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Linfield at 150: Snapshots of Student Life

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Linfield at

Snapshots of student life

Theatre, athletics, debate and Greek Life are just a few of the activities that provided students a rich social life for a century and a half. Alumni remember their time at Linfield College as much for their lives outside the classroom as for their studies. In his final article celebrating Linfield's sesquicentennial, Professor Marvin Henberg offers a glimpse of activities during pivotal years in the life of the college, which break out in 25-year increments, beginning with the 1872-73 academic year, the first for which a record exists.

1872-73

Hopes were high among the 160 students arriving at McMinnville College in 1872 – the largest enrollment until well into the 20th century. The majority were from McMinnville, with two students from Walla Walla, Wash., and one from San Francisco, Calif. Most instruction was at the primary level, with some in high school. McMinnville College had yet to see a student qualify for study at the collegiate level.

Students lived at home or with local residents at a cost of \$2 to \$2.50 a week. With the rhythms of agricultural life dominating their lives, the dictates of “early to bed, early to rise” left little free time outside chores and recitation, the favored mode of instruction.

Music and oratory dominated entertainment. Students organized the college's first literary/musical club, The Philergian Society, whose records date from 1874. Families were staunchly in control of their children's education, as the catalog attests: “A daily record of merit and demerit of each pupil is kept, which is at all times open to the inspection of parents.”

1897-98

Twenty-five years later, the college's new publication, *The Review*, proclaimed its student body of 70 – less than half that recorded for 1872-73 – to be “the

best in the college's history at opening time.” But if they were wrong about quantity, they had reason to be bullish about quality. For the first time McMinnville now hosted a genuine college, with more than half enrolled in the collegiate division. Students enjoyed the relative leisure to study intensively and to devote energy to an array of extracurricular pursuits. Playfulness became a matter of record, as in this account of a Philergian Society debate on the question, “Resolved, that if you were out in the midst of a desert and had hold of a lion's tail you had better not let go”:

Mr. Knapp represented the affirmative, Mr. Sawtelle the negative. After the usual exchange of words, which in this instance pictured many humorous scenes, the judges, Messrs. Blood and Black, were called upon to cast their votes, which decided in favor of the affirmative. The question was now left to the tender mercies of open debate, in which Messrs. Ramsey, Tony, Hilton, and Black took part. Several ladies were called upon to speak, but somehow they did not seem to be greatly interested in the question. Finally, by vote of the house, this momentous question was decided in favor of the negative.

On a regular basis, *The Review* listed every book added to the Pioneer Hall library. The first acquisition that year, number 589, was *Phylosophy (sic) of Education*, and the last, number 1,636, was *The Life and Times of Rev. Elijah Hedding, D.D.*

The football team sported a record of 2-1, with wins over Oregon Normal School and Pacific University and a loss to Newberg's Pacific College. Team members expressed gratitude to trustee A.C. Chandler for providing his house near campus for changing their uniforms. In a manner typical for McMinnville College, the students themselves "fitted the rooms with tubs and a stove so that they could have hot and cold water for bathing."

A typical social gathering such as the Christian Society featured a mix of music and oratory: a cornet solo, a rhetorical titled "Asking the Governor" by Herbert Toney, a song cycle with guitar accompaniment and a piano solo. The ever-present faculty chaperone, in this case Professor Burt Barker, presented an interpretation of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, reportedly leaving the students regretful "that the lack of time forbade a more extended study of the play." The evening concluded with informal conversation and "seeing who could blow the largest bubbles."

With no school colors or standardized fight song, each class selected a color and class yell. Collegiate Division aspirants chose orange for a color and adopted "Zip! Bom! Boo! Zip! Bom! Boo! We are the class of 1902," for its class yell.

1922-23

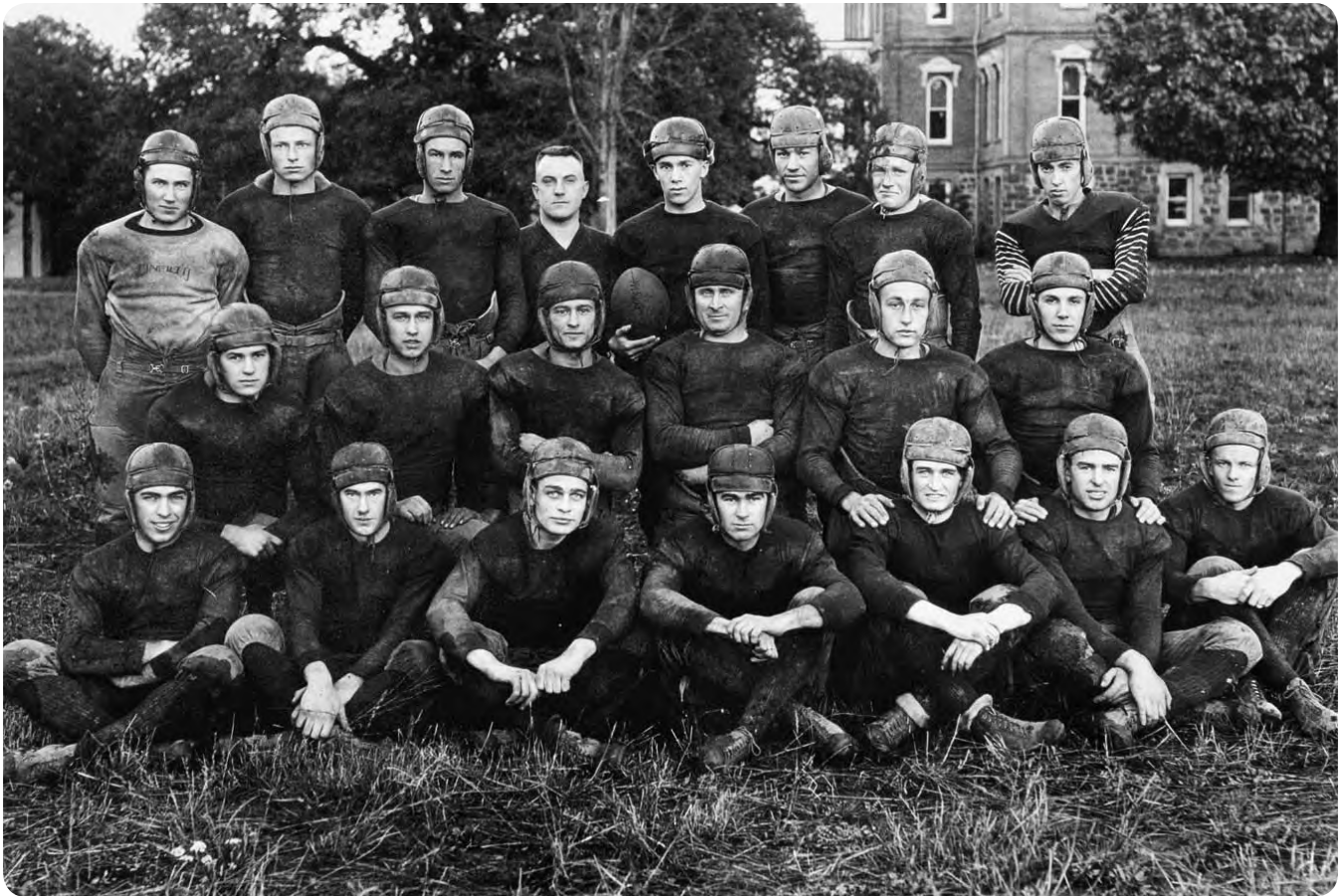
The 263 students arriving in the fall of 1922 were the first under the new name, Linfield College. The returning students devoted great energy to ensuring that the traditions of McMinnville College were upheld. In early October *The Linfield Review* reported gleefully on the fate of a freshman who had behaved insubordinately and was duly punished by a gang of enforcement-minded sophomores:

Last Thursday, a cool and frosty morning when the waters of Cozine were unusually cold and very muddy from recent rains, one bright eyed, red headed member of the Freshman class penetrated the depths of the icy stream before 7:45.... So it was his to do and dunk.

On several occasions *The Review* wrote sanctimonious editorials about lax adherence to the Rook Bible:

Freshman shall wear their green caps every day of the five school days of each week until May Day.

In early November a tradition reappeared when Linfield hosted its first football game in 16 years, defeat-



The football team in 1922 was the first to play on campus in 16 years, after the sport was banned by President Leonard Riley and the Board of Trustees "for its spirit of rowdiness and brutality." In that first momentous game, Linfield defeated Pacific University 20-0, and the Wildcats have gone on to four national championships and the longest consecutive-season winning streak in the country.



ing Pacific University, 20-0. Women's sports still were a far cry from the men's in terms of competition, with the women's basketball team playing only five games against area high schools. But, an important first step was taken when the student body amended its constitution so that the basketball players could earn the first letters awarded to women in college history.

Despite ardent opposition from President Riley and from the faculty, Greek letter organizations regularly publicized their social activities in *The Review*. Pledge dinners and Christmas parties by Iota Omega Mu Fraternity and others were often held in Portland:

Seven car loads of merry I.O.M.'s and their lady friends left Linfield Friday afternoon and, in a few hours ride through the snow-covered valley, arrived in the Oregon metropolis. From warm reception parlors the merry makers found their way to the Washington street (sic) Hazelwood where a banquet table was attractively arranged for them in the Colonial room.

Other fraternities such as Phi Epsilon were forced to travel on the Southern Pacific Railroad, whose local schedule was printed in the student handbook. A train from Portland to McMinnville took one hour and 46 minutes.

The growing popularity of Greek social organizations and the abundant accompanying opportunities for entertainment cut into membership in college literary societies. Long gone were the Philergian Society and The Nicaian Society.

The election of the May Queen continued at the new Linfield College. Esther Telcher '23 from Grangeville, Idaho, was selected and presided at the annual "burning of the green" (green beanie and caps consumed at the campus bonfire).

1947-48

The college was dramatically different and rapidly changing for the 899 students who enrolled in fall of 1947. Enrollment had tripled, and a substantial number were World War II veterans; most were older than the norm and many were married. Dancing had been approved on campus the year before, underscored by *The Linfield Review's* list of "Do's and Don'ts for Dancing Demons" that included the following advice: "DON'T be a gorilla gripper. If you wrap your arms around the unsuspecting girl's waist in a death-like grip, you might easily cut off her breathing. If the girl cannot breathe she certainly can't dance."

The year was also the second for the campus Baby Show, which *The Review* called a "new tradition": "Not

Pop's Shop remembered

The final closing of Pop's Shop in 1972-73 was lamented in the 1973 *Oak Leaves*, which reprised a sentimental ditty from a previous college songbook:

Come raise your voice in rousing song,
The music casts its spell.
We serenade the well-known spot
Where Linfield loafers dwell,
We sing this song to thee, Oh Pop,
And to thy shop so dear,
Forever will thy memory
To weary hearts send cheer.
Oh, haven of the hungry hordes
That from the Commons pour,
Oh, Mecca of the lovelorn lads
Turned back from Failing's door.
So Pop's Shop, here's a toast to thee
Thy coffee and thy smoke,
A toast to thy fraternity
Forged fast in song and joke.

that the coon-skin coat and the sweater girl are doomed to fade from the campus scene, it's just that the new era has all that and babies too." A day care program was offered through the Department of Home Economics in an area of Pioneer Hall remodeled for that purpose.

The celebration of Sadie Hawkins Day was in its fourth year. Drawn from the syndicated comic strip *Li'l Abner*, Sadie Hawkins Day featured women dressed in costumes befitting the raggedy characters of Dogpatch, the strip's setting. If a woman caught a man during the Sadie Hawkins Day Race, he was obliged to marry her. To the predominantly female Linfield student body in the inaugural year of 1944, the celebration perhaps expressed hope for a conventional matrimonial future. Men who preferred to deter the interest of fleet-footed women grew beards. Jack Graham '50 was Linfield's winner for "the longest beard grown in comparison to his competitors."

The boom in student numbers was likewise a boon to Greek Life. Rush in 1947 netted 115 new pledges for sororities and 116 for fraternities.

Linfield freshman Dan Rehwalt '51, left, doesn't look too intimidated by George Anah Cobb '48, who berates him for not wearing his green cap. Freshmen were expected to follow the guidelines of the Rook Bible, which outlined a code of behavior for all incoming students. The annual "burning of the green" (green beanie and caps consumed at the campus bonfire), was held in conjunction with the May Day celebration.

Theatre and movies offer entertainment

From early in the 20th century on, movies and theatre have provided entertainment for generations of Linfield students. Some of the offerings were:

1922-23

Lark Theatre movies: *The Old Homestead, Penrod, The Cowboy and the Lady, The Queen of Sheba*

Linfield plays and operettas: *Stop Thief, The Japanese Girl, In the Garden of the Shah*

1947-48

Films: *Meet John Doe, Bring on the Girls, My Wild Irish Rose, Daisey Kenyon*

Theatre: *Arms and the Man, Joan of Lorraine, State of the Union*

1972-73

Films: *The Godfather, Play Misty for Me*

Theatre: *Figaro, The Matchmaker*

1997-98

Films: *Titanic, Men in Black*

Theatre: *Mama' Stars, The Brothers Menaechmus*

Freshman-sophomore tug-o-war during the 1947 homecoming festivities.





Female students “capture” the men during the 1947 Sadie Hawkins Day, a popular celebration on campus for many years. To the predominantly female Linfield student body in the inaugural year of 1944, the celebration perhaps expressed hope for a conventional matrimonial future. But by the post-war years when marriage and babies became a part of the Linfield present, Sadie Hawkins Day was enjoyed both for its message and for its ironic twist on the conventions of courtship.

1972-73

By 1972-73, the change in the student body was nearly as dramatic as 25 years earlier. Conventional is the last word anyone would choose to describe students that year. Despite Linfield’s traditionally conservative bent, 1970s students saw themselves as social critics. They criticized the Vietnam War, openly publicized (in *The Lineus*) the availability of birth control pills, and questioned college rules and practices.

The waning employee-student childcare center was re-vitalized, but with a different focus. The new center in Potter Hall provided day care for low-income and migrant families, freeing up parents for employment. This transformation reflected priorities for a new age, and the 1972 experiment was a forerunner of today’s Pre-Kindergarten.

Linfield students joined their peers at other Oregon institutions to form a chapter of the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG). That spring

OSPIRG unleashed a broadside at the Linfield Bookstore, which was accused of being “the one bookstore that is overpricing in the state of Oregon.”

The Black Student Union (BSU) became increasingly active in the 1970s, its numbers swelled by admission of many black students from the East. The BSU was a force socially, politically and athletically (it won the fall intramural football championship), but did not promote black separatism as at many other colleges of that era. A BSU member, Billy Hutchins ’74 (now known as Baruti Artharee), lost the ASLC presidential election to Mike Martinis ’74 by only 24 votes. Other groups organized that year included a Chicano Student Union, a women’s liberation group (the Ms. Club), and the United Student Union of Linfield College (USU), a group organized to ensure “a complete review of professors, their methods of instruction, and [of devising] a means to handle student complaints in all fields of study.” Eventually the USU collaborated with a faculty committee to establish the now familiar and universal Linfield

system of student evaluation of faculty.

Amidst all the scrutiny of contemporary human institutions and with sublime confidence in their ability to create new institutions, Linfield students' interest in Greek Life waned. Rush in November secured only 31 pledges among the four fraternities and 48 pledges for the four sororities.

A men's soccer club, spearheaded by Nigerian student Sam Ogunlade '74, laid the foundation that in 1994 gave birth to varsity men's and women's soccer teams. A 1974 fencing club, by contrast, was short-lived.

1997-98

Students in the last 10 years may best be summed up as combining some of the conventional, obliging traits of 1947-48 with some of the radical thinking from 1972-73. This group put great stock in its homecoming, featuring such traditional amusements as a bonfire song contest and a Twinkie eating contest. At the same time, they organized Fusion, a gay and bisexual alliance. Many students supported and most were accepting of the organization, putting them in polite but firm opposition to their elders at home and in the community.

The Linfield football team hit a milestone when a 31-14 win over the University of Puget Sound propelled the Wildcats into a tie with Harvard and Notre Dame for the most consecutive winning sea-

sons in American college football history.

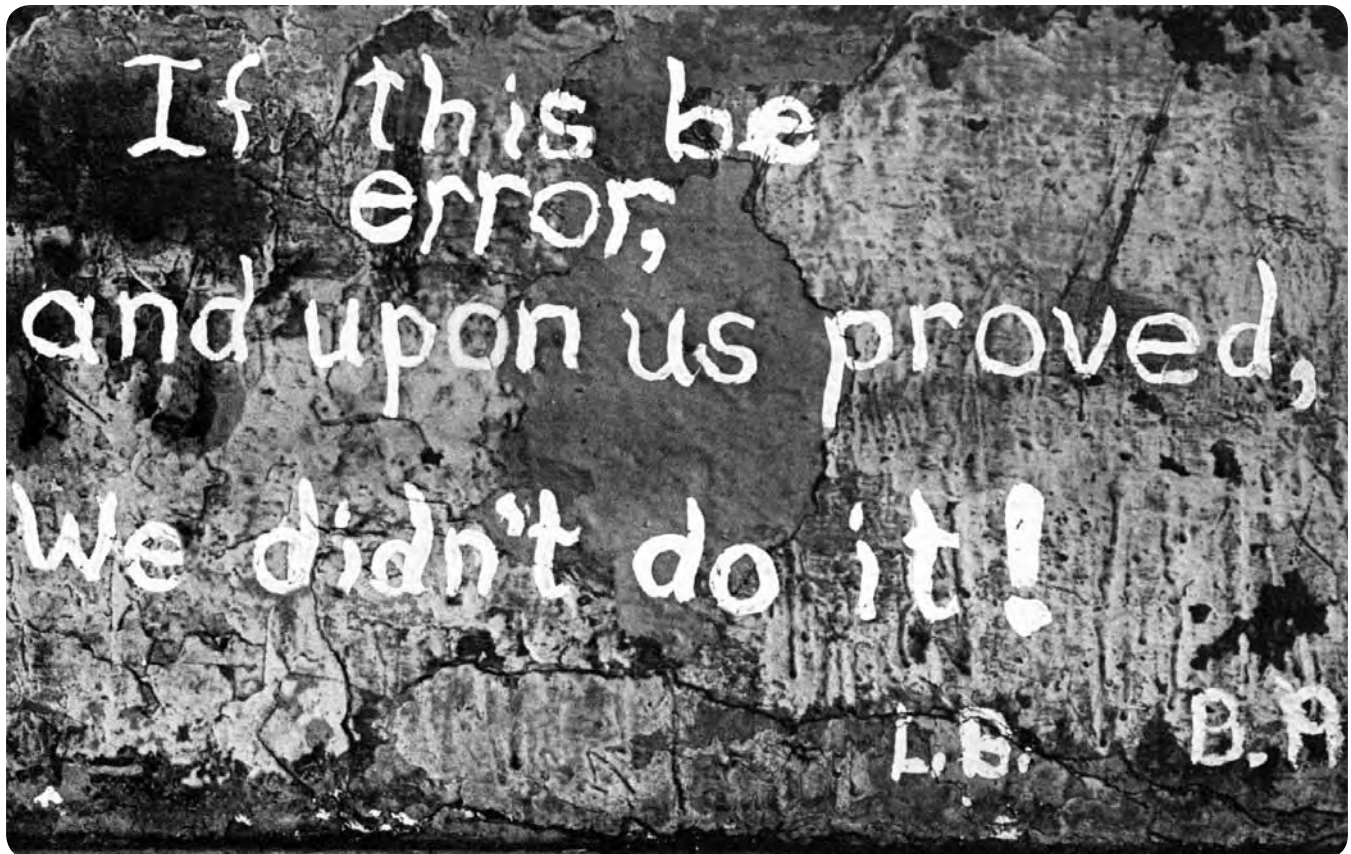
Mama'Stars, a play by Professor Thomas Gressler, thrust actress and singer Stephanie Routh '99 into the finals of the prestigious Irene Ryan national acting competition in Washington, D.C.

Nicole Payne '99 was elected as the first female student body president in 15 years and the first non-Greek in six years. Her victory was soon overshadowed by the announcement that the college had acquired most of the acreage and all the buildings in the former Hewlett-Packard property, more than doubling the size of campus.

The year ended on a somber note with a memorial service for popular alumnus Christopher Hubbard '96, who died in Venezuela as the result of a fall during a hiking excursion. *The Review* reported: "Tears and laughter filled Melrose Auditorium...[as]...a small group of students and faculty congregated at the memorial service to remember Hubbard and to give support to his parents Steve and Ann Hubbard and his sister Louise Hubbard." Like her brother, Louise Hubbard '98 is a Linfield graduate.

It is fitting to remind ourselves that the college family extends over many generations and encompasses many bonds, always rallying to honor what is right and good in its sons and daughters.

— Marvin Henberg



The exclamation of innocence lettered on the back of the senior bench after it was anonymously repainted in 1973.