

## A History of the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society, 1950-2003

The roots of the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society (and of the other nine, or so, regional philosophy of education societies) lie in three other organizations: first, the Progressive Education Association, founded shortly after World War I, to promote innovations in America's schools. In the 1930's, the world-wide economic depression led a number of leading educational theorists to found the John Dewey Society in 1935 to promote a response from educators to the problems of the American economic system. They included radical social theorists such as George Counts and Harold Rugg at Teachers College, Columbia. By 1941, the changing political scene, occasioned by the war in Europe and Asia, led a group of philosophers of education to form a more academically rigorous, and less politically committed society of scholars, which they named the Philosophy of Education Society.

In those years, a chief fight involved philosophy of education becoming a respectable part of the curriculum in schools of education (as it had at Columbia, under the influence of Dewey, and at a number of large universities including the University of Illinois and Ohio State University.) From the start, membership in the Philosophy of Education Society was restricted to those who worked and published primarily in the field. Application for membership required the recommendations of current members (to screen out faculty in teacher education programs who may only occasionally teach a course that included philosophy). No doubt, from the start, the society struggled with how to include those with an interest in philosophy of education who did not qualify for full membership.

Early on, the idea of having regional societies with more inclusive membership probably occurred to members. World War II intervened, restricting travel to professional meetings so that the founding of regional PESes waited until after the war. In all likelihood, the Mid-Atlantic States Philosophy of Education Society (MASPES) probably came first, led by Dewey associates at Teachers College Columbia such as William Heard Kilpatrick, John L. Childs, and R. Bruce Raup. MASPES dates its founding from 1946.

The founding dates for OVPES appear more obscure. My only source from before my own first attendance in 1961 comes from papers left behind at his death by Philip G. Smith, the society's most honored

member. Smith began graduate study at Ohio State in 1950, and provides memorabilia from OVPES meetings beginning in 1952. In addition, in the minutes of the 1969 meeting of OVPES, A. Stafford Clayton includes a tribute to the recently deceased Stanley Ballinger, his colleague at Indiana University, that reads in part, "He was a member of the society [OVPES] since 1950 and was therefore one of the early participants." This suggests that the first meeting of the society took place either in 1950 or a year or two before that.

When Rob Sherman, at the University of Florida, undertook a history of the Southeastern Philosophy of Education Society, he evidently found no records for the years between 1950 and 1971. He dated the society's beginning in 1948, and the first president of the society presided at their meeting in 1950, which Boyd Bode, retired from Ohio State, hosted in Gainesville, Florida, receiving welcoming letters from John Dewey, Kilpatrick, Bruce Raup, and H. Gordon Hullfish, Bode's former colleague at Ohio State. The 90-year-old Dewey sent a message that read "work to keep open the channels of communication to prevent curtains of class interest or national interest, or any other, from shutting out light and preventing freedom of inquiry and expression."

In all likelihood, similar welcomes greeted OVPES, since Hullfish, known to friends as Hank, became in all likelihood, the first president of OVPES in 1951 (or so a tribute to him published in *Educational Theory* in 1963, the year after his death, refers to him). His title may rather have been "chairman" than "president", since Ralph Pounds, who as secretary of the society throughout the 1950's prepared programs and notes on business meetings, identified the head of meetings between 1952 and 1955.

One somewhat curious aspect of the founding of OVPES: Pound's notes describe its region as consisting of Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and West Virginia. The University of Illinois, in contrast, became part of the Midwestern PES region, leaving Ohio State the dominant program in the Ohio Valley. Staff Clayton from Indiana University, a student of Bruce Raup at Columbia, became chair of the society for the 1952 meeting, and subsequent meetings had chairmen (yes, all men), from Ball State University (Max Carmichel), Ohio University (Forest Shoemaker), and Dean Howard H. Long from Central State College.

The choice of H. H. Long from a predominantly black college stirred some controversy. In the early years it became convention that

the Vice Chairmen became chairman for the next year. Long had been Vice Chairman in 1954, but the nominating committee proposed Stanley Ballinger for chairman in 1955. Evidently, a serious discussion followed after which Ballinger withdrew his name and substituted Long's name, establishing a precedent of succession, which became the pattern.

Ballinger had his day, becoming the first person listed as president of the society in 1958 (unless Hullfish in 1951, actually had the title). The 1958 meeting proved very lively, the topic: accreditation of schools of education, a topic dear to philosophers of education seeking a role in undergraduate teacher education. The author of NCATE's charter, Howard Bowers, addressed OVPES, defending the absence of philosophy from teacher education programs. Responding came that champion of all that is good and just in teacher education, Harry Broudy from the University of Illinois, to explain why programs without philosophy became teacher training, not education. Years later someone at a business meeting of OVPES proposed Broudy as an honorary member, but the move was shot down as "unprecedented." OVPES has no honorary members (to my knowledge) or perhaps the whole membership counts as honorary, since it now appears to span the country.

Throughout the 1950s and into the 1960s the meetings of OVPES appear to have always taken place at a single location: Teachers College, the University of Cincinnati. Credit for that probably goes to Ralph Pounds, the society's secretary throughout the '50s, and its president in 1962. In those years the society needed no treasurer, since the University of Cincinnati, and the Dean of its Teachers College, Carter V. Good, covered all expenses. Members paid no dues. Their only cost was their hotel stay, which in the early years amounted to less than ten dollars a night. And the jewel of those meetings became the principal meeting room, the Annie Laws drawing room at UC, a place so suggestive of an 18th Century drawing room that one expected to hear a salon orchestra playing Mozart on entering. I found no tribute to Ralph Pounds in looking through the materials to which I had access, but if anyone deserves honor for OVPES, it is he.

And that included my own mentor, Phil Smith. Smith became president in his first year at Indiana University (1961). The second listing of the region covered by OVPES in its business meetings, included in its purview the four earlier mentioned states and Tennessee and Western Pennsylvania. Those latter two inclusions came, I suspect, from two faculty members, colleagues at Western Reserve University in

the early 1950's, who moved, in the case of Robert E. Mason, president of OVPES in 1959, to the University of Pittsburgh, and Phil Smith, who taught at the University of Tennessee before he came to Indiana University in 1961.

The 1961 meeting contained a Friday afternoon session devoted to papers by graduate students. Encouragement to presentations by grad students became an early emphasis of the society, and probably constituted a reason for having regional societies connected to PES. The most memorable paper at that meeting came from David Angus, a grad student at Ohio State who went on to a distinguished career at the University of Michigan. The Friday evening session contained a talk by a local school administrator defending merit pay for teachers (do the issues never change?)

In the 1950's H. Gordon Hullfish functioned as a dominating voice in the society, as the likely first chair or president in 1951, and a keynote speaker in 1954. He probably played a role in the visit of a Japanese scholar, Yoni Mori, to the meeting in 1959. Mori reported on formation of a philosophy of education society in Japan (before either Britain or Australia had such societies). Hullfish probably influenced the formation of the society since he, with a group of American progressive educators, visited Japan in 1948, and 1949, in hopes of establishing democratic schools there in the wake of World War II.

Hullfish missed the meeting in 1961, when Phil Smith, his student and co-author of a then recently published book, "Reflective Thinking: The Method of Education," was president, due to illness. He died the following year.

In 1963, Educational Theory, which began publication in 1950, devoted an entire quarterly issue to a tribute to Hullfish. Contributions came from former students Phil Smith, Harry Armogida, then teaching at Miami University, and Ernest Bayles, at the University of Kansas. They noted that, in addition to OVPES, Hullfish had in the 1950's served as president of PES, the John Dewey Society, and as the final president of the Progressive Education Association in 1955 when it dissolved declaring its mission completed. The 1962 OVPES conference bore a dedication to Hullfish. Its only other conference so dedicated was to his student, Phil Smith, in 1990, in the first anniversary of his death.

Ernest Bayles' son, Lewis, followed his father into philosophy of education, joining the faculty at Indiana University in the 1960's. He participated in two unusual events at OVPES. He became the president for the 1965 meeting, and for the first time the society met away from

Cincinnati, choosing the Campbell House hotel in Lexington, Kentucky, for its meeting place. Bayles came to the meeting room for the presidential address Friday evening, to have George Maccia, chair of the session, announce that Bayles had lost his copy of his address. As I recall, the members of the society pitched in to search for it. It wasn't found, and philosophers of education, showing they have nothing to talk about until someone gives a paper, slowly drifted from the room.

Bayles left Indiana a year or two later, and joined the faculty at the University of Cincinnati. This occasioned a second unusual event for OVPES. At the business meeting of the 1969 session, Staff Clayton introduced a resolution to censure the University of Cincinnati for its dismissal of Lew Bayles without cause, which passed; and the society said goodbye forever to its Garden of Eden, the Annie Law's drawing room.

Two significant attempts in the 1960s to strengthen the society came from presidents George Maccia in 1963 and Francis Villemain in 1964. Maccia surveyed colleges of education in the region to learn which had courses that included philosophy and who taught such courses. This led to an expanded mailing list for the society. Villemain, then at the University of Toledo, researched other regionals with two possible suggestions: a newsletter, and constitutions. Both ideas eventually got a tryout by OVPES, but not till many years later. Villemain became editor of the journal *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, and obtained OVPES as a sponsoring organization at a cost of \$25 per year. By then, the society had minimal dues.

But probably the most significant innovation of the 1960s came with the first publication of the proceedings, beginning with the 1968 meeting. Richard Stephens at Indiana State University became the first editor. He solicited funds from his institution. The 1968 meeting took place in downtown Cincinnati, at the Netherlands Hilton Hotel. The hotel had a parking garage attached, a relief from the parking problems Fridays at the University of Cincinnati. The conference also had a theme "the relation of philosophy of education to social processes" (wide enough, I'd gauge). Stephens did an excellent job as editor. He had the journal copyrighted, included a brief summary of the conference, the minutes of the business session, the treasurer's report, and an extensive membership list of the society. Stephens also edited the proceedings for the 1969 and 1970 meetings. Clint Collins took over for the 1971 proceedings. In the editor's forward he wrote, "The conference broke precedent with the past by taking on aspects of a

retreat. The Bergamo Center in the rolling countryside outside Dayton, Ohio, supplied all meals, lodging, meeting rooms and partying facilities....” At the instigation of OVPES president, David Denton, the society made its first trip to Bergamo. It did not return until 1999.

The 1972 meeting saw another change from precedent: scheduling of concurrent sessions, presumably as a result of increased submissions now that papers would appear in print. Throughout all the early years of OVPES, the meetings had occurred on the first weekend in November occasionally beginning on Halloween. That became the preferred meeting date for the newly formed American Education Studies Association, producing some conflicts for OVPES members. The break from precedent on the date of OVPES meetings began in 1973, meeting one week later than usual. The following four years OVPES met two weeks later, in mid-November. Cincinnati remained the dominant meeting place, but the society met in Columbus in 1966, Louisville in 1976, Pittsburgh in 1977, Lexington again in 1980, and Bloomington, Indiana, in 1981.

In 1974, Richard Pratte, as OVPES president, offered a resolution recognizing the death of Everett Kircher, whom he lauded as "giving long and meritorious service" to the society "over a period of three decades," presumably, the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's. From 1972 to 1979 the editorship of the proceedings returned to Indiana State University in the capable hands of John Carter and William Brownson.

A significant shift occurred for the 1976 edition: a change in both title and cover design. The title became *Philosophical Studies in Education*, and the cover design, by Laura Snider of Indiana State, on slick paper, resembled a rendering of Stonehenge in black and white. 1976 also saw the first publication of a society newsletter under the guidance of that year's president, Fred Schultz of the University of Akron. The 1980 proceedings edited by Dennis Senchuk and published by Indiana University's School of Education, were indexed in *Photosphere's Index*, and microfiche copies became available through ERIC. Back copies to 1968 were available through University Microfilms International.

The 1981 OVPES meeting took place at the Indiana University Memorial Union, and president John Carter led a salute to Phil Smith in his retirement from IU. A picture of Phil appeared in the proceedings, the only edition of the society's journal to contain someone's picture. The 1981 meeting also had the distinction of being to date the only meeting of the society to have occurred in December (the 4th and 5th).

At 1981's meeting also, Eleanor Roemer became president-elect, but by 1983 she had left the field to begin law school, and her place as president went to Keith Raitz, at the University of Louisville (only the second occasion on which someone failed to succeed to the presidency).

One of the more angry sessions in the society's history occurred at the 1984 meeting. Henry Giroux, then at Miami University, gave an invited address at the Friday evening session, responded to by Richard LaBrecque. Giroux left the meeting, enraged at the critique, but Richard Quantz, his colleague at Miami, acting as associate editor, managed to secure Giroux's paper for the proceedings. At the business session, Dick LaBrecque moved that the society accept the invitation of the AESA to meet jointly with them in Pittsburgh in 1986. After much discussion on how the society might maintain its identity at such a meeting, the motion carried.

For the only time in its history, the proceedings of the 1987 and 1988 appear in a single volume. The business session at the 1989 meeting supported a resolution giving the president of the society the right to select the site of the meeting at which they preside. The resolution also instructed presidents to avoid conflict with the meetings of AESA. The meeting also added a requirement that submissions for the program include a disk version.

In 1990, John Carter moved that the year's proceedings bare a dedication to Phil Smith on the first anniversary of his death. At that meeting, Gerald Reagan moved that the society's long standing pattern of an invited speaker be titled "The Phil Smith lecture," and that the endowment fund that Phil had initially proposed be used to defray the expenses of invited speakers. Reagan also proposed that the society join the Council of Learned Societies, making a contribution of \$100 per year. The motion carried.

The 1992 meeting was once again held concurrently with AESA in Pittsburgh. The 1992 business session formally passed John Carter's motion to instruct program committees to include a Phil Smith Memorial lecture. The first announced Smith lecture took place at the meeting in 1994, held on the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis. Joanne Pagano, of Colgate University, who served at the time as national president of PES delivered the Smith lecture.

The proceedings of the 1995 meeting of the society caused some confusion by being identified on the spine and cover as the 1996 proceedings. No problem, if you have the actual 1996 proceedings. The

Smith lecture that year again was delivered by the national society's president, in this instance Betty Sichel.

The business session at the 1996 meeting approved further changes in the society's journal in 1997. The title became *Philosophical Studies in Education: The Journal of the Ohio Valley Philosophy of Education Society*. Two-page proposals to the program committee replaced full papers, for the purpose of setting up the program. The authors then had to submit their final papers for publication to the editor of the journal. The editorial board, consisting of the program committee together with the editors, decided which papers to publish, each paper having undergone blind review by three readers. The meeting instructed the secretary/treasurer to request e-mail addresses, and Terry O'Conner agreed to begin a web site for the society.

In 1997, the society began negotiations with the CaddoGap press for publication of the society's journal. The journal for that year (1997) contained neither a copy of the program for the meeting, nor notes on the business session, nor a treasurer's report, nor a list of the membership. This became the pattern for future editions, presumably to emphasize its primary function as a source of refereed publication, and less a report on the doings of the society.

The society's journal for the first time in 1998 had a volume number on the cover, volume 30. While 29 previous volumes had appeared, one volume contained two years of the proceedings, so volume 30 contained the 31st year of published proceedings.

The meeting in 1998 in Lexington, produced a minor crisis exposing the society's lack of a constitution or bylaws. The president for that year, Eugenie Potter from the University of Pittsburgh, evidently did not know of the established practice of appointing a three-person nominating committee. Instead she consulted with another member and came up with a nomination for president-elect of someone who declined the nomination. A last-minute substitution drafted a very recent member of the society, a result later challenged by significant numbers of society members.

Deron Boyles, as president, ably stepped into the breach, appointing a new nominating committee so that another election could occur. Boyles also sought to learn of the possible existence of a constitution or bylaws for the society by contacting John Carter, a member since 1968. Carter said that no such document existed. Boyles therefore appointed a committee to draw up a constitution. It seems the



society had long operated as a non-profit organization for tax purposes but, without a constitution, had operated illegally.

The by-laws committee chaired by John Carter reported to the 1999 meeting; the first of a series of meetings held at the Bergamo conference center that continues to date. The constitution and bylaws for the society finally gained approval at the meeting in 2000. The 2001 meeting exposed serious concerns about the state of the society's journal. Members complained that it does not assist their applications for tenure and promotion because of its appearance. A journal committee was appointed that eventually resulted in Haithe Anderson, at Bowling Green State University, taking the editorship. She and her associates produced a professional looking publication, complete with an ISSN number. To further distance the journal from the older proceedings, it bore the date of its publication year, not the year of the meeting: papers presented to the 2002 meeting appeared in the 2003 edition of the journal. The 2001 meeting also began exploration of the possibility of "publishing" the journal on line.

As I approach the end of four decades of association with OVPES, it remains the group whose professional meetings I have most enjoyed attending. I hope my brief survey conveys how much I have seen the society change, but in all its manifestations it has proven a welcoming place. I take heart that a regional society devoted to philosophy of education can still flourish in the face of many cultural trends that minimize the value of such efforts.

Someday soon our society will make no use of paper at all, and the trees will remain standing to absorb our carbon dioxide. Philosophy of education offers endless amounts of hope for our collective future.

Clinton Collins  
September 2008