



The cover of Nancy Delano's book, featuring her mother, Pauline "Polly" Efford Delano

Mother's Day

Remembering Pauline Efford Delano ('32): Daughter writes memoirs of an alumna from 'The Normal'

On Sept. 24, 1928, Pauline "Polly" Efford Delano ('32) arrived at the State Teachers College in Harrisonburg - a school that 20 years before had been a simple cattle farm, and yet would 50 years later would be a coeducational institution known as James Madison University. Her tuition and fees amounted to \$300, which is what today's student pays for books for one semester. Before her stood at least 12 Bluestone buildings, their beautiful Harrisonburg-quarried walls stretching dramatically along three sides of the Quad. Three of the buildings - Jackson, Spotswood and Ashby - were dedicated to living space for students. Two of these buildings remain as residence halls today.

By the time Delano arrived at the State Teachers College, a shortage in living space was already an issue. Three girls were bunked in a two-person room. What Delano recounted years later to her daughter of her living situation was not about the novelty of electricity in her bedroom, but about the difficulties of sharing a single mirror among three young women. Not much has changed in either the necessities of girls or in the atmosphere of JMU's historic bluestone dorms, according to Moore's memoirs of her mother. "...a desk light plugged in a cord hanging from the ceiling, wooden floors and iron beds - one bunk and one single - a radiator for the comfort of central heating, two large windows with curtains, a desk, chair and bookcase, one closet, a doll and stuffed animal, and quilts folded neatly on the foot of the bed."

Nancy Delano Moore has done what few daughters actually take the time to do. She has captured many of her mother's early JMU memories in *Remembering Pauline Efford Delano*. The book chronicles her mother's entire life, but a few chapters are especially meaningful for her classmates and other alumni.

A visitor could walk among the rooms of Spotswood today and find little distinction between now and then. Campus life, however, was very different. The college's center was housed in Harrison Hall. Maury was home to the natural rather than the political sciences. Wilson's auditorium was being built, rumored to "provide the best ... in the state," and its towering cupola - the image to be stamped upon letterhead and brochures for years to come - had not yet been constructed. It would not top the paladin building until 1930, two years into Polly's college life.

Delano, according to her daughter, was an avid student. She was enrolled in Dr. John Sawhill's Latin classes and courses in the School of Expression taught by Miss Ruth Hudson. Delano also took lessons in Greek. Her interests, however, reached beyond academia to include school-sponsored activities. The Lyceum series then, like now, brought much-anticipated visitors to the Harrisonburg campus. Delano attended a lecture by John Powell - a composer and musician, watched the London cast of *Beggars Opera* perform, enjoyed a Careen de Berbera moving picture - a privilege made possible by

the French government, and "marveled at Antony Sarg's marionettes." The young student also kept herself busy off-grounds through her presidency of the YWCA, an institution with which the school had a very close relationship.

Though today, many JMU's students might find themselves struggling to make ends meet most of their trials do not compare to those of Pauline's days on campus. The Depression caused many girls - forced to work and help support their families - to terminate their education. A time of such economic hardship was not the time to waste money on educating young women. Delano's mother, however, felt differently and due to insurance money left by her late husband as well as Pauline's \$75 renewable Dupont scholarship, was able to keep all of her children in school. Polly and each of her siblings graduated from their respective institutions.

Pauline graduated with a degree in English and Latin, and certified to teach. As one of the duties of her YWCA position, Polly welcomed the young women of the class of 1936 with sage words of reflection: *I am just so glad you have chosen Harrisonburg Teachers College for your alma mater, for I know you will soon learn to love it just as much as we do, who have been here longer. College life is a most exciting adventure filled with tasks, pleasures, wholesome associations and really worthwhile experiences - an adventure in which you will want to invest your very best.*

Soon after graduation, Delano was offered a third grade teaching position at Farnham, where she had attended grade school. She accepted the job and is still remembered by her students as having a fervor for knowledge and a love of life.

- Katie Templin ('03)