

# Revised Report on Origin of Building Names at WWU

September 2020

## Arntzen Hall

Edward J. Arntzen (1894-1971) taught at Western Washington University from 1924 to 1962. A graduate of the University of Washington, Professor Arntzen earned his master's degree at Columbia University and was a high school principal in Redmond and Wapato, Washington, before joining the faculty in Bellingham. His scholarly specialty was American economic history. He became the chair of the Social Studies Department in 1933 and stepped down from that position in 1960, when, in large measure due to his planning, the department was split into four separate departments. During Arntzen's time at Western, the hiring of faculty with doctoral degrees became more common (earlier in the school's history, most professors did not hold a PhD, nor did Arntzen himself). Arntzen advocated for and was able to improve faculty salaries, for which he was greatly appreciated. He became Professor Emeritus in 1962. In recognition of his accomplishments and service, a new campus building was named for him in 1976.

## Bond Hall

Elias Austin Bond (1873-1955) was born in Iowa but grew up in Washington Territory. Educated at Pacific University in Oregon, he later studied at the University of Washington, the University of Chicago, and Columbia University. He joined Western in 1907, intent on improving the quality of teacher training in the state. A professor of mathematics, Bond authored several elementary school textbooks that achieved national recognition. He also served as Western's first basketball coach and led student climbs to Mt. Baker. The Elias A. Bond Technology Scholarship was established in 1992. A graduate fellowship in mathematics also honors his memory.

## Buchanan Towers

This dormitory on the south end of campus was named in 1971 in honor of Samuel J. "Sam" Buchanan (1899-1986), who came to Western as a student in 1923 and worked in various financial management positions at the school for 39 years. Prior to the naming, a committee consisting of faculty, staff, administrators, and students also considered calling the building "Dunsinane," a reference to the fictional castle in *Macbeth*. The name was intended to tie in to the nearby Birnam Wood Apartments, which also took their name from Shakespeare's play.

Although students favored “Dunsinane,” the committee was undecided, and President Charles Flora ultimately submitted “Buchanan Towers” to the Board of Trustees for approval.

### **Carver Gymnasium**

Born in Indiana, Sanford E. “Sam” Carver (1887-1965) moved with his family to Washington in 1903. He graduated from Western in 1913, upon which he became the school’s first director of athletics and chair of the physical education department from 1914-55. For the first ten years of his coaching he was the only coach at the institution and was responsible for all sports. Carver took a leave of absence in 1925 to earn a BA in physical education from Stanford; in 1939, he received a master’s degree from the University of Iowa. In honor of Carver’s forty-two-year career at Western, a new physical education building was named for him in 1962, three years before his death.

### **Edens Hall**

The first Edens Hall, a wooden dining facility, was built in 1903 and moved several years later to the south end of Old Main, roughly where the Rose Garden and Humanities Building are today. This building was equipped as a women’s dormitory in 1907 before being demolished and replaced by the current Edens Hall in 1923.

The building’s namesake, John James Edens (1840-1914), was born in Kentucky and served in the Union Army during the Civil War. At war’s end, he headed west, eventually arriving in Washington Territory and settling on Guemes Island, where he engaged in farming and logging. In 1880, Edens married Isabella Eldridge, a schoolteacher and daughter of Scottish immigrant Edward Eldridge, a prominent figure in the early development of the area around Bellingham Bay. Edens was elected in 1889 to the state legislature as the first representative for Skagit County. In 1893, he and his family moved to Bellingham from Guemes Island so the children could get a better education. Edens then served for eighteen years on Western’s Board of Trustees.

### **Fraser Hall**

Opened in 1962 as the Lecture Hall Building, Fraser Hall received its current name in 1995 in tribute to Gordon C. Fraser (1912-2004) and his wife Alice B. Fraser (1911-2014). Known by his nickname “Bus,” Gordon was a lifelong resident of Bellingham and owned Fraser Chevrolet car dealership from 1957 to 1976. He attended Western briefly before transferring to the University of Washington. Alice, a 1931 graduate of Western, taught in a one-room schoolhouse in Ferndale

until her marriage. The Frasers had no children but were avid supporters of education, donating over \$8 million to WWU, at that time the largest gift in the university's history.

### **Haggard Hall**

William Wade Haggard (1892-1977), a native of Tennessee, came to Bellingham in 1939 from Illinois, where he had been a school superintendent. Prior to this, he taught high school in Tennessee and Michigan. He held a PhD from the University of Chicago. Haggard served as Western's president for twenty years, retiring in 1959, the longest tenure of any president. During that time, six new campus buildings were constructed, and a considerable amount of land was acquired for future growth. Haggard also saw the school through the Second World War and the rise in enrollment that followed. The school awarded its first master's degrees in education during his time in office. Haggard Hall (originally called the Haggard Hall of Science) was named in his honor in 1960. In addition to his service to Western, Haggard served for a time as president of the National High School Principals Association and the American Association of Junior Colleges. He was also chairman of the accrediting committee for the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. One of Haggard's personal interests was the study of Abraham Lincoln, about whom he delivered public lectures on many occasions.

### **Higginson Hall**

Higginson Hall is named after Ella and Russell Higginson, important figures in the early history of Western and Bellingham. Ella (1862-1940) was born in Kansas and traveled with her family to Oregon by wagon train as an infant. In 1885, she married Russell Carden Higginson (1852-1909), a relative of New England abolitionist Thomas Wentworth Higginson. Three years later, Russell and Ella moved to present-day Bellingham, where Russell operated a drug store. The couple lived on High Street, across from where Edens Hall stands today. Russell played a major role in the establishment of Western. Ella is now remembered as one of the first writers of fiction and poetry to draw attention to the Pacific Northwest. Published by Macmillan, a prestigious New York publishing house, she also worked as an editor for various regional magazines, including *The West Shore* and *The Pacific*. Her poems were widely admired; some were set to music and performed by leading musicians, including the opera singer Enrico Caruso. In 1931, she was named the first poet laureate of Washington. Ella was campaign manager in 1912 for Frances Axtell, one of the first women elected to the Washington state legislature. The two were founding members of the PLF (Progressive, Literary Fraternal) Club, which supported various civic causes in Bellingham and Whatcom County.

*Alaska: The Great Country* (1908), a work of nonfiction researched over the course of four summers in Alaska, takes a relatively sympathetic view, for its day, of the indigenous people Ella

encountered but is still written from an outsider's perspective. Recently, one of Ella's poems, "The Vanishing Race" (1911), has come under scrutiny in the context of discussions around decolonizing Western's campus. Though probably intended as a lament for Native Americans, some argue that the poem reinforced the idea that indigenous people were extinct or invisible—in her words, a "voiceless shadow."

## **Mathes Hall**

Edward Tilden Mathes (1866-1937) served as the first principal of the New Whatcom State Normal School, the forerunner of WWU, from its opening in 1899 until 1914. Born in Michigan, he taught in Kansas and Idaho before coming to Bellingham. During his fifteen years as principal (president), the number of faculty increased from nine to 38 and enrollment nearly tripled from 264 to 615, partly as a result of his direct recruitment of students. In addition to working as an administrator, Mathes taught history and pedagogy.

Mathes was civically active and directed the Bellingham YMCA for twenty-two years. In 1901, he helped organize the Bellingham Bay Lecture Course, which during the next two decades brought an array of notable speakers to the community, including Robert LaFollette, Progressive Party leader; photographer and social reformer Jacob Riis; British suffragette Emmaline Pankhurst; and Henry Watterson, editor of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*, who despite having fought for the Confederacy, argued for the rights of African Americans. (See attached cover letter for a note regarding this series and other speakers.)

Mathes himself delivered hundreds of public lectures, both locally and nationally. Full transcripts of his presentations have not been located, but judging from excerpts in newspapers, he occasionally made comments which merit close attention. For example, in a presentation titled "Mexico and Her Problems," delivered in 1916 following Pancho Villa's raid on the border town of Columbus, New Mexico, Mathes stated that "Mexico is not so much an enemy as it is a responsibility." Although Mexicans deserved "just treatment" and "were capable of an advanced civilization," he referred to them as "our 'benighted brothers'" (*The Pantagraph*, Bloomington, Illinois, June 29, 1916). According to another newspaper summary of the talk, Mathes maintained that one of Mexico's "problems" was "the nature of the people themselves. The stock originated in the old Moors of northern Africa, who came to Spain in the eighth century, and from Spain to Mexico, where they intermarried with the Aztec Indians. Eight out of every ten Mexicans have Indian blood in their veins" (*Weekly Times-Record*, Valley City, North Dakota, July 20, 1916).

At a teachers' conference in California in October 1907, Mathes spoke on "The Wandering Caucasian." The *Sierra Educational News and Book Review* (vol. 3., no. 11, Nov. 1907) summarized his remarks:

Mr. Mathes in his lecture took up the human race in the Tigris and Euphrates valley, "The Cradle of Nations." He spoke of the types represented there, and said that the Hebrew was the wanderer and the moralist, the Egyptian the scientist, and the Persian the warrior. Following out the ever westward tendency that has marked the growth of the human race these people finally found themselves in Greece with all their better qualities merged in one man—the Greek. Then came the Roman. Both these people sought the north beyond the Alps, and came into touch with the Teuton, who was making his way from the east. "And then," said the speaker, "the Greek, the Roman, the Teuton and the Scandinavian all met one morning on a small island off the west coast of Europe and developed into the Englishman. From him came the American with all his various types of Yankee, Hoosier and Western cow-puncher."

"But in all its advance," he said, "the great Caucasian race has never had to deal with the great brown race that now lies to the west. So today we are facing a problem that has never before confronted the white man."

Mr. Mathes took the Japanese, the Chinese and the Hindu in turn and explained the composition of their character. His talk on the Hindu was especially interesting. He told of the riots in Bellingham, and said that after all the laborers had been driven out, the only remaining Indian in the town was a student in his school. Mr. Mathes went to the workmen in the shops and asked them what they were going to do about the boy. They said: "Let him stay as long as he is trying to educate himself and put himself on our level."

The riots referred to above had occurred on September 4, 1907. A mob of as many as 500 white men attacked and drove out Bellingham's community of South Asian migrant workers, mostly Sikhs but labeled by the local press as Hindus. Nabhi Ram Joshi, a student from India, had recently enrolled at Western, where Principal Mathes treated him with great hospitality (the two later corresponded for many years, and Mathes's daughter in law, Miriam Snow Mathes, created a scholarship for Indian and Indian-American students at WWU). The Vancouver newspaper *Free Hindustan* called Mathes "a good friend of India." Nevertheless, historian Paul Englesberg found no evidence that Mathes ever publicly condemned the riot.

A year earlier, the *Seattle Republican*, an African American newspaper, had praised Mathes for affirming the rights of Alma Clark, Western's first black student, whom other students made to feel so unwelcome that she withdrew. Mathes insisted that Western knew "neither race nor color," and the Board of Trustees stated in its minutes that "The school is for the benefit of all

the people of the state of Washington, regardless of color, race or politics, good work and good morals being the essentials required of students.”

Mathes suffered considerable embarrassment in 1909 when two professors, James O’Sullivan and Edward N. Stone, publicly accused him of having low educational standards and using scare tactics to discourage criticism of his administration. After the Board of Trustees reviewed the allegations, O’Sullivan and Stone were fired. They then presented additional, more serious, claims, including financial mismanagement, and even called into doubt the validity of Mathes’s doctoral degree. The state’s governor launched an official investigation of the matter. Although several local educators, in letters published in the *Bellingham Herald*, upheld the truth of some of O’Sullivan and Stone’s claims, Mathes was again exonerated. (Stone went on to work for the University of Washington, where he cofounded the Department of Ancient and Modern Languages. O’Sullivan changed careers, taking over his father’s engineering business in Michigan before returning to Washington and becoming a key figure in the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam.)

After retiring from Western in 1914, Mathes operated a bookstore and theater, served as mayor of Bellingham, and lectured throughout the Northwest on contemporary subjects. He ran unsuccessfully for governor as a Democrat in the 1920 primary election. Mathes Hall, a dormitory completed in 1966, is named in his honor.

### **Miller Hall**

Home to Woodring College of Education, Miller Hall opened its doors in 1943 as the Campus Elementary School. The building was renovated and enlarged in 1968 by noted Seattle architect Ibsen Nelsen and renamed Miller Hall in honor of Irving Elgar Miller (1869-1962), chair of Western’s education and psychology departments from 1917 to 1942 and first chairman of the curriculum committee. Born in Pennsylvania, Dr. Miller received his PhD in 1904 from the University of Chicago, where he was a student of educational reformer John Dewey. He then worked as a teacher and administrator in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Colorado, before coming to Western.

### **Morse Hall**

Originally named the Chemistry Building, Morse Hall honors Dr. Karen W. Morse, president of WWU from 1993 to 2008. Morse earned her PhD from the University of Michigan in 1967. She was employed as a chemist at the U. S. Army Ballistic Research Laboratory at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland from 1966 to 1968, when she was appointed to the faculty of the

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at Utah State University. She was appointed Dean of the College of Science at USU in 1988 and served as Provost from 1989 to 1993.

During Morse's tenure at Western, the South Campus as we know it today was created. The number of students and faculty also grew significantly, and the United Faculty of Western Washington was solidified. Widely published, Morse is a fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and was awarded the Olin-Garvin Medal, an annual award that recognizes distinguished scientific accomplishment, leadership, and service to chemistry by women chemists. The first female president of WWU, Morse was inducted into the Northwest Women's Hall of Fame in 2006.

In November 1998, Washington voters passed Initiative 200, effectively ending affirmative action in the state. WWU came under criticism for what some saw as its poor record on diversity. Morse defended her administration's diversity initiatives and emphasized that the university had not actually been using affirmative action prior to Initiative 200.

### **Nash Hall**

George Williston Nash (1868-1944) arrived in Bellingham from South Dakota in 1914 and served for eight years as Western's second president. He saw the university through the First World War and a temporary closure during the 1918 influenza epidemic. Despite these challenges, enrollment more than doubled during Nash's tenure and the number of faculty increased from 38 to 58. Nash left Bellingham in 1922 to take a position in Chicago but returned upon his retirement in 1940 and lived here until the end of his life.

### **Parks Hall**

In 1982, the South Academic Building was renamed Parks Hall in honor of Maynard Parks (1913-2007) and Patricia Parks (1915-1981). Owners of a valuable property on Lake Samish, the couple was so impressed by the Western rowing team practicing on the lake that they decided to donate the property to the university shortly before Pat's death in 1981. Maynard, a graduate of the University of Washington, spent his career as a railroad executive, serving for a time as vice president of the Missouri Pacific Railroad and Texas & Pacific Railway. During World War II, he was involved in coordinating railroad services to Allied troops in North Africa and Europe.

### **Ross Engineering**

This building is named for President G. Robert Ross (1928-1987). Born in Texas to a family of educators, Ross received his PhD in psychology and education from the University of Denver

and served in administrative positions in Indiana, Nebraska, and Arkansas before coming to Western in 1983. His southern drawl endeared him to many, but some were skeptical that he would fit into the culture of Western and Bellingham. Nevertheless, Ross worked to diminish the longstanding divide between “town and gown” and viewed Washington’s regional universities as “the most accessible path to upward social, cultural, and economic mobility for the least affluent of the state’s population.” He forged stronger ties between the university and the local business community, demonstrating that WWU could contribute to the state’s economic development. Prior to this, the university had been seen as antagonistic toward business, with students from the Huxley College of the Environment speaking out against economic development. Ross’s position, according to one newspaper report, was that “you shouldn’t shoot industry in the eyes. Instead, you need to get in there and get a job with one of these companies and teach them the proper way to treat the environment.” He assisted the port of Bellingham with efforts to increase ties with Canadian businesses and helped provide economic research to support making Bellingham the southern terminus of the Alaska state ferry system.

Ross was also a man of global vision and expanded the university’s international focus, developing exchange programs with universities in Japan, China, and Mexico, and inviting foreign educators to visit WWU. He worked to recruit more minority students to Western and encouraged greater emphasis in the university curriculum on intercultural and international concepts. Although the idea did not originate with Ross, he helped facilitate Western divesting itself of any financial ties to South African companies to protest apartheid.

WWU grew in academic stature under Ross's leadership. The university’s engineering program numbers among his most important accomplishments. State legislators had argued that money for technology should go to the University of Washington and Washington State University rather than WWU, which in the early 1980s focused on the liberal arts. Ross persisted and secured funding for new technology programs as well as the new building which now bears his name.

President Ross was killed in a plane crash near Bellingham in 1987.

### **Sundquist Laboratory, Shannon Point Marine Center**

Biology professor Leona M. Sundquist (1896-1988), a Skagit County native, served as chair of the Department of Sciences at Western Washington State College from 1942 to 1961, when the sciences were split into separate departments. Sundquist held a master’s degree in botany from the University of Washington. She began teaching biology at what was then Bellingham State Normal School in 1923, prior to which she taught science at Nooksack High School and St. Nicholas School for Girls in Seattle. Recipient of the 1966 Science Education Recognition

Award (given annually by *Science Education* magazine, a nationally circulated publication), she was a longtime advocate of field-based learning, originally taking students by streetcar to study tidepools in south Bellingham. She was also one of the first faculty members to use the Friday Harbor marine field station operated by the University of Washington. By the 1950s, Sundquist was advocating for Western to develop a similar field research station in the San Juan Islands. Her advocacy finally bore fruit when biology professor Jerry Flora became president of Western and helped secure the funding for what became Shannon Point Marine Center.

### **Viking Union**

The Viking Union takes its name from Western's mascot, which dates back to 1923. A contest was held that year to select the best nickname for the school's sports teams. More than 65 submissions were considered suitable. According to an article in the campus newspaper, "Vikings" was chosen for three reasons: 1) it means "fjord-men" and Puget Sound is one of the world's largest fjords; 2) Vikings were associated with the far north, and Western is the northernmost university in the United States outside of Alaska; and 3) the name was "considered capable of being adapted to various circumstances and is easily remembered." (Source, *Weekly Messenger*, Nov. 16, 1923.)

### **Wade King Recreation Center**

Ten-year-old Wade King was one of three victims of the 1999 Olympic Pipeline explosion in Bellingham. Wade's family, including grandparents Ben and Dorothy Haggen (founders of the Haggen grocery store chain), endowed Western's recreation center in his memory. The King and Haggen families have also provided funds for scholarships and many other causes throughout the Bellingham community.

### **Wilson Library**

Completed in 1928, Wilson Library takes its name from Western's first librarian, Mabel Zoe Wilson (1878-1964). A graduate of Ohio University, she arrived in Bellingham in 1902 and found a haphazard library collection of just 500 books. Under her leadership, the library took shape, and funds were allocated in the 1920s for the construction of a new, state-of-the-art building, designed by Seattle architects Charles Bebb and Carl Gould. Bebb, an Englishman, was involved in rebuilding the cities of Chicago and Seattle after they were destroyed by fire. Gould studied under prominent architect Daniel Burnham and is perhaps best known for designing the campus of the University of Washington, in addition to many private homes throughout the Puget Sound region. In recognition of Wilson's achievements and decades of service, Western's library was named in her honor in April 1964, shortly before her death.