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**A Short History
of the
Development of the Campus
of
Taylor University
Upland, Indiana ***

by William C. Ringenberg

Taylor University relocated to Upland, Indiana, in 1893 after operating in the west-central part of Fort Wayne, Indiana, with campus frontage on the St. Mary's River, since 1846.

As was typical in small nineteenth-century colleges, nearly all of the college functions (academic, religious, cocurricular, and residential) in Fort Wayne took place in one large, classic-style building. Henry Williams designed the four-story 160' X 80' brick building, and George E. Ross served as the contractor. In 1884 the trustees added a 60' X 73' four-story front to the building. Fort Wayne contractor William Moellering built the addition at a cost of \$15,000, and the resultant college indebtedness led to a financial crisis that, in turn, led to the 1893 relocation of the institution to Upland, then a growing and prosperous town in the natural gas boom region of north central Indiana. During the last three years in Fort Wayne, the college was known as Taylor University following a merger with Fort Wayne College of Medicine. The medical school operated in the stately former home (on Superior Street) of Fort Wayne banker, Hugh McCulloch, who had served as Secretary of the Treasury for Presidents Abraham Lincoln, Andrew Johnson, and Chester Arthur.

Upland Methodist minister John C. White negotiated an agreement between the Taylor trustees and the Upland Land Company whereby the university would relocate to the south edge of Upland and the company would provide a ten-acre campus and \$10,000 in cash. The original campus was the northeast corner of the present 230-acre campus.

Two buildings greeted the students at the beginning of the second school year in Upland. H. Maria Wright Hall (when completed a four-story, 80' X 68' brick structure with a stately tower and known historically as the Administration Building) originally housed all of the academic and administrative functions of the college, while the original Samuel Morris Hall (a simple, white-frame structure) served as a residence hall and dining hall. In the late 1890s the college added a new residence hall and dining hall southeast of the Morris Hall.

During the first decade of the twentieth-century the institution sought to provide inexpensive or even free housing for ministerial students, and to this end it built several low-cost cottages and one substantial building. The latter was Sickler Hall, built in 1902-03 and located north of Wright Hall; currently it operates in its second century as the oldest existing building on campus.

In the 1910s the college added 1) a new music hall, 2) its most substantial dormitory to date and 3) the remaining 70 acres of the 80-acre plot of which the original campus was the northeastern corner. The 1912 Helena Memorial Music Hall, located immediately southeast of Wright Hall, housed not only music education facilities (first floor) but also a gymnasium (basement floor) and a chapel auditorium (second floor). Nearly one-half of the \$10,000 cost of construction for Swallow Robin Dormitory (built in 1917 and located immediately south of Morris Hall) came as a gift from Rev. and Mrs. Silas C. Swallow; he had been the Prohibition Party candidate for United States President in 1904.

As Taylor increasingly became a residential institution for college students only (the secondary-level academy, which had enrolled many younger commuting scholars, ceased operations in 1923-24), it constructed in the 1920s the Magee-Campbell-Wisconsin Dormitory (MCW), a four-story, "H"-shaped structure with 170 rooms and a new college dining hall in the basement. During the entire Upland period no one residence hall has commanded the loyalty of such a high percentage of the students as did "MCW" during its half century of existence.

Another major building project of the 1920s was the gymnasium. As with the "MCW" residence hall, the construction supervisor for this project was H. C. Miller. Maytag Gymnasium, completed in 1930 and with a seating capacity of 2500, took its name from its largest subscriber, T. H. Maytag, the Newton, Iowa, washing machine magnate.

Following the completion of the gymnasium, no new buildings appeared until after the Great Depression and World War Two when the college imported low-cost war surplus barracks and officers' cottages from Fort Wayne Baer Field military station and Camp Atterbury (Indiana), and, more significantly, built its first self-standing library structure, the Ayres Alumni Memorial Library (1950), south of the Wright Hall Administration Building.

Then, in the mid-1950s, the Taylor officials worked with the Gonzer and Gerber Consultant Firm of Chicago to develop the institution's first long-range growth and construction plan. This 15-year comprehensive plan gave top priority to the construction of a new men's residence hall, a food service center, and a science building. The residence hall and dining commons (the new Sammy Morris Residence Hall and the Storer Food Center) were completed in 1958, with the aid of a Federal Housing Administration loan; however the implementation of the rest of the plan was interrupted by the January, 1960, fire which destroyed the original and still main campus building, Wright Hall.

With the campus nerve center now gone, the new president B. Joseph Martin (1960-1965) placed all building plans on hold and invested his presidency largely in an effort to relocate the college, with serious consideration given to Fort Myers and Naples, Florida, and, especially, Fort Wayne, Indiana (the land for the new Fort Wayne campus was actually purchased at the southeastern corner of the intersection of Highways 69 and 24, on the southwest edge of the city).

With the decision to remain in Upland, President Milo Rediger (1965-1975) led the most concentrated building program in the history of the institution. Working with a revised master plan, seven buildings—four of them major structures—appeared in two years. These included Wengatz Hall for men (1965), the Art Building (1965), the Field House (1965), East Hall—

renamed Olson Hall—for women (1966), the Liberal Arts Building—renamed the Reade Center (1966), the President's Home (1966), and the Science Center—renamed the Nussbaum Science Center (1967). These new facilities allowed the student enrollment to increase from the 850 level of the early 1960s to over 1400 by the late 1960s.

Since the early 1970s the institution has witnessed a gradual but steady increase in the quantity and quality of its buildings and the aesthetic appeal of the campus in general. Of the 30 buildings listed in the 2003-2004 university catalog, 25 have been built or extensively restyled since 1970. Even more remarkable for an institution that has operated continuously on its present site for over a century, no current building existed in its present form in 1965. The new or newly designed post-1970 buildings include Gerig Hall (1971), Hodson Dining Commons (1972), Freimuth Administration Building (remodeled 1972), the Student Union (remodeled 1973), Fairlane Village (acquired 1970), English Hall (1975), Haakonsen Health Center (1975), Odle Gymnasium (1975), Rediger Chapel/Auditorium (remodeled 1976), Smith-Hermanson Music Center (1983), Zondervan Library (1986), Helena Memorial Hall (remodeled 1987), Ayres Alumni Memorial Building (modified 1987), Bergwall Hall (1989), Swallow-Robin Hall (remodeled 1990), Randall Environmental Studies Center (1992), Rupp Communication Arts Center (1994), Boyd Physical Plant and Service Center (replaced 1995), Sickler Hall (remodeled 1995), Morris Hall (1998), and Modelle Metcalf Visual Arts Center (2003).

The completion of the dining commons during the 1971-72 school year allowed the old dome-shaped dining commons adjacent to Morris Hall to be remodeled as a two-level student union containing bookstore, grill, student activities offices, and recreational areas.

Continuing the pattern whereby the construction of many new buildings in the late 1960s and early 1970s allowed some of the older buildings to be remodeled to meet other needs, the college converted the Art Building to the Ferdinand Freimuth Administration Building in 1972.

Other than the destruction of Wright Hall by fire, no passing of a campus building caused as much trauma as the demolition of classic Magee-Campbell-Wisconsin (MCW) Dormitory in 1975. During the previous half century, perhaps the majority of Taylor students had called it their home, and for many of these students, it also had served as dining commons, infirmary, and a major social center. But it had to come down. The college's architectural engineering consultants said that it had become dangerous. Made mostly of wood, it had obsolete and hazardous wiring; thus a major renovation, particularly of a building its size, was not possible.

Actually, it was a combination of English Hall (227 students) and the Haakonsen Health Center that replaced the MCW dormitory including its infirmary wing. Both new structures were built on the south campus next to what is now Gerig Hall, with English Hall containing the same Gerig Hall design of multiple-room suite complexes within the traditional floor plan.

By the 1970s, Maytag Gymnasium was no longer adequate to meet the athletic and recreational needs of a student body which had grown over fourfold during the nearly half-century since it opened in 1930. Furthermore, the facility had never provided a satisfactory environment for the thrice-weekly chapel services, although it had served as the meeting house for chapel since 1960 when the college officials abandoned their effort to continue crowding the student body into the

small, although venerable, Shreiner Auditorium. Accordingly, the university officials sought to solve two problems with one plan by first building the new Odle Gymnasium, and then remodeling the old gym into Rediger Chapel/Auditorium (1600 seating capacity).

The two major new facilities to appear in the 1980s, the Smith-Hermanson Music Center and the Zondervan Library, were built in the large, open central-campus area between the major classroom buildings and the Rediger Chapel/Auditorium. With the construction of the new music center and library building, both the music department and especially the library changed from being probably the least adequately housed Taylor departments to becoming the campus showpieces. Following the January 20, 1972, fire in the Helena Building, the music department relocated from its traditional home to temporary modular units on Reade Avenue adjacent to what then was in the process of becoming the Freimuth Administration Building. Between 1950 when the Ayres Library was built and the 1970s, the student body had grown from 600 to 1500 and the library volumes had increased from 25,000 to 125,000. But the library size remained unchanged at 16,840 square feet. The serious planning for the new library began in 1983. When President Gregg Lehman (1981-1985) called for a state-of-the-art structure, Library Director David Dickey, who had an unusually large role in the planning process, asked for and received a building that was architecturally delightful and technically advanced. Designed by Leroy Troyer and Associates of Mishawaka, Indiana, the 61,000 square foot facility was built with a capacity for 210,000 volumes and a natural expansion to the west. It also housed the learning support center, the university archives, and a walk-through galleria that served as a major informal and formal social center.

In August, 1986, fire struck the Helena Building for the second time in fifteen years. This arson-related tragedy brought resolution to the question of what to do with the recently vacated Ayres Building. The art department and the Little Theater relocated to Ayres from the heavily damaged Helena Building. As he did later during the debate on what to do with Swallow Robin Dormitory and Sickler Hall, President Jay Kesler (1985-2000) successfully argued that as the campus was so short on physical reminders of its history, tradition demanded that the institution seek to restore old traditional buildings like Helena even when it would be more cost effective to dismantle them and build new structures. Essentially, the renovated Helena became a second administration building, both relieving the space pressures in the Freimuth Building and creating a new home for the Admissions Office and the Office of the President.

The steadily growing student enrollment and the largely residential nature of the college required the renovation and replacement of existing living units and the building of new ones. In 1970, the university purchased the red brick, modern construction Fairlane Village apartments (90 students), from contractor Edward Hermanson. These north-of-campus units for married students and upperclass single students replaced the series of wooden buildings collectively also known as Fairlane Village which the college had brought to the same location from Fort Atterbury after World War II. In 1986 the university closed Swallow Robin Dormitory for the same reason that it had razed MCW Dormitory a decade earlier, namely it could no longer meet modern fire safety standards. Four years and \$1.2 million later, Swallow Robin reopened essentially as a new building; however, it retained the style and character of the old one. The construction of Bergwall Hall (181 students and named for 1950s president, Evan Bergwall) and the addition of the temporary West Village (west of Odle Gymnasium) mobile units (91 students)

in the late 1980s eased the demand for on-campus housing. Bergwall Hall, located between the campus woods and the dining commons with a walkway connecting it to the latter, was designed to serve as a living unit for conferees in the summer as well as a student residence during the school year. This double purpose combined with its style and appearance led the students to label it the "Holidorm."

In the early 1990s as a result of a major capital campaign, the university for the first time in its history was able to construct buildings—the Randall Environmental Science Center and the Rupp Communication Arts Center—with the funds for their cost and maintenance already identified. In the late 1970s, the biology faculty had developed an arboretum on 50 acres of the 80 acre plot west of the main campus, and the Randall Center, a \$3.6 million, 19,000 square foot, high-tech rustic structure, was built on this environmental education and research site. The building took the name of Trustee and Research Professor Walter Randall and his wife, Gwen. A \$500,000 grant—at that point the largest foundation grant in the history of the university—from the Lilly Endowment stimulated the fund-raising effort for the Rupp Center, a \$5.2 million, 45,000 square foot building that includes a 300-seat theatre and arguably the finest and most high-tech facilities on campus.

When the communication arts department relocated from Sickler Hall (and elsewhere) to the Rupp Center, the university remodeled the former structure—which was the oldest existing campus building—to house the William Taylor Foundation which the institution had revitalized in the 1980s as the Development Office's planned giving center.

The third residence hall to be named Morris Hall appeared in 1998 on the northeast corner of campus. It replaced Morris Hall II (1958-1998), and houses 280 men. The Metcalf Arts Center opened in 2003, thus, with the Smith-Hermanson Music Center and the Rupp Communication Center, completing the three-building Fine Arts Complex near the center of campus. Meanwhile construction continues on the Kesler Student Activities Center, which will be completed on the west side of campus in 2004.

Parallel with the improvements in the campus buildings came an explicit commitment to campus beautification in general. Reflective of this new emphasis was the change in name of what had been traditionally the maintenance department to the department of buildings and grounds. President Rediger hired landscaper J. D. Miller as the first superintendent of grounds, and many new trees began to appear in the campus open spaces. Paul Lightfoot with a graduate degree in botany succeeded as the campus landscaper in the early 1980s and demonstrated skill, not only in growing attractive flower beds but also in raising funds for his many projects of campus beautification. When Daryl Yost became provost in 1985, he embraced and expanded these earlier efforts. Influenced by the idea of Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Commission that the physical appearance of the campus is highly important in recruiting students, Yost's efforts resulted in many high quality physical improvements: a new strategically located major entrance to the campus, additional and enlarged parking lots and sidewalks, a standardized campus-wide lighting system, creative and timely painting, attractive dispensers, efficient and hidden-from-view refuse systems, and well-designed campus signs and historical markers. Also appearing on the heretofore primarily functional campus were large, prominently located works of architectural and sculptural symbolism.

Noteworthy developments in the outdoor athletic facilities included the construction of modern-design facilities for track and field (1966) and tennis (1990) and the building of the 3,500 seat Wheeler Memorial Football Stadium (1981) between Odle Gymnasium and the Field House. Alumnus John and Jodi Wheeler were the major benefactors in the construction of the stadium to honor their son Jim, a popular and talented student in the late 1970s.

Developments in the late 1980s on land tracts to the east and south of the traditional 160 acre campus also have been of significance for the university. Taylor benefactor Leland Boren and his wife, Taylor trustee LaRita Boren, in 1986 built their new Avis Corporation (a holding company for twelve industries) Headquarters Building directly across the highway from the main Taylor campus entrance. To design the \$3,500,000 structure, they employed the same architectural firm that planned the Zondervan Library. The idea was to create a structure which would blend with the red brick architecture of the Taylor buildings. A year later, retired basketball coach Don Odle, trustee Paul Gentile, and their wives donated to the university the 40-acre plot adjacent to the campus to the south.

Such were the major developments in the history of the physical plant of Taylor University at Upland. As physics is to chemistry, as the theatre stage is to the story line of the human drama, as the body is to the mind and spirit, so also the Taylor buildings and grounds have been and continue to be to the intellectual, social, and spiritual development of the members of the campus community.

* Major parts of this October, 2003, essay are taken from William C. Ringenberg, Taylor University: The First 150 Years (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company and the Taylor University Press, 1996).