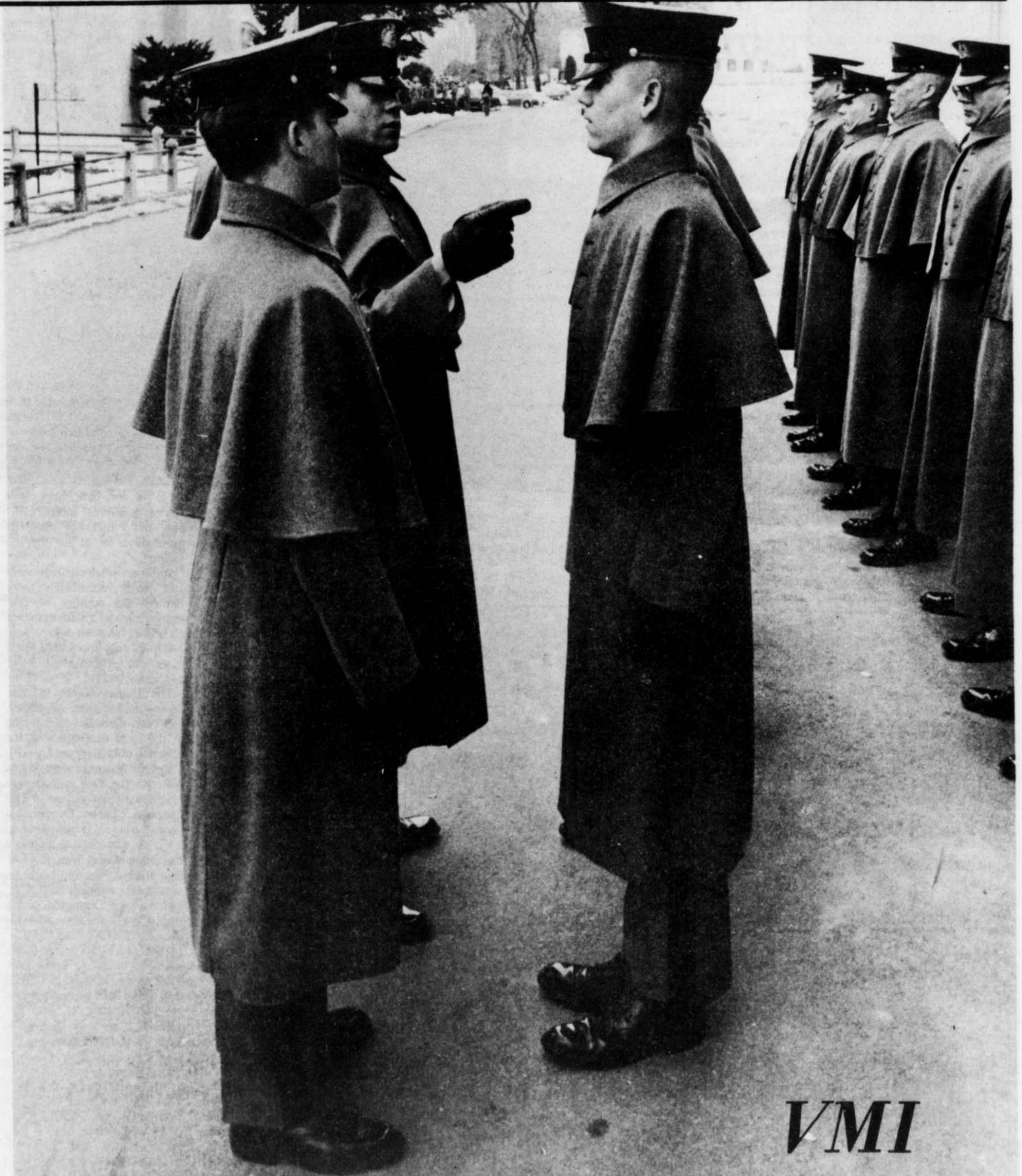


Front Lawn

A supplement to The Ring-tum Phi



VMI

VMI & W&L: A quiet rivalry

Relationship spans riots in 20s to parties in 80s

By B. SCOTT TILLEY
Staff Reporter

Legends abound of the abuse heaped on Virginia Military Institute cadets by Washington and Lee students, and vice-versa. And, according to retired W&L professor Dr. Charles Turner, most probably are true. "When I started teaching here (1946) things were somewhat antagonistic between the student bodies," remembered Turner.

"In sports events and such, I remember them ending up in fights, sometimes. And I can remember when the cadets used to march to church on Sundays. The frats use to mock them, trying to get them out of step."

Turner also remembers "Vee Mees, as we call them," sneaking over to "borrow" flags from Lee Chapel, and W&L students doing the same in Jackson Hall.

"They were even antagonistic in church," he recalled. "In the baptist church, we had a special place, the balcony, reserved for them. When the church used to vote on something, even on something like new members, they would all vote no, in a block. But we just used to laugh, because their vote didn't count

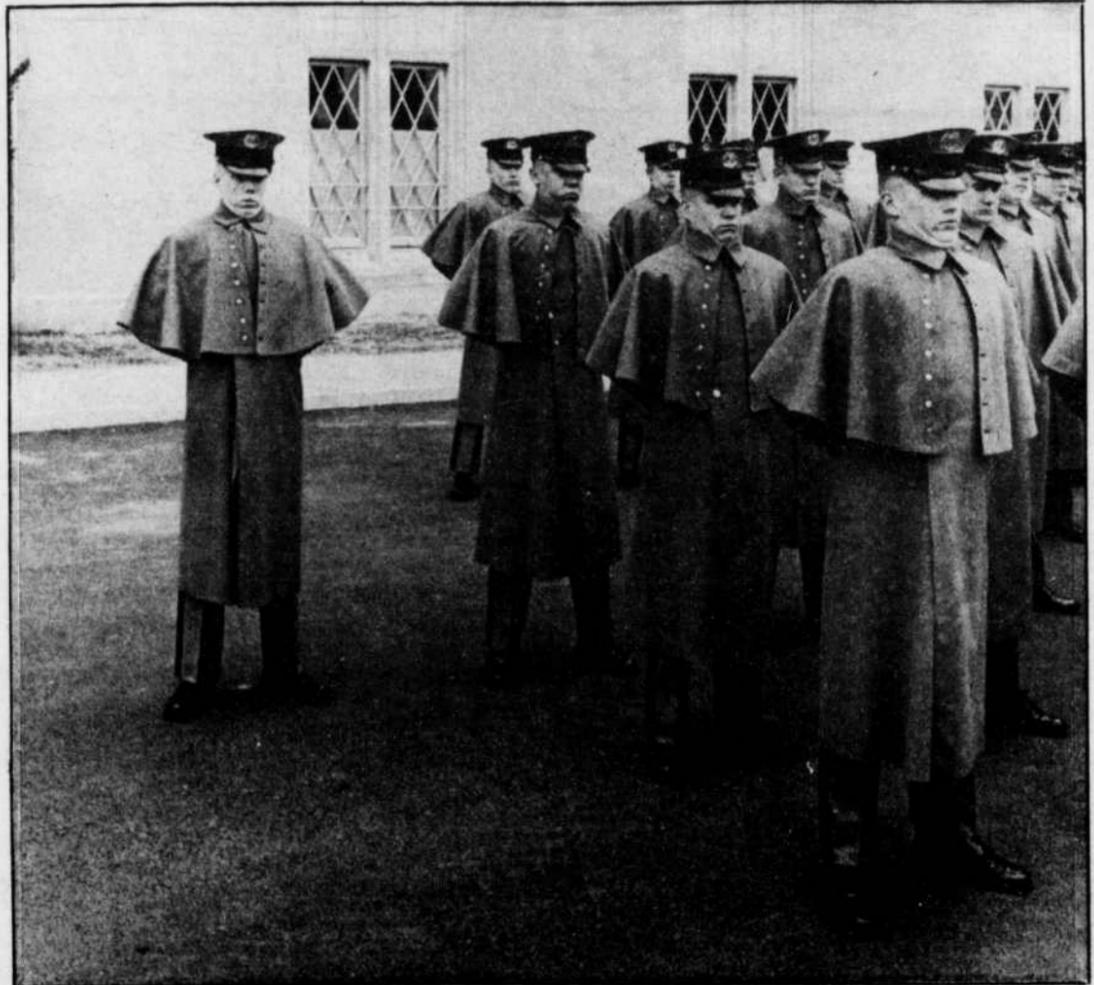
much anyway."

Relations between the two schools had a much more auspicious start, though. In fact, VMI was originally a component of Washington College.

According to Ollinger Crenshaw's "General Lee's College," in 1836 the Virginia legislature passed a bill "reorganizing the Lexington arsenal and establishing a Military school in connection with Washington College."

In 1838, the Virginia Military Institute was officially organized. The Washington College Board of Trustees used money in its Cincinnati fund to appoint the Cincinnati Professor of the College. They elected Colonel Francis H. Smith, who also became commandant.

Before the two schools would formally separate, the Washington College trustees would consider, and defeat, a proposal to combine the two schools into "The Washington Institute of Virginia." When the formal separation occurred, Dr. George Armstrong, professor of chemistry, wrote the Rock-bridge County delegate to the General Assembly that VMI's independence would "convert it into a College which shall be a rival of Washington College, of



such a character that the rivalry, between them must eventually result in the downfall of one of them or the other."

By the time of the Civil War, antagonism had clearly begun.

Three times (before the battle of New Market) the cadets were called into service. And three times, after seeing no action and not firing a shot, they returned to Lexington amidst the mocking and jibes of Washington College students.

By the turn of the century, rocky relations also had become prevalent on the athletic fields.

"One time, years and years ago, students broke out in a riot between the two schools at an athletic event," said W&L athletic director William McHenry. "That was back when the rivalry was intense."

After that incident, athletic competition between the two virtually ceased, said McHenry. Even in the early 1950s, when McHenry was a student here, the wisdom of athletic competition still was questionable. The two teams relented to scrimmage, but it was closed to student spectators.

Competition in all sports except those subsidized by scholarships at VMI — football, basketball, and track — was not resumed until 1971. "Even when we were subsidized in athletics, when we were usually much stronger, we still didn't play them," said McHenry.

Dr. Turner noted that interaction used to be prevalent among the schools in the academic spectrum. He was one of many professors that used to be involved in a professor exchange program between the two colleges.

But even that is minimal today, according to Dean of Students Lewis John.

"It is too bad there isn't (more academic interaction), but our different natures preclude a lot of it," he explained.

Different academic calendars and daily schedules have limited the number of programs, such as a student taking classes at the other school, said John. "It's not impossible, but it is difficult. There are a lot of barriers," he said.

The major source of academic cooperation, he added, has been the cross-referencing of the card catalogues at the libraries of each school.

But the degree of segregation between the two schools was made particularly clear to VMI Chaplain Charles Caudill last year during a tragic time at VMI. Three cadets, as well as a Randolph-Macon Woman's College student, were killed in an automobile accident on U.S. 11, just north of Lexington. Not a single W&L student attended the memorial service at VMI.

"W&L and VMI are so close, we need to get to know each other more," Chaplain Caudill said at the time while summing up the history of the two schools. The only growth he said he has seen between the two schools is their Christian communities.

"If two students, one from VMI and one from W&L, had been in the car, I don't know if there would have been a joint service," he concluded. "It would be interesting to see what would happen. I don't know."

All photographs in this edition of Front Lawn are by W. Patrick Hinely, unless otherwise noted.





Life at VMI is the bad with the good

By CHARLIE ALCORN
Staff Reporter

Exactly how is life across the way? Ask any number of VMI cadets and one will get any number of answers: these, unrealistic, disciplined were a few of the adjectives used to describe life at our brother campus.

If a man from W&L were asked to trade places with a cadet for a week and then describe the experience, "harsh" probably would be the predominant adjective used.

Harsh, you say. Well, try this day on for size. At 6:40 each morning, 10 minutes of bugle calls wake the men up and the fun doesn't stop until 11:30 each evening with taps. In between, there's morning assembly and the march to breakfast and then bugle calls every half hour to announce each class change. Cadets can leave the Post from 12:05 to 4:15 on Mondays,

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, if they have no afternoon classes, but at 4:05 there are 10 minutes of bugle calls to herald inspection, drill, athletics or parade.

On Wednesdays, cadets are allowed to leave from 4 p.m. un-

On Saturdays, when taps comes a full half hour later than usual, they can go off Post from 1 p.m. until midnight, and on Sundays from 8 a.m. until 11:30 p.m.

That's the full nine yards, minks, and you thought you had

are they talking about? One always sees numerous cadets running through the streets of Lexington and across the W&L campus. They don't do it for their health. It's part of a strict aerobics routine required for all cadets. Rat Barr is probably

longer permitted, sweat parties are now the rule — late-night workouts on the fourth-class stoop of the barracks that leave the floors as moist as a cold beer can.

"Big deal!? How would you like to do 250 push-ups with a guy screaming in your mug?" asked one disgruntled Rat.

So with all this to keep them busy, how do cadets find time for their love life?

"Love life? No love life here. It only exists in a letter," said Rat E.P. Devins.

"My girlfriend right now is a sock that I put on the radiator at night," is how another Rat described his love life.

"My love life sucks," said First Classman A.W. Meade.

Does this dirth of social life leave the cadets feeling rather jealous of their cross-town rivals? Asked what they respect most about W&L, several cadets mentioned freedom and

(continued on page 6)

Asked the one thing

he would like W&L students to experience

in his daily life ,

cadet D.A. Barr

said the discipline and physical training.

til supper formation at 6:30. At 7:25 every weekday evening, they have to report to an authorized place for a status check and stay there until 11:15, at which time they get 15 minutes to visit friends in the barracks before lights go out.

it bad with AB period Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Asked the one thing he would like W&L students to experience in his daily life, cadet Rat D.A. Barr said the discipline and physical training. What kind of physical discipline

referring to a much more intense sort of physical activity, however: Rat Line.

The Rat Line is an indoctrination process administered by upperclassmen to produce what is called "class unity" in each freshman class. Hazing is no



Controversy rises over Rat line

By MIKE ALLEN
Staff Reporter

On the Chinese calendar, "The Year of the Rat" (year 4682), began Sunday, but you won't find anyone celebrating over at the Virginia Military Institute.

That's because the freshmen have become the focus of a bitter conflict between the Institute's administration and the upper classes.

"Things are getting pretty slack around here," a cadet in the guardroom said Tuesday of the treatment this year's Rats are receiving as a result of administration policy.

The Institute is run by the Superintendent, General Sam S. Walker, and the Commandant of Cadets, Col. Harold B. Snyder Jr.

The head of student government is the First Class President, Jamie Edward Clark, an English major from Sharpsville, Penn., who will be in the Marine Corps.

From the beginning of the year, there were reports of "friction" and "lack of communication" between the two sides.

said at the time that the "whole issue stems from the fact...that the Administration is bending over backwards to keep Rats from leaving."

The official count at integration time showed that 43 Rats had left, but the Cadet said that the actual figure was somewhat higher.

The newspaper said that for each Rat that had left at that point in the year, the Institute lost about \$8,000 in reimbursements to the parents and loss in state support. Clark said he was concerned that when the system gets easier, the "quality of the product drops."

The First Class acquiesced to integration reluctantly. "They have listened to me, and understand we don't have a choice, fight or not," Clark said.

An editorial in the Cadet the following week said the effect of administration policy was "to ram rat integration, in both ranks and the mess hall, down the Corps' throat. Little, if any, consideration was given to the First Class," which normally runs the Rat line.

The legend of New Market

By B. SCOTT TILLEY
Staff Reporter

On May 15, 1864, 247 cadets charged into battle at New Market, and thus changed the history of the Virginia Military Institute. The annual recognition of that event is still the most revered celebration at VMI.

The Battle of New Market was the climactic point of Union General Franz Sigel's Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1864. General Ulysses S. Grant was then battling General Robert E. Lee at Spotsylvania in his quest to take the Confederate capital at Richmond, and he realized the implications that a simultaneous victory in the Valley could have.

Not only was the Valley the breadbasket of the South, but Sigel could also capture the major railroad transportation centers of Staunton and Lynchburg. If victorious, he would only be 60 miles west of Lee's left flank at Spotsylvania. "I propose to fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," said Grant.

The force charged with stopping Sigel was led by Major-General John C. Breckinridge, the former vice-president and 1860 presidential candidate. As he advanced toward the encounter from southwest Virginia, he found himself greatly outmanned. The Augusta and Rockingham County Reserves had been called up, but that number was still insufficient. On May 2, General Francis H. Smith, superintendent of VMI, offered the services of the cadets. On May 10, Breckinridge called the cadets into service.

That afternoon, they had participated in a Lexington ceremony commemorating the

death of Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, a former professor of physics at VMI, a year earlier at Chancellorsville, Va.

The cadets cheered as they broke from ranks upon hearing the news. They had grown dejected listening to reports of the war and burying local dead while never being called themselves. On three occasions the cadets had been summoned to oppose the Union raids of Brigadier-General William Averell, but each time failed to find him or fire a shot, returning to the jibes of Lexington residents. In March, they had even called themselves together into a mass meeting and passed a resolution offering their services to Lee.

The youthful cadet corps was led by Colonel Scott Shipp, only 24 himself. The veterans teased the cadets, calling them the "Seedcorn Battalion." A regimental band struck up the tune "Rockabye Baby" and the veterans cradled their rifles in their arms and sang along.

The confrontation between Union and Confederate troops occurred May 15 at New Market. Breckinridge hoped to keep the cadets in reserve, vowing only to use them if necessary.

As the battle reached its peak, the Confederate center was on the verge of collapse. Major Charles Semple told Breckinridge that the cadets were the only hope, but he allegedly responded, "No Charley, this will not do, they are only children and I cannot expose them to such fire as our center will receive."

Semple tried to contract the lines, but soon returned saying that it was impossible. Breckinridge, with a tear in his eye, said, "Put the boys in...and God forgive me for the order." It is

said that he turned his back as the cadets charged into battle.

Suddenly, Sigel attempted a charge with the 34th Massachusetts leading the way. The cadets repulsed them, though, and Captain Henry A. Wise, who replaced the injured Shipp, jumped up and yelled "Charge!"

The cadets moved forward like a human avalanche. As they rushed forward, the ground, like a swamp from the rain, literally sucked the shoes from their feet. "The Field of Lost Shoes" did not stop them; and the left and right flanks rallied around. Soon Sigel's whole line was under attack, retreating, Sigel screaming orders in German. Unfortunately, none of his men spoke German.

Triumphantly, Oliver "Brave" Evans waved the flag of VMI from the top of a captured caisson from Captain Albert Von Kleiser's battery. Future U.S. Senator Charles Faulkner took 23 prisoners himself.

The victory was a costly one: 47 cadets were wounded. Ten were dead. The cadets quickly became romantic heroes. Lee thanked them for protecting his flank, Breckinridge praised their courageous actions. President Jefferson Davis addressed them in Richmond, "Stonewall" Jackson's old brigade paid tribute to them, the Confederate Congress commended them and thousands cheered them. Breckinridge, later appointed Confederate Secretary of War, would always refer to them as "my cadets."

On that day, they had saved Staunton, protected Lee's left flank while he fought at Spotsylvania, created a legend and made a name for the Virginia Military Institute.

'The whole issue stems from the fact . . . that the Administration is bending over backwards to keep Rats from leaving.'

In an interview in early October with The V.M.I. Cadet, the student newspaper, Clark took a conciliatory tone, saying that "a portion of it was our fault."

However, he pointed out the conflict he faced in having to follow orders from the administration as well as trying to accommodate the many wishes of the cadets.

On Oct. 24, the dispute escalated when the separate Rat ranks were dissolved and the freshmen were "integrated into the Old Corps." In recent times, this has taken place much later in the year, after "breakout," when the Rats achieve fourth class status.

Several nights earlier, the First Class had voted "overwhelmingly" against pre-breakout integration. According to an account in the Cadet, at Supper Roll the Thursday night before, by "throwing his Regimental Executive Officer's collar brass to the floor, Clark dramatically proved his sincerity in carrying out the desires of the class."

Integration took place as scheduled, however, and Clark

On Oct. 28, Clark met with the VMI Board of Visitors, and received a vote of no confidence.

The next week, he outlined for the First Class the options available to it, including "stepping off."

"The Bullet," known as "The Rat Bible," defines a "step off" as "the ultimate act of protest by the Corps of Cadets in defiance of an unfavorable administrative policy."

At the meeting with the First Class, Clark pointed out that "a step off could result in a dismissal of some members of the class."

In two separate votes that night, approximately half the class expressed its approval of integration, so further protests were not pursued.

Last week, the administration (known to Cadets as "Smith Hall") stated that in the future, the First Class would no longer be permitted to work out the Rats in any manner.

In addition, the Rat Disciplinary Committee is now permitted to meet only once a week for half an hour.

First Class reaction has not yet been determined.

Alumni help cadets with placement

By ANDY HOPPES
Staff Reporter

Virginia Military Institute alumni play an important role in assisting cadets find job opportunities, Lt. Col. Royce E. Jones, director of cadet affairs and placement, said in an interview last week.

About 300 VMI alumni assist the placement office in helping cadets find jobs, Jones said. Alumni not only alert cadets to possible job openings, but also do such things as house cadets who are in a city for a job interview and lecture on aspects of finding a job, Jones said.

Alumni inform the placement office of job openings in their

A cadet can specify his employment interest and even a geographical preference to the computer, and receive a print-out of alumni matching the specifications who might have information on job openings, Jones said.

"Everyone uses something that fits their situation. A lot of people are using computers. The computer just makes it easier to organize," Jones said.

On occasion, the placement office also will send out the resumes of cadets to companies that request information on future graduates in certain fields, Jones said. Unless the company specifically requests resumes for certain individuals,

'That kind of contact is like having many sets of eyes instead of just one'

own companies and companies they do business with, Jones said. The pool of VMI alumni is too small to provide enough job openings for graduating cadets in their own companies alone, Jones explained.

"That kind of contact is like having many sets of eyes instead of just one guy," Jones said.

Jones describes the placement office's role as being that of a "middle-man" who finds out about jobs and informs likely candidates of the openings. The placement office might suggest that the two parties get together, but after that it is up to the cadet, said Jones.

"We purposely don't want them to think that we get them jobs. The responsibility of getting the job is with the cadet," Jones emphasized.

In order to spread information about job openings and possible job applicants, the placement office utilizes several sophisticated methods.

Jones said the placement office sends out a bulletin to both alumni who have volunteered to assist in placement and to cadets who have registered with the placement office. The bulletin provides information on both job openings and brief summaries of the credentials of cadets looking for jobs.

Starting this year, the placement office also has begun to use several computer programs to cross reference cadets seeking jobs with possible sources of jobs, Jones said. A similar procedure had been used previously; however, the cross referencing had to be done by hand, he said.

the placement office will send the company the resumes of every registered cadet in that field, he added.

"One thing we don't do is try to judge who is a good engineer. We don't pick out individual students," Jones emphasized.

About 60 cadets register each year with the placement office to receive assistance in the job search, Jones said. In addition, 30 alumni, many just coming off active duty in the military, he added, register with the placement office.

Although Jones said that he does not rely on statistics to justify what the placement program does, the program has been fairly successful.

"About a quarter or a third of our guys say they got their jobs through the placement officer in their department," Jones said.

Nonetheless, Jones said the career planning part of the placement office's program is probably as important as the placement part. A great deal of time is spent teaching cadets how to go about getting a job and helping them find a career that appeals to them, Jones said.

"The key to the whole career planning and placement program is that the students get involved in it early. A guy has to find out what a job is about," Jones said.

Jones said that he expects VMI's placement program to be upgraded next year because a full time placement officer probably will be added. Jones said he spends only about half his time at VMI working on placement duties.



Running: a daily chore for cadets

By PAUL CLARK
Staff Reporter

Did you ever wonder why VMI cadets constantly are running across our campus?

According to Dr. Clark King, chairman of the VMI physical education department, running is only a part of an extensive and rigorous physical fitness program required for all cadets.

All freshmen, sophomores and juniors are enrolled in a physical education program, Clark said. The P.E. curriculum is divided into two parts: classroom study and activities. The classroom subjects include CPR, drug and alcohol abuse and films. Activities include swimming, boxing, weight training, wrestling and scuba diving, among others, King explained.

The freshman, or Rat, class

has a program that, according to King, is designed like Outward Bound — an intense exercise program that brings out the survival element in man. The Rat program only lasts one semester. When it is completed the first-year cadets can then join another program, such as aerobics.

Keydets take the aerobics class four days a week. Each Keydet has to earn a minimum of seven points a day. To receive maximum credit for the class, a Keydet must earn 40 points a week. Failure to earn 30 points in a week results in a zero. Similar to the W&L Physical Education department, three zero marks means the student fails the course regardless of any additional effort he puts into it.

Rats at VMI are required to complete a 1½ mile run in 10

minutes, 30 seconds to receive credit for the program. Points can be earned in a variety of ways, but the amount of points earned is determined by the intensity of the sport. For example, two rats playing raquetball will receive more points if they play at a high level of intensity, whereas if they play lackadaisically they will get fewer points, King said.

According to Dr. King, "We give points based on a pulse of 150 — a 60 percent level for men of their ages." Some men, said King, choose to earn all of their points through running.

"It is all very complicated and confusing to someone not aware of or familiar with our system," adds King. "There is one thing we can be assured of — these men undergo strenuous workouts — they are very challenging."

Cadets are upset over possible changes

By FRANK KOLLMANSPERGER and BILL JEMIS OF THE VMI CADET

While their neighbors, the students of Washington and Lee University have struggled with the questions of coeducation and necktie requirements, the cadets at Virginia Military Institute have loudly questioned administrative directives concerning the Ratline and Rat integration. Although conflict between the Corps and the administration has become as much a tradition as the Friday afternoon parade, the changes this year have been more startling and the responses more impassioned than in years past.

Brochures describing VMI to prospective cadets characterize barracks life as an experiment in self government and leadership. The First Class has traditionally taken the leading role in this experiment, through cadet organizations such as the Honor Court, the General and Executive Committees and the Rat Disciplinary Committee. The Honor Court is composed of fifteen elected members, five from the Second Class and 10

from the First Class, and they are directly responsible for applying the cadet honor — "A cadet will not lie, cheat or steal, nor tolerate those who do" — to everyday situations, setting policies concerning exams, homework, and status, and enforcing those policies regardless of the offender's rank, position or popularity within the Corps. Its authority is seldom questioned, and the administration is strongly supportive of the Court and its policies.

The same level of administration support has not been forthcoming this year to the other three student governing bodies. While the Executive and General Committees, which are composed of the three officers of the upper three classes, are

responsible for enforcing a self-imposed standard of conduct and appearance of cadets in public, the Rat Disciplinary Committee (RDC) is concerned solely with the enforcement of a strict code of additional restrictions placed on the first-year cadet (Rat.) This last committee has become the focal point of conflict between the administration and the First Class.

This year General Sam Walker, by direction of the VMI Board of Visitors, has taken action to remove perceived excesses and abuses of the Rat system, most especially in the area of physical conditioning and disciplinary action. These changes have attracted the fierce opposition of the

Corps, who feel that the common hardships and physical obstacles of the Rat year provide for a better cadet and a strong unified class. Amid emotional charges that Walker is attempting to transform VMI into a model of West Point, his alma mater, the Corps has been frustrated in every attempt to seek redress; and many believe that the only option left is a

"step off" — a demonstration in which the entire Corps refuses to attend classes, wear uniforms, or march in parades. Past "step offs" have been met with stern reprisals to include the dismissal of entire classes. This year is no exception as Gen. Walker has threatened to dismiss those cadets who openly defy his directives.

Walker's determined effort to "clean up" the Ratline and gain a tighter control of barracks coupled with the fierce opposition of the Corps to include the Rats themselves, only serve to illustrate the emotional nature of the issues at hand. VMI men, whether they be Rats, upperclassmen or alumni, all attribute the unique nature of VMI and its success in furthering the ideals on which it is founded, to the system of indoctrination and training of new cadets known as the Ratline.

Whatever the outcome of the current power struggle between Gen. Walker and the Corps may be, this much is seems certain, the Ratline, as it has existed in recent years is an endangered species destined to be modified or replaced.

Life

(continued from page 3)

social life. So do the cadets become angry when they hear parties roaring into the wee hours while they remain confined to the barracks?

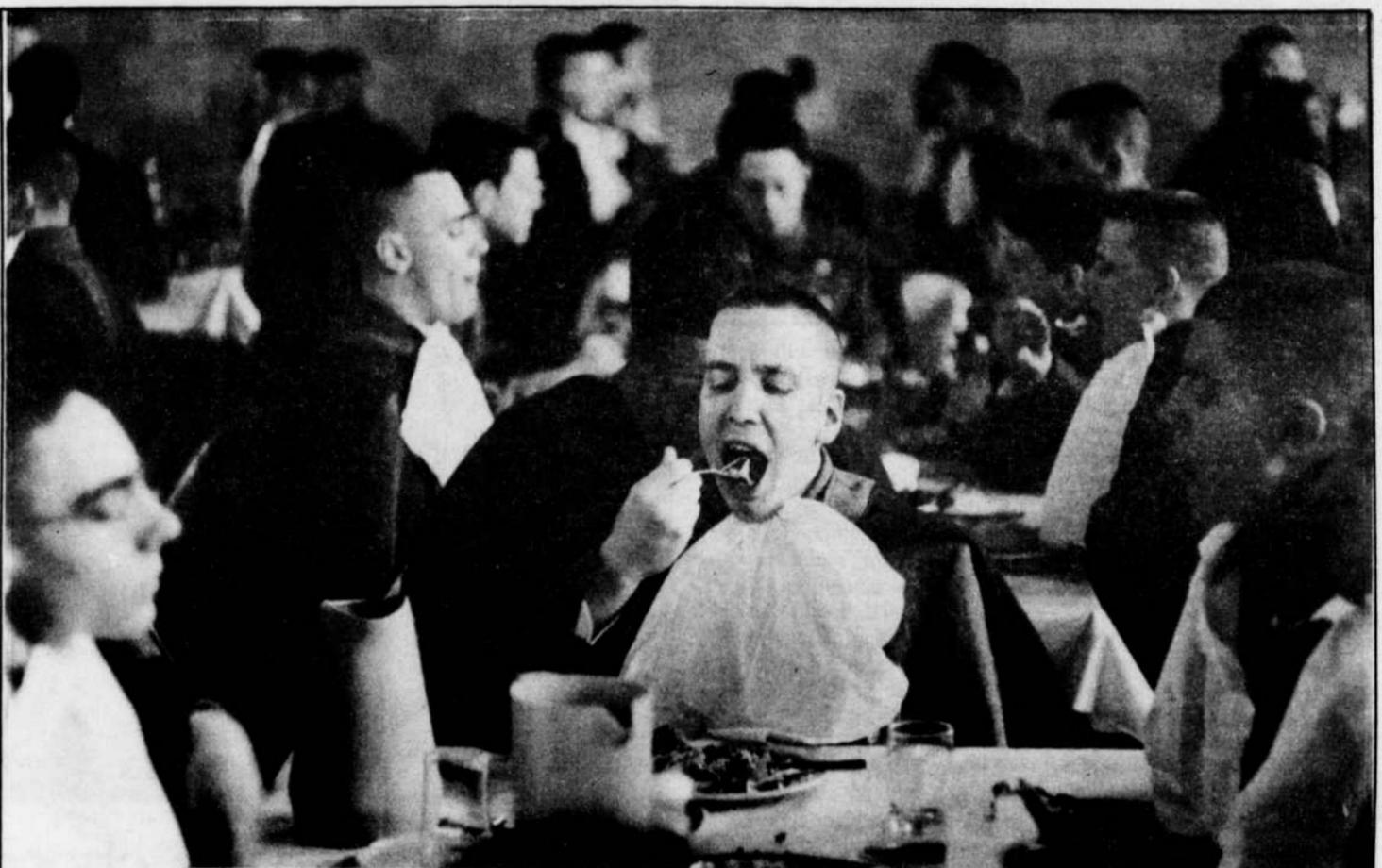
"Yeah," said one upperclassman, "but you have to accept it or you'll go crazy."

At some point, many cadets become a little bit tired of life at the "I" and the result is a phenomenon known as "running the block" — escaping from the barracks, usually to an illegal apartment party or a W&L fraternity. If caught in the act, a cadet may face a penalty of several weeks in confinement.

So what is a good cadet to do with the petty rules and the tight hours putting never-ceasing pressure on him. For many at the Institute, sports is the only viable outlet.

As of last year, VMI was dropped from Division I to Division I-AA status by the NCAA. This means that VMI is not obligated to schedule all the bigger schools in the area. They do manage to play a good deal of Division I competition and in many cases, especially in football, they pay for it. A school of 1,500 students just cannot keep up with a program that has 30,000 students to work with.

The cadets interviewed seemed to believe that VMI was heading toward Division III status but was being pushed to stay on a scholarship level by the alumni.



A Rat consumes his 'square meal' in the VMI dining hall.

The mention of alumni raised another major topic with most of the cadets — the inordinate amount of influence the alumni have on the school. One cadet called them "the silent voice;" most refer to them as "pains." Perhaps this is because most of the tactical officers — faculty members who help police the barracks — are VMI graduates and the commandant (dean of students), who is in charge of discipline, is invariably a VMI graduate.

Needless to say, the new cadets don't get much slack from the old cadets now running the show. The administration says it's all part of the VMI tradition. The current students call it pressure, pressure to make the grade in a world that is changing outside the parade grounds of VMI, but remains static, some say unforgiving, inside the institution.

In many cases, students under the kind of pressure that cadets insist is real would turn to drugs for some kind of relief. Most cadets are quick to admit that there are drugs on the campus; heard of, but not seen.

In light of the fact that 11 cadets have been subpoenaed by the recent grand jury investigating drug dealing in Lexington, perhaps the problem is a little worse than many are willing to admit. When asked which campus had a worse drug problem between W&L and VMI, the general response was that they were probably about the same, but that it was not a major problem at VMI.

The big difference between the schools, according to some cadets, was the two school's honor systems. The cadets feel that theirs is much stricter and, therefore, taken more seriously. In the same breath, they also

would say that it is unrealistic because it is too all-encompassing and doesn't give students enough room for genuine error.

Lying, cheating and stealing are covered by W&L's honor code. VMI's covers these areas as well as nearly every other aspect of daily life. The cadets say their system works, but at the expense of any hint of casual flippancy. The sound of percussion in the middle of the night — a cadet being "drummed out" for an honor violation — punctuates the respect with which it is treated.

So, with all its gothic code of honor, stringent system of discipline and regimine and the Spartan way of life, from the architecture of the buildings to the starch-laden meals, is there still a place in the American college scene for the kind of experience VMI has to offer?

The cadets answer with a resounding yes. Why? Because they fast are becoming the last of a dying breed — an all-male military institute. With the service academies going coeducational and pointing toward a more technically-oriented education, the men at VMI feel their school offers a superior education. Some referred to it as a "pure" military experience. Pure in a sense that has been grounded in the values given the academy by Stonewall Jackson. There has been little change since.

First classman A.W. Meade caught the overriding sense of pride the cadets have for their school when asked whether he thought tradition was the glue that holds the institute together. "No," he replied. "It's people fighting to hold the tradition together."

AD, coach satisfied with Cameron Hall

By MIKE STACHURA
Sports Editor

An arena seating over 5,000 spectators would seem to be out of place in small-town Lexington. Not so if you ask Tom Joynes or Marty Fletcher about Cameron Hall, the imposing athletics and convocations structure on the campus of Virginia Military Institute.

Joynes, athletic director at VMI, was initially suspect of the size of the \$7 million facility, saying in January 1983, "It's ridiculous to have a building which seats 5,000 in a town which only has 5,000 people in it."

In the interview last year, he also said that the arena would rarely be filled for sporting events or other functions. He felt it would be difficult to attract popular bands, saying, "The type of show that would come wouldn't clear enough to pay for their advertising."

The hall has been used for VMI drama productions, banquets, and other special events like the Founder's Day Convocation at VMI and former President Gerald Ford's speech in October.

However, it has not attracted many concerts in its two-and-a-half year existence. Pure Prairie League played the hall in April 1983, and the Fancy Dress Thursday night concert was held there in 1982 when the Atlanta Rhythm Section played.

Joynes explained that although there was no plan that it would generate any revenue, the Board of Visitors at VMI (similar to W&L's Board of Trustees) thought Cameron Hall would get more get more business than it does.

Ike Sherlock, Director of Cameron Hall, declined comment on the issue.

Joynes' attitude has changed somewhat over time, however. He still feels Cameron Hall has too many seats for basketball but recognizes its important functions for the school and the cadets. "It's given us a great place to play basketball and a great place for graduation and corps convocations.

"There are too many seats for basketball, but those extra seats are used for corps convocations," Joynes said.

Joynes explained that Cameron Hall is an improvement as a site for corps convocations and graduation ceremonies because the building formerly used, JM Hall, wasn't large enough to seat the cadets, faculty and guests.

"It was built for the special needs. It has served its purpose as a multi-purpose facility," he said.

According to Capt. O. Lawrence Burnett, Director of Public Information at VMI, "VMI had long felt the need for a multi-purpose auditorium. The facility was 10 years in the



Cadets attend the VMI basketball game Monday night in Cameron Hall. (Photo by David W. Stevens)

planning."

The primary tenant at Cameron Hall has been head basketball coach Marty Fletcher and his Keydets, who began playing their home games there in November 1981 with an opening night contest against the University of Virginia and Ralph Sampson. Even then, with the second best team and number one player in the nation, "There were still 600 seats open," Joynes said.

Coach Fletcher, though, feels it is an excellent facility for

basketball. "Spectator-wise, I don't think there's a bad seat in the house. We feel like the crowd is able to be right there with us," the Keydets' third-year leader said. Fletcher also praised the technical aspects of the gymnasium.

The hall is rarely more than half full for a basketball game, but Fletcher finds this to be no hindrance to his team's play. "We've had crowds of 700, 800 people, but the corps is so enthusiastic and they cheer so

well for us.

Cameron Hall is a change from the Keydets' former home, affectionately known as "The Pit," where the corps played an instrumental role in not only cheering for VMI teams but also disturbing opposing squads.

Fletcher hopes to establish the same type of atmosphere in Cameron Hall. "It's a bigger place than The Pit. We'll just have to work a little harder, and it seems like it's starting to move in that direction."

VMI clings to Division I status

By PAUL FOUTCH
Staff Reporter

Virginia Military Institute is one of the smallest schools competing in Division I athletics, and although major sports there have had a few lean years recently, the school's intercollegiate athletic program has produced success that belies the school's size.

The Keydet basketball team has not posted a winning season in five years, yet as few as eight years ago VMI reached the final eight of the NCAA tournament.

From the 1975-76 season through the '77-78 season, the basketball team went 22-10, 26-4 and 21-7, respectively. In 1976 the team lost to Rutgers, 91-75, in the Eastern Region finals of the NCAA tournament. In 1977 the team lost to Kentucky in the semifinals, 93-78.

The team's last winning season before 1975 came in 1941.

The Keydet football team, which competes in Division IAA, hasn't produced the great successes of the basketball team, but it has been more con-

sistent. In 1981 the team was 6-3-1, winning against Virginia Tech and Army. This year, though, the team posted a 2-9 record.

In track and wrestling, less-emphasized sports, VMI is more successful. The track team has won the state championship three out of the last five years, and the wrestling

successful intercollegiate sports program is important to VMI. "We want to win and we want to be competitive, but we haven't been in the last five years in our two major sports," said Strickler.

However, there are no major plans to improve the teams by a radical change in the program, and under no circumstances

VMI is going to do everything possible to compete on a Division I level in athletics and win as many championships in the state and Southern Conference as possible," said Strickler.

One of the reasons that a Division I program is important to VMI, he suggested, is the athletic scholarships attract athletes who would not normal-

recruit they're looking for is the kid who can handle the toughness of the military system here and still play major college athletics and get a good education.

"If there were no scholarships, VMI would be hard-pressed to get the number of cadets they want in the barracks," said Strickler. "The admissions office and the business offices have said as much."

According to Strickler, 159 out of the 1,300 cadets in the school are on some sort of athletic scholarship, with a little over half that number receiving full scholarships.

Of that 159, about 145 scholarships go to athletes in football, basketball, track and wrestling. The other sports for which scholarships are awarded are baseball, soccer, tennis, golf and swimming.

Athletic scholarships are funded by the Keydet Club, which this year will raise \$700,000 from alumni for scholarships.

'VMI recruiting is a little bit tougher because of the academic and military requirements'

team has won 30 consecutive dual meets over the last three years.

According to Sports Information Director Mike Strickler, a

would VMI drop to a lower division, according to Strickler.

"The Board of Visitors (comparable to W&L's Board of Trustees) set a policy not too many years ago that states that

ly have become cadets.

"VMI recruiting is a little bit tougher because of the academic and the military requirements," he said. "The type of

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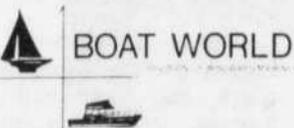
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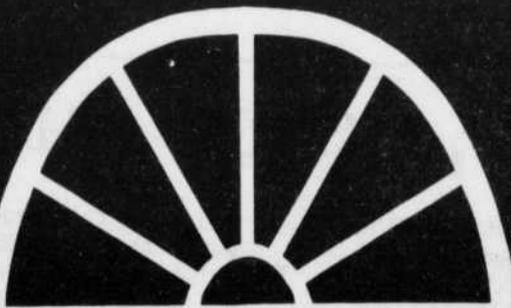
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