, some of the people at Western, someone I think you ought to interview, John Perkins, of course, knows a lot about the history. The realtor.

LR: He's my next door neighbor. He's one of the early ones.

JH: Right. Now one of the earliest, though, and I'm not sure if there's much difference between early and Blackburn, is Colonel Blackburn Steven of First Federal. Now he was the second pledge class. And we just had a homecoming, which of course you know, and we had a lot of Barons back. And got our Baron Camp.. Bab Hogis owns Baron Camp now. Built a home up on top of the ledge out there. His brother, Doug, was an active

during my time. And Doug, of course, teaches in the school system here and his wife Gloria, teaches at Western. Gloria Hogis, she teaches in the business department, I think. Anyway, we got to use Baron Camp again and Blackie Stephens and Perkins, John Perkins, were out there. And they were talking about it. So their memory ought to be refreshed as to what went on. We also had a luncheon or just a reception out at the country club, over at the country club at noon homecoming and Dr. Frank Moore was out there. And, of course, he was in one of the earlier classes.

LR: Dr. Harrison, what about, you were finding out that Marshall Hughes was a member of this Baron Club through letters, did you see a letter to the editor?

LH: Yes, the one that you had in the paper to former members.

JH: Okay. Yes sir, we've, what we're, trying to do since we've got Baron Camp now, we're trying and this is the second year we've done it. We're trying to get as many people back as we can every homecoming because it was a small organization. The Barons never had a, I'm not for sure how many actual members they ever had but I bet it wasn't over six or seven hundred. So it was not a large organization at all. And they were, you knew most of the people, you knew all of them or you knew most of the people. So that's why when we had people from the second pledge class and the last pledge classes that were here and they intertwined, they knew each other. And it was just, all fit in out at Baron Camp.

LH: Do you know when it got started?

JH: 1933, I believe. I used to, when we pledged we had to remember when it started, who the first president was and all of the members. And the members of the first pledge class.

LR: Now, we've got another gentleman and many of these Barons have been successful in whatever endeavor they chose but one in particular that I met and you know, Dr. Harrison, was Russell Daugherty, who three years ago retired a four-star general, head of the strategic air command. And I've heard him speak of his days here on campus as a Baron, so I think what we're doing here in this interview is getting you, Marshall as one of the last before it became rec-, as affiliated with a national fraternity.

JH: I was one of the last. I was going to school when the ATOs came in here, when they became national. That was the year I left for law school.

LR: We said in here, we were asking the question about where you held your meetings and I think we've said that the Baron Camp. Was that about the place? Did you hold them in some homes?

JH: No, we held them at Baron Camp. We held meetings out there I think every Tuesday night at Baron Camp itself.

LR: Well, what, in those days, and I think I know the answer from his, but you might be able to give us more light on this, was the University's policy toward fraternities?

JH: Well, it was just real simple. They didn't recognize us. And that was it.

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LR: There wasn't any question about where you- What does that mean when you didn't recognize you? You didn't have to hide, though, to have a meeting did you?

JH: No, they just didn't-

LR: They didn't back you or help you?

JH: That's correct. That was it. They didn't punish us for belonging but, well, they just didn't recognize us. One other member you might want to talk to, at that time, is Judge David Frances, is a member. That's someone else who would have some more information for you.

LR: Now, this is an interesting story and maybe Judge Frances needs to document this rather than me, and I might be even liable for saying it. But Robert L. Preston said today, he was really a loyal member and he proved it one time and that they were caught. It's unbelievable that you could catch a group of red-blooded Americans like this doing something wrong by the police. And they were going to have to report to the police station and pay a fine. And they let, they let, they caught all of them and let David go. But David caught a cab and beat the rest of them to the police station so he could still be a member of the gang, and paid up his part of the fine. That proves that he was loyal.

JH: Yessir.

LR: Okay, so how did the fraternity feel about the no-recognize policy of the University? Was that ever any problem?

JH: Not really, they didn't know any difference. Now you have some people who come in that belong to other fraternities away from here and it just wasn't a real problem because we could do pretty much whatever we wanted to do. If someone got out of line, Dean Cowan used to call them in and said, "okay boys, we know you don't recognize, but this has gone on," and get it squared away. Normally we would work, the president would work pretty closely with him.

LR: Well, then we have a question here that we were going to ask to the Barons tribe to get the university to change its policies to accept recognize the Barons or fraternities in general, and the answer to that would finally be, during your tenure, that whether you all tried to get them to or not the national fraternities came in here and so you were a part of one of them.

JH: Lee, I'm a little fuzzy at this point, to tell you the truth, because I'm trying to remember whether or not right at the last about '63 or '64, when the nationals started coming in here, and if we did in fact try to fight that. And I think we did.

LR: Tried to fight?

JH: Going national and national fraternities.

LR: Because you had already established you some-

JH: I don't think we were interested in that and I think we appointed some fraternities - They did form an interfraternity council back before they got the nationals and that led to the nationals and we had representatives on that, best I can remember.'

LH: Let me ask something here. What other fraternities were there then? Besides the Barons.

JH: There were actually four fraternities, best I can remember. The Omicrons, the Thirteeners and the Sigmas were the latter. They were the latter fraternity. I'm not for sure who went what. I know the Thirteeners went Delta Tau Delta, the Omicrons, I think, gosh they might have gone Sigma Nu, I think. The Sigma's, I think, I'm not for sure now, I'm lost at this point. I think they might have gone SAE.

LH: We could check on that and find out.

JH: Yeah, that's -

LR: What was the attitude of other students toward you as a member of the Barons?

JH: Good, good. I think that all the Barons and the Thirteeners were recognized. I think that, well your, most of your, not most because there weren't that many fraternities. The kids on the hill that liked to party and liked to have a good time, most of them belonged, well we didn't have a large campus then. A lot of them, I'll say, a lot of them belonged to one of these fraternities. And the fraternities would merge with the Senators. We'd have joint parties and sometimes there'd be a little fussing between them but nothing serious, but we'd have joint parties. One would put on a dance and the others would support it. But I think most of your leaders at that time, you could pretty well look at the leaders of the different classes and of the different organizations and most of them had some fraternity backing, some fraternity they belonged to.

LR: If there was a party, then by an independent, by a non-fraternity group at that time, it was just haphazard, it wasn't as organized. You all really organized, for social activities and planned them ahead and had certain dates that you were going to have certain type parties.

JH: That's right. It was just like a fraternity now.

LR: Well see, I was not in any of those so I was here as a student from '48 through '50. And we didn't have much social. They'd have dances on campus or they'd have a party in the Potter Hall there and that's where Jimmy Sacca's started his singing group over there. And I'd go to those but other than that, if we had a party it'd just be a bunch of us decide to get together and do something. We didn't have anybody that was really organizing it for us.

JH: Well see, they had Baron Camp at that time. Of course, they had Baron Camp since the early 30's. Since the late 30's. Well, they had Baron at that time and they would go out there every weekend. And then we'd have what is called Spring Formal and Fall Formal, \_\_\_\_\_ Formal. That's when we'd go out at the end of the, between the fall and spring semester and they'd stay out there three or four days and get a bunch of Mr. Ray Bowles' pimento cheese and some bologna and crackers and just a couple of kegs. Whoever had gotten pinned during that time would be by the kegs of beer.

LR: How did you get your bologna, legally or did you -

JH: We always got our bologna and stuff legally. Well, we always would put someone in charge of it and say get it legally.

LR: Right.

JH: It never went any deeper than that.

LR: Didn't question it.

JH: I'm sure they got it legally.

LR: Okay. What was -

JH: Sam Rainbow was a Baron, too, and he always helped us out.

LR: What was the Barons' primary social organization, did it have service functions? Did you do anything of service or were you strictly social? In honest opinion now.

JH: I'm trying to remember if we ever did anything. We used to organize a blood mobile. I think. It was either Barons or the ATOs later on. I think we had some but very little, very little. I think we got the blood mobile, sometimes. That was back when they used to have groups get it here, participate in parades at campus. We'd always have a float whenever we'd have the homecoming and all that sort of thing. That was about it. It was really more of a social group.

LR: I have another question I was going to ask you. I think we've answered it. The history of the Barons, when they were founded. You said you think in 1933. Do you know anymore about the history or is that part of your initiation?

JH: It is part of initiation. I had forgotten. I know they were



formed by a group of, I think five or six fellows and then the En Amies were formed from the Barons' girlfriends. Now that's E-n, one word, A-m-i-e, Amie. My friend, I think, in friendship, in friendship, in latin. And they were formed from the dates of the Barons and then they were the first sorority here and then we built Baron Camp and it burned down, three times I think. We rebuilt each time and now it's in its present form since the early, late fifties, I think was the last time it was rebuilt. The camp was flooded many times. But the only time we were disorganized, that we became unorganized, was in '41 or '42, during the war. And we had a few of the fellows come back and recognize it.

LR: Marshall, do you remember anything about your group's participation in election as class officers or campus favorites or Talisman Queen or Homecoming Queen?

JH: I think we always, the fraternities always tried to have someone in those. If they didn't, they backed, not only backed, but usually we had someone either from our group that was involved or someone we were backing up one of the sororites. But normally, that was something they did. They didn't, yeah, they participated somewhat in that. They sure did. Now we weren't large enough to, like some of your fraternities now, I understand, are real large and they can swing some things.

LR: Yeah, I think the Greeks on campus today certainly are very active in everything and they have that kind of organization when they want to, they may not be able to control it, but they can certainly get their group together and go one direction in the vote. Then in that way they can control it. Well listen, we wandered around here and asked questions and hopefully, Lowell, we've come up with some information.

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Atleast we've got some honest opinion from Marshall because he didn't know we were going to show up. So his answers have been right off the cuff and this question comes to my mind and though that's been, how long ago that you were an active, Marshall? Twelve years?

JH: No, longer than that. About sixteen, fifteen or sixteen.

LR: Okay, can you remember then as a freshman, a seventeen or eighteen year old freshman, coming over here from Muhlenburg County, and then a year and a half, tow-years later getting into the Barons Club. Can you site that club as being beneficial to Marshall Hughes and his tenure at Western Kentucky University?

JH: Yessir, I think it toughened me up. It really did, it helped me out. Now the time I pledged it didn't help me. Because I had bad grades that sememster. That was bad. I had good grades going into it, but I had bad grades and I had to fight back after that to get my grades back up. I think it not only did it give me some people that help me now because I deal with them all the time now. People that have done things for me that are older than me.

LR: They're brothers so to speak.

JH: No question about it. Spiro Carriacus and I are the best of friends and Charles Ray Woosley, and their bad Democrats and I'm a bad Republican, but I've always tried to help those boys out because of that. And judge Frances the same thing.

LR: Now, and those people were not a students at the same time you were.

JH: That's correct.

LR: You've just know them through the alumni of the -

JH: That's right.

LR: Barons actions and activities.

JH: That's why I'm talking about really and when we start getting people coming back in, parts of a class might be there or we might have fifty people, but you'll have them spread out where you'll know people in their class and they will know people in your class. And it was really like old home week, both times we've had them back.

LH: Has anyone kept a complete roster of members from the beginning -

JH: We had one and -

LH: Of a sort of history of the club?

JH: Yeah, and it's a shame. The story I've got to tell you. The entire thing was kept intact. We had photographs, we had records. We had just an excellent recording and it was left on Louie Harmon's back porch.

LH: Oh, no.

JH: And it was exposed and it was disappeared after his death.

LH: Oh.

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JH: The weather got it and we couldn't go out there. It was just a pitiful shame and that's just what happened to it. Photographs and everything.

LH: That's too bad.

LR: Well, Marshall, I didn't know you as a student very well, though I worked at Western. I went to work at Western in 1960 and I remember you there. Well, you and I have gotten to be friends since then. I have an idea when you came to Western though, you were not introverted because you've probably been extrovert all of your life. Though I think anybody that comes from a small community or maybe a rural area when they get into an organization like that I think it helps you develop your social graces.

JH: It did, it really did me because that was a fact and once I got into it, it let me know people from other places, I got to travel to weddings and I got to travel to homes-

LR: Marshall, as we close up this interview we appreciate you taking your time and I'm going to ask you a question here and then make a comment and give you time to think about it. Some of the things that went on during your undergraduate days at Western, other than the Barons, professors that you might remember, incidents that might have happened that were things that you can remember that went on. And while you're thinking that question, I don't know whether the Barons did it, Lowell Harrison, for Marshall Hughes, or whether Western in general, but somewhere through those days he became an awful loyal alumnus. And I just think about when you asked me to come down here today and do this interview with Marshall Hughes, I got in the mail an invitation to attend



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LR: And then died later. As a young fellow, I mean he wasn't an old man.

JH: I don't believe Jim's dead yet, is he?

LR: Yeah.

JH: I didn't realize that until right now.

LR: Yeah, he is.

JH: We just lost touch with him. No one at homecoming, everyone thought where's Jim LaGrande.

LR: He taught at a private college somewhere in Ohio.

JH: He was really frustrated whenever Western and BU merged, I know that really broke his heart, because he felt that BU was everything. Gosh, I don't know Lee, I just, it's just different to see Western. Of course, when I left here and went to Indiana University, I think Western had 3000-3500 students or something like that.

LR: When you left there just at the beginning -

JH: When it started growing.

LR: Right.

JH: Went to law school up there had 900 or 1000 when I went into it and it was a lot different. But I tell you it took hard work, but

I wasn't exactly unprepared totally for it. And I felt that was the, like Western gives a pretty good education. I hope they still do, I feel like they do.

LH: Well, we like to think that we do. Were there any of the teachers you had that you think especially prepared you? I know in my own case, I can think of such people as Dr. Stickles, Francis Richards. And when I got to graduate school, I was grateful for them.

JH: I think that one of the greatest influences in my life, if I had one was Miss Audrey Jackson. Miss Jackson was really concerned with me and young and in law school and I majored in economics. She was a student, was a graduate student when I was just coming in. And I worked for Dr. Olson. I worked for him when he was in the economics department. I used to grade his papers for him. Then, I'm trying to think of one other, I can't even -

LH: Was Dr. Taff already dead by then?

JH: I don't know Dr. Taff.

LH: Okay. He was head of the economics department when I was there.

JH: Dr. Olsen was the head of the economics department. I know who I'm trying to think about. A lady that I wish could just continue on at Western forever for young people, that like you say from Muhlenburg county away from home that had to learn how to study, and that's Mrs. Alden. That was our librarian, she had the law library when I was in Western. If I didn't show up one night, the next night she wanted to know just exactly where I had been the next night. And if I had done

my homework.

LR: She retired a few years ago and lives in Portland, Tennessee. In fact, I saw her with her daughter -

JH: Betty.

LR: That works down at Citizen National Bank, today at Mariah's at lunch.

JH: They're nice people and her husband, of course, the FBI agent here. She was a big influence in my life trying to encourage me as an individual and Miss Audrey Jackson. I guess those two would be the two would be the biggest influences I had.

LR: Well listen, Marshall, we're going to quit now and if you've missed a couple of clients, well you can just send to Don Zacharius, our president -

JH: Send a bill?

LR: A five or six hundred dollar bill.

END OF INTERVIEW.