

**Woodworking Homework Proves Durable**

In an ideal educational system, coursework is always relevant to students' future lives. In reality, homework often gets chucked by the wayside as soon as it is returned to students. However, a few JBU students' homework continues to impact the campus fifty years after their graduation date. Each time today's students take a seat in chapel, the pews they rest on are simply well-aged class projects.

From the very first days of the school's conception, students received practical carpentry training with their hands-on participation in campus construction. When the first building was raised up in the middle of the legendary cornfield, wood for the "Old W hite" came solely from trees on JBU's properties. The same applied to many later buildings, including J Alvin Hall, California Dorm, the Arkansas Building, the Blood Memorial Buildings, and the Cathedral group. Oak and walnut furnishings and trim from the furniture factory provided the finishing touch.

The skill of the school's young carpenters was a matter of pride for the university. For example, the hardwood floors of the first gymnasium were pieced together and sanded down by JBU vocational students. In the 1930s, when the new gym was the site of commencement celebrations, it was exciting to be able to compare the students' work with the gym facilities at the larger and wealthier University of Arkansas in Fayetteville. By 1931, vocational woodworking experience had become a significant feature in JBU's catalog of available classes. Obviously, the school's lumber yard remained a place of constant activity during this time. Besides supplying lumber for the school's continual construction efforts, the planing and saw mills produced materials for the furniture factory, handles for the brush factory, and fuel for the heating, pumping, and power processes in the "Old Bessie" power plant.

This is not to say that JBU considered its woodlands to be an expendable resource. Often times, wood from campus would be reused and recycled. When the Old White was torn down in 1930, its lumber became a primary resource for the construction of the Helen Brown Hodges Memorial Building. The MO Dorm, as it came to be known, was once again built by students, and the materials provided a second round of hands-on vocational experience for a new generation of students.

The actual woodworking department wasn't formed until 1933, when school (continued on back page).

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**ECHOES OF THE PAST**

Excerpt from the 8 August 1941 issue of the Threefold Advocate

A small fire resulting from careless use of a blowtorch being used to thaw out frozen water pipes in the South Hill apartments, called out the Jaybee volunteer fire department Monday at 11:40 a.m.

Firemen quickly extinguished the blaze which was in a small area of the floor and wall of the Wyckoff apartment.

The Jaybees of the fire fighting group expressed their relief that it had not been a more serious fire since extreme cold had frozen the fire truck water pumps in going to the scene.

The Lantern is a nonprofit publication which seeks to educate its readership about John Brown University's history and heritage. Copies are available at the Archives Office and on the Archives website at www.jbu.edu/library/archives. Editor: Jen Heller
Insights

From the works of John Brown, Sr.

The other day I came on a saw pit. I could see a man sawing a great beam of timber with the long saw which rose and fell, and though I could not see his confederate, I knew that down in the pit there was another man who had hold of the saw; and I could tell the rhythm and the motion of the body of the man I could not see, by noticing the rhythm and the motion of the body of the man I could see. And I saw at once that that was an illustration of the co-witness of the Holy Spirit.

Excerpt from The Holy Spirit and the Soul Winner

Milestones

October 1956: The sophomores serve as the hosts of the annual Halloween carnival. Traditional events included the Haunted House, the pie throwing booth, and the costume competition. However, these were supplemented with new additions, such as a portrait booth, where one could have a resemblance sketched in “assembly-line speed,” and an apple-bobbing booth, “where eager swains courted death by drowning to capture a name-tagged apple and a date with the girl involved.”

October 1985: A million-dollar, six-month renovation of J. Alvin is completed with the covering of the atrium in “Holiday-Inn-style.” While the new roof put an end to courtyard golf games, students were forgiving and affectionately dubbed the new shelter the “Alvindome.”

(continued from front) officials realized that a number of students were interested in classes above and beyond their vocational requirements. By 1937, the department’s coursework included Fundamentals of Woodworking, Wood Turning, Furniture Making, and Joinery and Carpentry. Classes in pattern making, cabinetmaking, and furniture making were added to the catalog in 1940. Continued growth allowed the department to offer dry kiln instruction during World War II. At this point in time, few schools other than those specializing in forestry offered hands-on experience with such equipment, designed to heat and dry lumber according to its wood type.

The school quickly learned why so few of its educational peers were willing to offer such courses. JBU lost a heating plant in 1926, a power plant in 1937, and a dry kiln and 5000 ft of processed lumber in 1942 to vocational wood-heating processes. In addition, a fire sparked in the furniture factory in 1947 led to the loss of three buildings and over $150,000 in machine shop equipment. Simultaneously, the growing costs of equipment maintenance led the department to add lab fees to carpentry courses. A final blow came when the department merged with the Building Construction Engineering Department - the forerunner of today’s Construction Management studies. Prospective carpenters were lured away by the promise of steady work and greater prestige in the construction industry.

The risks and costs associated with the woodworking program incited the gradual phasing out of the program in the early 1950s, and the last carpentry course - cabinetmaking - was offered in the fall of 1965.