


1982

## UA52/1 Alumni Memories

WKU Archives

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc\\_ua\\_records](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records)

 Part of the [Communication Commons](#), [Education Commons](#), [Oral History Commons](#), [Social History Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

WKU Archives, "UA52/1 Alumni Memories" (1982). *WKU Archives Records*. Paper 5400.  
[https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc\\_ua\\_records/5400](https://digitalcommons.wku.edu/dlsc_ua_records/5400)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in WKU Archives Records by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact [topscholar@wku.edu](mailto:topscholar@wku.edu).



## WKU Archives Solicited Collections Alumni Memories

Memories shared by students and alumni. Please [share your memories](#) of attending WKU.

---

**Susan Dyer**, class of 1980

I remember my days in the Big Red Marching Band. I will always remember the cold red delicious apples we would get after the halftime performances. My own daughter is in the Indiana University's Marching Band.

---

**Hugh Ayer**, excerpts from an email entitled "Western Memories" from Mr. Ayer to Sue Lynn Stone, April 7, 2002.

If it is okay with you, I would like to share some of my Western memories in installments. Maybe that is because I'm too lazy to do it any other way; but I think some spacing might enable me to think through some things more clearly.

First, I think it would be helpful for you to know a bit about my background. That will enable you, I think, to understand what a culture shock Western (and Bowling Green) was for me and why I was in such awe of the people who befriended me there.

I grew up on a tobacco farm in McLean County. My mother was widowed when I was 2+ and we moved in with my grandparents -- my paternal grandparents. Six years of my elementary schooling was in a one-room school with one teacher. My high school was Calhoun, population 749 and the county seat of McLean County. Although my mother, who never went beyond the 8th grade, persistently promoted the value of education, I really never expected to be able to go to college. But then I met a girl, a Calhoun girl, a town girl (!) and we dated during most of our high school years. Now, it so happened that her mother was related (a niece, I think) to Henry Hardin Cherry so she had ties to Western. I have always theorized that she feared her daughter would marry me and be doomed to life on a tobacco farm, and to evade this unthinkable fate she set about to get me to go to Western. Maybe I would have gone anyway, but there is no doubt that she provided much encouragement and opened some doors for me. Incidentally, I did not marry her daughter -- but that is another story. I don't mean to imply that mine was a unique situation. Indeed, a large number of Western students of that era came from very similar backgrounds.

Anyway, when I arrived at Western, in the fall of 1942, it was one of the very few times I had been out of McLean County. I was overawed by just about everything. From the three elderly ladies whose attic room I lived in (on State Street, just a block off campus) the good people of First Methodist Church, the faculty and most fo the students I was warmly, even enthusiastically received. In retrospect I think I must have felt that I had died and gone to heaven.

That fall semester -- no, we were on the quarter system then -- I encountered my first college history teacher, Miss Frances Anderson. She was prim, rather stern I thought, and easily identifiable by her always perfectly set white hair. If I am to be honest I will have to say

that she was not the best for the history faculty at Western, but I didn't know that in 1942, and so I was deeply impressed by her command of historical facts. But, alas, I had a harsh experience with her. Up to that point I had never received anything but top or near-top grades. She scheduled our first major examination for the Monday following Thanksgiving. As I remember it, at that time we only had one day -- Thursday -- off for Thanksgiving. But I needed to go home to gather the corn I had grown that summer on my mother's farm. So, I went to see Dean Grise (talk about sternness!) and he reluctantly gave me permission to be away on Friday. I spent Friday and Saturday harvesting corn, got back to Bowling Green late Sunday night, by then too exhausted to do any studying. You know what happened. Not only did I not do well on Miss Anderson's exam, I failed it, I mean a flat out F. I had never seen one of those -- at least not on my work -- and I was crushed. But I rebounded. Made high grades on the remaining tests and Miss Anderson, very generously I thought, gave me a B for the semester.

That was my introduction to the study of history at Western. It is a story that I have shared with many discouraged students through the years, most of whom have been kind enough to believe that "Dr. Ayer" could possibly ever have failed a history test.

I'm afraid I'm telling you more than you want to know, that you are wondering "Why did I ever ask him to share memories of Western?" But if this is tolerable, next time I'll talk about some of the others. Meanwhile, if anything I have written triggers some questions, I hope you will share them with me.

Cordially,

Hugh

---

**Peggy DeFreece Dean** class of 1982

Dear Alumni Editor,

I am a nursing graduate of WKU - Class of Dec. 1982. I am very proud of my years at Western, and grateful for my many experiences there.

I married Greg Dean, an MTSU graduate. We have four children - Matt 8, Michael 7, Morgan 6, and Molly 2. I am active in church and school volunteering, as well as working one day a week in the intensive care unit at Central Carolina Hospital.

My fondest memories include my Theta Mu sisters, nursing clinicals, rugby games and parties, and the socializing at lunchtime at DUC. My favorite teacher was Dr. Baldwin who made German class come alive. I think he always thought my name was Margaret, after he called roll my first semester of freshman year I never told him my legal name was Margaret but I go by Peggy. I ended up taking 3 semesters of German and never got the nerve to correct him. He was a very wonderful teacher and I enjoyed his classes.

Thank you,

Peggy DeFreece Dean

---

## **Donna Cleaver Miller**

My husband and I attended WKU in the middle sixties. My husband saw "the lady in the blue mist" when crossing the bridge that spans Barren River one evening while heading back to his dorm. Long story but he wasn't a believer until that night!!

He and another friend both saw it at the same time -- no denying it then!!

I was in the "South Pacific" production in 1965 or 66 and heard the ghost story of Van Meter. We had a lightbulb and spot light incident and something about furniture being moved. Don't remember much about it. Long time ago! The drama professor confirmed the stories and said he'd witnessed the apparition at times sitting in the audience.

My husband also told me that the hill and area had been a civil war encampment and battlefield, Bowling Green being the capital of the Confederacy. Remember something about young girl apparition seen on a bridge (on campus) looking for her finance killed in the battle. [Or] something to that nature.

---

**Cordell Hull** attended Ogden College in 1886. Below is an article that appeared in the *Park City Daily News* on May 23, 1948 regarding his experiences in Bowling Green.

NEW YORK, May 22 -- (Spl.) -- Bowling Green as it was in 1886 is described by Cordell Hull in his Memoirs published Monday by The Macmilan Company, [sic] Mr. Hull says:"On September 1, 1886, I went with my brother to the normal school at Bowling Green, Ky., for two terms until June, 1887. My trip to Bowling Green is memorable because I then saw my first train. My brother and I put a small trunk containing all our clothes in a covered wagon going to Nashville for a load of goods. To catch the train we drove the 75 miles from Celina to Gallatin and slept in the wagon at night.

"We went to the Bowling Green school because we had learned about it from friends who had been there. Also it was cheap. Father, who was then making more money, did not skimp us on expenses. He left the choice of school up to us, and he was getting along so well he would have put us into any school we might have selected. We chose schools, however, which did not cost too much. That was our idea of economy, which may have been a mistaken one.

"At Bowling Green, my brother and I did our own housekeeping, or, as we called it, 'kept butch.' Our expenses for the ten months were \$175 each, which included everthing, train fare, board, lodging and tuition. We took one meal per day at the dormitory of the school, which was called the 'soup house.'"

"The Memoirs of Cordell Hull" describes the career of this distinguished American from his boyhood in the Cumberland Mountains to his retirement from the position of secretary of state, where for 12 years he was a chief actor in momentous events touching every corner of the world.

---

**Julian Harper**, excerpts of letter from Mr. Harper to Sue Lynn Stone, June 21, 2001.

Thank you for providing the address (1138 College Street) of Mrs. Wilkins' boarding house. I don't believe I have mentioned to you, but Mrs. Wilkins had a black woman that did the cooking. She was a very large person and an excellent cook plus having a good sense of humor. She was someone that you could visualize from the movie, "Gone With the Wind." She looked after us boys that worked (waited tables) there and in turn we were very good to her. She was just a wonderful person.

Again, I get a recall (it has been a long, long time) regarding 1302 College Street. I do remember now, the lady's name was Mrs. Losie Bowles. She owned the house. As I recall, she only rented two upstairs rooms. My roommate, Henry Reynolds, from Louisville and I shared one room and there was an older boy/man that rented the other room. I do not remember his name. Best that I can remember I lived there from November (?) 1948 until the later part of 1949. Each time that I moved I tried to get closer to school to avoid those cold mornings trying to get to that 7:10 a.m. class. I later moved to a home across the side street from the Sweet Shop. I cannot remember the lady's name but she worked at the Sweet Shop. At that point, I was less than a half a block from school. From there, I went to work for BU as a Student Representative. No more cold morning walks to class.