

Through Hardship, Joy, Jolleys Treasure Mars Hill Experiences

"Tis the season to be jolly," Harley Jolley, Professor of History, told his future wife, Betty, Associate Professor of History, in the fall of 1949. After all, it had been three years since they had met. Harley had a good job teaching at Mars Hill. More importantly, they were in love--so why not get married? They did just that on a chilly Christmas Eve, 1949, and ever since both have gained a wealth of impressions about Mars Hill, and about each other.

Neither Dr. or Mrs. Jolley's first remembrances of Mars Hill were very favorable. Mrs. Jolley came as a freshman in 1945, only to have to leave a few days later because of serious illness. It is understandable that she would never want to return. Dr. Jolley hitchhiked from Asheville to Mars Hill for his first teaching position at the college, and thus had some very graphic memories about the long and winding road one had to travel to reach the secluded campus.

Dr. and Mrs. Jolley met at what was then Appalachian State Teachers College in the spring of 1946. Since it was close to home, Mrs. Jolley went there instead of returning to Mars Hill. Dr. Jolley had just returned from World War II and was completing his education on the GI Bill. Though social life at Appalachian was just as limited as that of Mars Hill at that time, the Jolleys found time to date before Dr. Jolley went on to the University of Tennessee for his Masters degree. In 1949, Mrs. Jolley graduated from Appalachian and accepted a teaching job in Winston-Salem while Dr. Jolley finished at UT and accepted a teaching position at Mars Hill.

Dr. Jolley had always teased Mrs. Jolley about the possibility of her returning one day to her "beloved" Mars Hill, but she never took him seriously. Even when she knew that marrying Dr. Jolley would mean doing just that, Mrs. Jolley still hadn't changed her opinion of the place. Ironically, the Jolleys spent their honeymoon on the Mars Hill campus. Since Dr. Jolley was a house father in Humphrey House, they stayed there until Mrs. Jolley had to return to Winston-Salem to complete her teaching contract.

After teaching music in the Asheville public schools for two years, Mrs. Jolley was hired as assistant librarian at Mars Hill while at the same time working on her Masters degree. In the summer of 1955 Mrs. Jolley had her last two graduate courses under her husband

at Appalachian. (Dr. Jolley had been invited to be a guest professor at Appalachian.) There, she says, she never worked so hard or learned so much. Consequently, Mrs. Jolley concludes that any greatness in her teaching has to be attributed to her husband. Later that year, almost exactly a decade after she left the campus, Mrs. Jolley was hired as a teacher at Mars Hill College. Since then, both Dr. and Mrs. Jolley have done additional graduate work, with Dr. Jolley acquiring his Ph.D. from Florida State in 1964.

Needless to say, both Dr. and Mrs. Jolley's impressions of Mars Hill have changed greatly over the years. The college itself has. When they spent their honeymoon in Humphrey House, Mars Hill was part of a much smaller world. Students' values and activities were different because they were "stuck" here--they had few cars with which to "escape" to Asheville each week--so their main

social activities were daily classes (6 days a week) and Sunday School. But according to Dr. Jolley, students have not changed in their interest in learning. He says that the freshman class this year is one of the most enthusiastic he has seen in all the years of his teaching. The college has also changed in some ways; it has grown and matured with the times. Yet, in the same sense as the students, it has stayed the same. What is now called competence was once known simply as quality. The commitment to excellence and to academic freedom has been the same over all the years that the Jolleys have been at Mars Hill.

Both Dr. and Mrs. Jolley have had numerous offers to teach at other colleges. Both have been offered deanships, but they have refused. The college community can surely count itself lucky that the Jolleys love Mars Hill so much. We, in turn, are sure that the feeling is mutual.



Dr. and Mrs. Harley Jolley, professor and associate professor of history, respectively, find Mars Hill College campus one of change, growth, and at the same time, one that holds onto its basic founding principle of quality education. Both see the campus youth of today as enthusiastic and eager to learn about many different areas. Above, Dr. and Mrs. Jolley demonstrate some of the enthusiasm they readily give their students daily both inside and outside the classroom.

Photo by Gisele Luttrell