

## Chapter 2: Washburn University History

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### Introduction

Washburn University has a long and storied past of which today's students should be proud. From its founding on the heels of the Civil War to the 1966 tornado to the 21<sup>st</sup> century institution it is today, Washburn University's legacy is strong. This chapter introduces you to the history of the institution and shows you why you should be proud to be an Ichabod!

### Founding

Washburn University was founded as Lincoln College, a private Congregational school, on Feb. 6, 1865. A group of church members had been trying since 1857 to get a college established, but various obstacles and the Civil War hampered their efforts.

During the summer and fall of 1865 a two story building took shape on lots donated by John Ritchie on the corner of 10<sup>th</sup> and Jackson streets in downtown Topeka. The front door faced west and had a good view of the state capitol under construction.

Since few young people had a high school education at that time, the founders decided to offer a three year high school course along with the college curriculum. Classes began January 3, 1866 with 38 high school students. According to a publication of the General Association of the Congregational Churches in Kansas, one of these students was African-American. The first two college students enrolled in the fall of 1866. The high school was a part of the college until 1918, when it became Washburn Rural High School.

Washburn has always admitted women and minorities. There are several well-documented episodes in early athletics of conflicts with opponents forfeiting the game because Washburn refused to play without their black player. This happened in 1897, 1899 and 1903. A 1903 *Washburn Review* commended the manager and players and said, "it would be to the [K.C.] Medics' advantage to deprive us of [Walter] Caldwell for he is a star and they know it, but what is more important than that, he is a man and we know it."

**The Articles of Association  
in the  
Incorporation of Lincoln College**

We, the Undersigned, desirous of becoming a body corporate, and politic, by the name and title of "Trustees of Lincoln College," do associate ourselves together, for the purposes set forth in the Preamble and Articles of Association...which read as follows:

Preamble

Desiring to promote the diffusion of knowledge and the advancement of virtue and religion, we do associate ourselves together for the objects and purposes herein certified--to wit:

Article I

To establish at, or near the City of Topeka, the Capital of Kansas, and secure the Incorporation of an institution of learning, of a high literary and religious character, to be named "Lincoln College," **which shall commemorate the triumph of Liberty over Slavery in our nation, and serve as a memorial of those fallen in defense of their country.**

Article II

To make said College an engine for the furtherance of those ideas of civil and religious liberty which actuated our Fathers in the revolutionary struggle, and which are now achieving a signal victory in the triumph of free principles.

Article III

**To afford to all classes, without distinction of color, the advantages of a liberal education, thus fitting them for positions of responsibility and usefulness.**

Article IV

To aid deserving young men to obtain an education, such as shall fit them for the gospel ministry, thereby helping to supply the pressing demand for laborers in the States and Territories west of the Missouri River.

Article V

To establish a number of free scholarships that shall afford tuition, free of charge, to indigent and meritorious young persons.

Article VI

To raise by subscription or otherwise, such a sum of money as shall be sufficient to erect a suitable building for the Preparatory Department [high school] of the College, and to continue to solicit funds until an endowment of one hundred thousand dollars shall be secured.

Article VII

Be it further declared that it is the intent and purpose of this Association that the Board of Trustees of said College, shall be so constituted at all times that its members shall be acceptable to the General Association of the Congregational Ministers and Churches of Kansas.

Harrison Hannahs  
Peter McVicar  
J. W. Fox  
H. D. Rice  
Ira H. Smith

Lewis Bodwell  
H. W. Farnsworth  
W. E. Bowker  
A. G. Bodwell

## **Name Change**

The economy right after the Civil War was not conducive to raising large amounts of money, so the fledgling college struggled to keep its doors open. The Board of Trustees managed the college, since a president had not been hired. The Board appointed Rev. Horatio Q. Butterfield, Professor of Latin and Greek, to be their field agent (fundraiser) in order to solicit money to help with expenses and for an endowment to put the college on a more secure financial footing. In the fall of 1868, Rev. Butterfield travelled to New England, home of many Congregational Churches. Someone recommended that he visit Ichabod Washburn of Worcester, Massachusetts, a wealthy and philanthropic businessman who made his fortune in the wire industry. His business, Washburn & Moen Manufacturing Company, later merged with other companies to become U.S. Steel. Mr. Washburn had retired by 1868 and was not in good health, but upon hearing about the college in Kansas that was educating women and African-Americans, causes that he supported, he gave \$25,000 dollars. In gratitude for this gift, the Board of Trustees voted on November 19, 1868 to change the school's name to Washburn College. Mr. Washburn never saw the college he rescued. He died a little over a month later on Dec. 30, 1868. Because of his success in fundraising, Rev. Butterfield was appointed the first President of Washburn College in 1869.

If you would like to learn more about Ichabod Washburn, visit University Archives or look for his autobiography in Mabee Library and the Washburn Bookstore.

## **Move to Present Campus**

In addition to the lots at 10<sup>th</sup> & Jackson, John Ritchie also gave the present campus of 160 acres to the college for a permanent location. Under the leadership of the second president, Peter McVicar, the college sold the Jackson St. building to the city of Topeka in 1872 and began construction of a larger building on their property which was 1 ½ miles southwest of the city limits at that time. They rented space in downtown buildings for classes until it was completed in 1874. The main building (later named Rice Hall) stood by itself on open prairie that was of higher elevation than the city proper, so the area as it developed was called College Hill. Besides classrooms and a library, the building had dorm rooms for male and female students (on separate floors), a kitchen, dining room, chapel and several apartments for staff.

### **Other buildings**

- Several cottages were built in the late 1870s as residence halls for students. These also included apartments for “matrons” or house mothers.
- Boswell Library, 1886
- Holbrook Hall, 1886 a large women's dormitory
- MacVicar Chapel, 1890 (Daily attendance at chapel services was required in the early days and at a local church on Sunday.)

## **The Yale Connection**

In the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, many of the professors, some of the trustees, and several presidents had degrees from Yale University. Washburn officially adopted Yale blue for its own color in the early 1900s. Even before that, student publications referred to the athletic teams as “wearers of the blue.” Yale students were called Elis after benefactor Elihu Yale, and by 1904 Washburn students began to call themselves sons and daughters of Ichabod and eventually just Ichabods.

## **Twentieth Century (1901-1940)**

At the turn of the century Washburn was well-established and ready to grow. A medical school in downtown Topeka was affiliated with the college for about 10 years, 1902-1913, and then merged with University of Kansas Medical School. The Law School opened in 1903 and a downtown art school merged with Washburn in 1904. Enrollment had increased to over 700 students and a flurry of building activity started.

- Crane Observatory, 1903 (the telescope purchased for this building is still in use in Stoffer Hall)
- President’s Home, 1903
- Carnegie Library, 1905 (Later the Law School and currently Education Department, Carnegie is now the oldest building on campus.)
- Thomas Gymnasium, 1909 (bells from its tower still ring in the Kuehne Belltower)
- Benton Hall, 1923 (Women’s dormitory, later men’s dormitory and now School of Applied Studies and Academic Outreach)
- Mulvane Art Museum, 1924 (one of the oldest art museums west of the Mississippi)
- Moore Bowl, 1928
- Whiting Field House, 1928
- International House, 1931 (home of President Womer & wife until 1969)

## **Another Name Change**

Congregational Church support diminished substantially throughout the 1920s. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, enrollment dropped, the college struggled again to meet expenses and was forced to use endowment funds principle. In 1940, President Philip King and the Board of Trustees decided this could not continue and voted to close the college unless a better solution could be found. The city of Topeka proposed to make it a municipal university and in April 1941 the citizens voted overwhelmingly in favor of supporting the college with property taxes. On July 1, 1941, Washburn College became Washburn Municipal University of Topeka, governed by a Board of Regents. The long name was cumbersome, so “Municipal” was removed in 1952 and eventually shortened to just Washburn University.

## Twentieth Century (1941-2000)

With the infusion of new funding Washburn was able to reduce tuition and enrollment began to increase. At the end of 1941 the U.S. entered World War II and the Washburn campus was transformed in a few years into a Navy officers training facility. Young men came from around the country to get specialized training and take college courses as well. When the war ended returning veterans were eager to get a college education, paid for by the government under the GI Bill. Enrollment soared at Washburn and the university built housing for married veterans and their families. Increased enrollment also meant a need for more classroom space, and there followed more than a decade of building.

- Veterans housing, 1946
- Memorial Union, 1951 (dedicated to those from Washburn & Shawnee County who gave their lives in World War I, World War II, and Korean War)
- Morgan Hall, 1955
- Married student housing, 1958
- Carruth Residence Hall, 1959 (for men, later changed to women)
- Stoffer Science Hall, 1960

## Tornado!

Visit [http://www.washburn.edu/mabee/special\\_collections/tornado.shtml](http://www.washburn.edu/mabee/special_collections/tornado.shtml) to see photos and learn more about the tornado.

On June 8, 1966 an F-5 tornado, half a mile wide, cut a diagonal path of destruction across the Washburn campus and Topeka. When the winds stopped, the campus was in shambles and five buildings were damaged beyond repair. President John Henderson and the Board did not even think about closing down the school. Summer school was held as scheduled in rented space at Topeka West High School and area churches. Throughout the summer, rubble was cleared away, windows and roofs were replaced and buildings cleaned. A large number of mobile classrooms were installed on campus, courtesy of the Federal Government, and the university held classes on campus fall semester 1966.

Buildings that were destroyed:

- Rice Hall
- Boswell Hall (a stained glass window survived and hangs in White Concert Hall)
- MacVicar Chapel
- Crane Observatory
- Thomas Gymnasium (its bells now hang in Kuehne Bell Tower)

Buildings added during the years right after the tornado:

- Memorial Union addition (was already in progress when tornado hit)
- Morgan Hall west wing, 1967 (3 stories instead of 2 for maximum number of classrooms)
- Garvey Fine Arts Center, 1968 (was in the planning stages, fast tracked after the tornado)
- Law School, 1969
- Henderson Learning Center, 1971

Within 5 years after the tornado all the classrooms had been replaced and the university switched from rebuilding to growing again. The School of Nursing started as a small department in 1974 and quickly grew to become a school. Numerous certificate and 2-year programs were added during this period. The departments of business and economics were organized into the School of Business and it grew swiftly also. During the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Washburn had transformed into a thriving, more career oriented university, while still preserving its liberal arts heritage.

Facilities added 1976-1999:

- Mabee Library, 1978
- Kuehne & West Residence Halls, 1980 & 1985
- Petro Allied Health Center, 1983
- Bennett Computer Center, 1988
- Falley Field, 1990
- KTWU building, 1994 (The station moved from Menninger Hill where it had been since 1965; the tower is still there. KTWU was the first public television station in KS.)
- Bradbury Thompson Alumni Center, 1996

### **Twenty-first Century (2001-present)**

Washburn has received state funds since 1961, but the amount has increased over the last 15 years, and in 1999 the university's primary funding was moved from city property tax to a percentage of Shawnee county sales tax revenue. This change created a broader funding base and allowed tuition to rise more slowly. President Farley's vision since he was hired in 1997 was to attract more traditional-age students and create a residential culture on campus. With increased revenue and fundraising, the university built more residence halls, renovated the football field, and created student-friendly facilities.

- Living Learning Center, 2001
- Yager Stadium & Bianchino Pavilion, 2003
- Washburn Village, 2004
- Carole Chapel, 2004 (moved from the former Menninger campus)
- Student Recreation & Wellness Center, 2004
- Art Building, 2005

## **What's an Ichabod? And Other Washburn Symbols**

As stated above Washburn students were known as Ichabods, but there was no visual representation of that or an actual mascot until 1938. Alumnus Bradbury Thompson (BA 1934) designed the original Ichabod and it was introduced in the 1938 *Kaw* yearbook.

The *Kaw* stated that "the ideals that Ichabod Washburn must have had...and the ideals that Washburn now represents were carefully kept in mind as the emblem was created. So Ichabod, as he is seen for the first time, has courage and enthusiasm, as shown by his brisk walk. He is democratic and courteous, for he tips his hat as he passes. Sincere in his search for truth and knowledge, he studiously carries a book under his arm. His friendly smile makes you like him. He is neatly dressed, and fits well into his generation of the [18]60's...but he adapts himself with equal ease to any change or any age."

Mr. Ichabod was adopted by the Student Council in 1948 as the official emblem of the student body and it began appearing on sweatshirts, pennants and other items. In 1974 students first got the idea of having someone dress up like the Ichabod and appear at football games as leader of the spirit squad. He has gone through many versions since then, but he remains our much loved and very unique mascot.

### **Washburn Crest**

A version of the Washburn family coat of arms and crest was adopted as the official school crest in 1917. The motto is *purificatus non consumptus*, which means purified, not consumed. Similar versions hang in churches and other places in Worcestershire, England where many of Ichabod Washburn's ancestors lived. The family name is spelled Washbourne there. Today Washburn University uses a simplified version of the crest. The shape of a coat of arms is retained and the flame at the top suggests the original burning bush and flax which illustrated the motto. Washburn has gone through much adversity but her spirit has not been quenched.

### **Traditions**

#### **Hobo Day**

Before there was Homecoming there was Hobo Day, which began in 1916 as a way to generate pep and school spirit before the KU game. Students dressed "tacky" and paraded down to the capitol building. In subsequent years it was held before some other big game and it evolved into electing a Hobo King & Queen, meeting with the governor, and having a bonfire on campus. It was eventually combined with Homecoming and celebrated into the 1980s. One of the last years, the students elected a Hippie King & Queen instead.

#### **Homecoming**

The first Homecoming Football Game was instituted in 1928. Greeks held a house decorating competition and after the game there was a banquet and a dance. The first parade was in 1930

and the first Homecoming Queen was crowned in 1933. Selecting a Homecoming King began much later. These traditions still form the core of an entire week of activities each fall.

Participating in Homecoming, cheering with the Bod Squad and singing the Alma Mater are great ways to show your Washburn spirit!

### **Blue Peppers to Bod Squad**

In the early 1920s, a group of women organized the Blue Peppers to show school spirit at games. They dressed in white shirts and blue skirts and sweaters. In the 1960s there was the coed WUlf Pack who sat in the stands as a group and displayed banners and school spirit. Today there is the Bod Squad who wear their signature blue T-shirts, sit on the visiting team side and bring noisemakers, signs, and banners to the game. They also have their own tailgate party. Join the Bod Squad and show your Washburn spirit!

### **Alma Mater**

Lucy Platt Harshbarger, Attendee, wrote the music and Frances Storrs Johnston, BS 1892, MD 1893 wrote the words. Lucy took music courses at Washburn for three years and also taught harmony for one year. Her husband, William Harshbarger was an 1893 Washburn graduate and he taught Mathematics here for many years, so they were a Washburn family. Frances graduated from the Washburn Academy (high school) in 1885, and must have attended Washburn College and the Kansas Medical School (in downtown Topeka) alternately. There were some gaps in her Washburn attendance and medical school was a three year course at that time. She was one of the first women to graduate from the medical school. She had a private practice in Topeka for a while and later moved to Scotland with her husband. Frances' father was on the Board of Trustees and several others in her family attended or taught at Washburn, so they were a Washburn family too.

A song of our prairies wide,  
A song of our breezes strong,  
A song of our pride,  
The true and the tried,  
Of our college dear, a song

Washburn, Washburn, we love thee well,  
Ours is the joy thy praise to swell  
With voices free we'll sing of thee,  
And ever thy praise we'll tell

## Student Publications

**Washburn Review**, the student newspaper, has been published since 1897. Forerunners, beginning in 1885 were Washburn Argo, Washburn Reporter, Argo-Reporter and Washburn Mid-Continent.

**Kaw**, the campus yearbook, began in the 1903-1904 school year. There were only three yearbooks prior to that: Helianthus, published 1895 and 1896 and the 1900 Senior Annual.

**Literary Magazines** *Hemlock* was published 1959-1975 and the current magazine, *Inscape* began in 1972. English majors solicit and select literary works, drawings and photographs and publish them in an annual issue.

## Athletics

- Baseball was the first intercollegiate sport played at Washburn, beginning in 1879. We played two games with KU that year, but there were no other games until 1885.
- Football began in 1891. Dr. John Outland coached the 1904 and 1905 teams at Washburn, and was Athletic Director until 1908. He also taught in the medical school. The first forward pass was thrown in a game between Washburn and Fairmount College (now Wichita State University) on Christmas Day, 1905. Both sides claim the honor. Dr. Outland established the Outland Trophy in 1946 because he felt linemen did not receive due recognition.
- Track began in 1903 and was offered until about the mid 1950s. It was revived again in the 1970s, but it did not continue very long.
- Men's tennis and golf started in the 1920s. The college even created a nine-hole golf course, which was on campus from 1930 to the 1980s.
- Basketball was first organized by women in 1901. Records are not complete but according to yearbooks, they played several colleges in 1903-04 and 1904-05. In the fall of 1905 the faculty declared that they could not play out of town. They tried again in 1910, playing against Emporia, Fairmount and Topeka High, but that was the last year until 1969 when women began competing intercollegiately again. Men's basketball started with the 1905-06 team.
- Women's tennis, basketball, softball and volleyball date back to 1969-70, when Washburn finally decided to apply equal opportunity to athletics. To her credit, this occurred several years before Title IX passed and it became the law.
- Field hockey was an early, very short-lived women's sport, and gymnastics was popular in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Women's soccer was added in 2003.

### National Championships

- 1925 Men's Basketball team won the AAU championship. This was before national collegiate championships existed.
- 1987 Men's Basketball team won the NAIA championship.
- 2005 Women's Basketball team won the NCAA D-II championship.

### Prominent Washburn Alumni

- Elisha Scott, JD 1916 – Lawyer for the local Brown v. Board of Education case.
- Karl Menninger, attended 1910-1912 – One of the founders of Menninger Foundation and author of many best-selling books on psychiatry and the human condition.
- William Menninger, BA 1919 – One of the founders of Menninger Foundation (psychiatric facility and training center once located in Topeka, now in Texas).
- Georgia Neese Gray, BA 1921 – First woman U.S. Treasurer (President Truman).
- Bradbury Thompson, BA 1934 – Internationally known graphic designer.
- Earl Sutherland, BS 1937 – Nobel Prize in Medicine 1971.
- John Scott, JD 1947 & Charles Scott, JD 1948 (Elisha's sons) – Lawyers for the local Brown v. Board of Education case.
- Robert Dole, BA & JD 1952 – U. S. Senator and presidential candidate.
- Art Fletcher, BA 1950 – Professional football player, Chairman of U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, U.N. delegate, and 1995 presidential primary candidate (called "father of affirmative action").
- Delano Lewis, JD 1963 – Ambassador to South Africa.
- Bill Kurtis, JD 1966 – Broadcast journalist.
- Billie Jean Moore, BEd 1966 – Coach of first Olympic women's basketball team 1977 and head women's basketball coach UCLA.
- James Reynolds, attended 1966-1970 – Actor on "Days of Our Lives," other TV, and films.

- Davey Lopes, BEd 1969 – Professional baseball player, now coach.
- Joan Finney, BA 1982 – First woman governor of Kansas.
- Greg Brenneman, BBA 1984 – CEO of several large corporations.

## Presidents

1. Horatio Q. Butterfield, 1869-1870
2. Peter McVicar, 1871-1895
3. George M. Herrick, 1896-1901
4. Norman Plass, 1902-1908
5. Frank K. Sanders, 1908-1914
6. Parley P. Womer, 1915-1931
7. Philip C. King, 1931-1941
8. Bryan S. Stoffer, 1942-1961
9. Harold E. Sponberg, 1961-1965
10. John W. Henderson, 1965-1980
11. John L. Green, 1981-1988
12. John M. Duggan, 1988
13. Hugh L. Thompson, 1990-1997
14. Jerry B. Farley, 1997-present

To see a slideshow about Washburn presidents visit:  
[http://www.washburn.edu/mabee/special\\_collections/presidents/sld001.htm](http://www.washburn.edu/mabee/special_collections/presidents/sld001.htm)

## Summary

These men, along with thousands of professors, staff members, trustees and regents created, sustained, rebuilt, and re-engineered the university you attend today. They strove for excellence and the principle that a college education should be accessible to all. When faced with adversity they did not give up, but persevered and kept their purpose always before them.

