

What's in a name?

UNL history embedded in buildings

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Staff Reporter

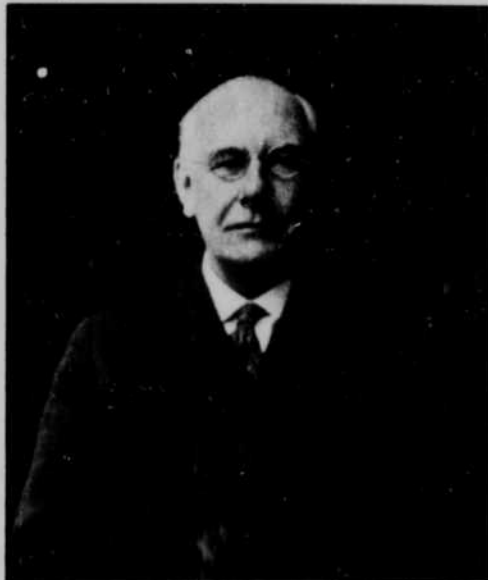
What's in a name?

The names of the various buildings on UNL's campus serve not only as identification but also as part of UNL's past. For example, Oldfather Hall, the tallest building on campus, houses several departments. The name Oldfather maintains the memory of one of UNL's more famous figures. But the story behind the person is not widely known.

Oldfather Hall: Charles H. Oldfather, professor of ancient history, joined the UNL faculty in 1926 after receiving a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin and a D.D. from McCormick Theological Seminary. He became dean of the College of Arts and Sciences in 1932 and retired in 1952. During his long tenure as dean, many of the problems associated with the great depression, World War II, and the resulting veterans' boom were successfully met and solved. Few university deans could equal his record of service to the institution.

As dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Oldfather enjoyed the confidence of the university administration and the support of his faculty. At the time of his appointment as dean, Chancellor Burnett found him, "a man of fine education" and "a popular teacher." Dean Oldfather saw the goal of the College of Arts and Sciences as, "The molding of citizens who will have an understanding of the world as it is and an appreciation of what the past and present have to offer. In short, it is the purpose of this college to turn out intelligent and useful members of society."

Avery Hall: Samuel Avery, born in Illinois in 1865, his family moved to a farm near Crete the next year. He was appointed chancellor of UNL in May 1909 and retired in 1927. He died in 1936.



Avery

Avery was an authority on insecticides. He discovered the causes of the cornstalk disease which had cost Nebraska farmers millions of dollars annually. He also resolved the "bleached flour case." Because Turkey Red wheat, a newly introduced winter wheat, yielded a slightly yellowish flower when ground, people refused to buy it. The millers then bleached the flour, but the federal government demanded that it be labeled as bleached and demand for it then dropped. At a trial of the millers versus the federal government, Avery gave evidence to prove bleaching did not destroy the flour's nutritive qualities. The labeling order was rescinded.

During WWI, after a hearing in which the State Council investigated charges of various faculty members being pro-German, Avery was

asked about the effect of so-called disloyal professors upon the students.

"The students do not take the faculty as seriously as the public does," he said.

Andrews Hall: E. Benjamin Andrews was born in New Hampshire in 1894. He served with distinction in the Civil War in which he lost his right eye. He graduated from Brown University in Rhode Island in 1870, where he later served as



Andrews

president. From 1872 to 1874 he studied at Newton Theological Institute and was ordained a Baptist minister, occupying a pulpit at Beverly, Mass. He was president and professor of philosophy at Denison University in Granville, Ohio from 1875 to 1879, and from there went to Newton as professor of homiletics (writing and preaching of sermons). In 1890 he became chancellor of UNL until he resigned Jan. 1, 1909.

An economist of some repute, he wrote two books: "Wealth and Moral Law" and "An Honest Dollar."

"We can't grow by entrenchment any more than a business can. It must be done by spreading out. . . . the university won't be doing what it can for the state until it touches every field in its teaching." — E. Benjamin Andrews

Benton Hall: Allen R. Benton was born in Cayuga County, New York, in 1822. After obtaining his B.A. from Bethany College in Virginia (now West Virginia) in 1847, he opened a private local academy in Fairview, Ind. He was an ordained minister in the Christian Church as well as a scholar of ancient languages. In 1871 he became its first chancellor ever. He taught various classes (there were four other professors in 1871) in history, political economy and constitutional law, intellectual philosophy, and the history of philosophic thought. Throughout his career as chancellor, he required daily attendance at the morning chapel services by all the students.

While on a trip to the east, Benton sketched the university seal that remains today.

During Benton's administration, 10 people were graduated from the university.

In those days low faculty salaries were not yet an issue. In a letter to his father, Benton said, "I prefer to teach here for \$4,000 than for \$1,500 at Indianapolis."

Lied Center for Performing Arts: The building that is not yet a reality, is in memory of UNL alumnus Ernst Lied. He graduated from UNL in 1927, and later opened a car dealership in Omaha. In 1959, he moved to Las Vegas to make a fortune in real estate. At the time of his death in 1980, his total holdings were estimated at over \$100 million.

Lied's estate is managed by his longtime associate, Christina Hixson. D.B. Varner, of the NU Foundation, contacted Hixson to find out if Lied would have wanted to make a donation to his alma mater. Hixson made a donation in the form of a matching grant of \$10 million for "a building of brick and mortar." The NU Foundation gave Hixson three choices: a performing arts center, a new state museum, or a new administration building.

Morrill Hall. Charles H. Morrill was a successful Stromsburg farmer and a NU regent from 1890 to 1902. Morrill financed many paleontological and geological expeditions throughout the state of Nebraska. Along with Dr. E.H. Barbour, a professor of geology who shared his passion for digging into Nebraska's prehistoric past, Morrill collected a plethora of geological and paleological specimens. By the late 1890's the collection of fossils and rocks had grown so large that there was no more room to store them, much to Morrill's distress. He wanted a proper facility to store and display the collection. Morrill asked Chancellor Andrews, "If valuable collections that are delivered to the university

authorities . . . are to be buried underground and stored in boxes piled up in corn cribs, how can you expect citizens of the state to interest themselves in this work?"

Morrill Hall was dedicated in 1927. It was financed by tax funds prompted by a generous donation to the university and state by Morrill. In a letter dated April 4, 1926, that accompanied his gift he wrote to Chancellor Avery: "I am now nearing 85 years of age. As I look backward viewing my past life and my varied experiences, I consider the 12 years I acted as regent and as president of the board of regents of the University of Nebraska the brightest and most interesting period of my life."

Pound Hall: Roscoe Pound was born in Lincoln, Neb., in 1870. He received three academic degrees from the university — A.B. in 1888, M.A. in botany in 1889, and his Ph.D., also in botany, in 1897. He attended Harvard Law school and was admitted to the bar in 1890. He practiced law in Lincoln throughout the 1890's. In 1903 he became dean of the College of Law.

See BUILDINGS on 8

Pour

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