

Halls' history dates oldest on campus

Blanton and Nason halls built in 1948 after WWII, Brewer added in 1959

Alicia Collins
Staff Reporter

It has not always been a girl thing. Blanton, Nason and Brewer, the trio of all-female residence halls more commonly known as BNB, have not always been limited to their same-sex occupation standards of today.

Missouri Hall Director Zac Burden said BNB has changed its coed status several times during the decades after originally opening as an all-female hall.

"There was desperate need for housing, really," he said. "... There were opportunities where it just needed to become a coed facility."

The building of Blanton and Nason halls was the first time in the history of the University that the General Assembly of Missouri appropriated funds to be used for the erection of housing facilities for students.

Those funds came from the sale of bonds, according to Walter H. Ryle's book "Centennial History of the Northeast Missouri State Teacher's College."

Burden said Blanton and Nason, built in 1948 after World War II, were the first residence halls on campus because of an increasing amount of people attending college. But Brewer was not built until 1959.

"It was a part of the original building plan, and they knew it was going to come eventually, but as is the case often with campus construction, there wasn't enough money to fund the project," he said.

The construction of the two residence halls was the first time since the founding of the University that officials erected a school building off the original campus of 13 acres, and to build the halls required the destruction of five homes and the closing of a street, according to Ryle's book.

Before the construction of Blanton and Nason, army barracks were placed in the grass in the location of the Pershing parking lot, Burden said.

"It got to be so awful that it was



Courtesy of Special Collections, Pickler Memorial Library
Blanton, Nason and Brewer halls were not always same-sex living situations. Blanton and Nason, seen in this picture, were built in 1948 and were the first residence halls on campus. This photo shows only Blanton and Nason because Brewer was not built until 1959.

known as 'Muddyville Flats,' and it was primarily where married students and men lived while females lived in Blanton-Nason," he said.

The residence halls officially were accepted by the Board of Regents on Aug. 26, 1949, and officially were given to the University for occupancy Sept. 3, 1949, according to Ryle's book.

Burden said the original cafeteria for the campus, which was used until the opening of Ryle Hall in 1963, was located in the basement of Blanton Hall, as was a hair salon.

BNB also had a switchboard operator to direct incoming phone calls, Burden said.

"I met with some alumni who used to live in the building right when it opened, and I heard a funny story once how if

they had a girlfriend up in a room, and a boy that she liked called, but he was calling for someone else, they would go ahead and misdirect the call so it would go to her," he said.

BNB was the first residence hall to experiment with complete coed housing, Burden said.

"Originally it had been that one of the wings was female while the other was male, but during the mid- to late-'80s that was the first time we saw coed houses occurring on the same floor," he said.

Burden said BNB's idea of coed floors then spread to the other residence halls until 1999, when it then turned back into the only all-female residence life on campus, because Ryle Hall became a coed facility.

"The demand for all-female housing wasn't as high as it used to be, so having a building that housed 550 residents that are all females just seemed too much, and BNB was a smaller facility so it seemed more appropriate," he said.

Junior Shannon Grantham has been a student adviser in Blanton for the last two years after living in Dobson Hall her freshman year.

"It's a completely different environment," she said. "While I loved being in a coed dorm, there are a lot of good things about being in an all-girl dorm like how quiet and clean it is."

Grantham said she chose to be a student adviser in Blanton again because she thinks there are much fewer residents who drink or do drugs, which makes her job easier.

Freshman Niki Rust, a Blanton resident, said she does not think it is necessary to have an all-female dorm on campus because of the progression of society, but she understands other individuals feel differently.

"I chose BNB because of I didn't want to deal with community-style bathrooms," she said. "... Sometimes I miss having guys around just as friends."

Rust said that while she misses the interaction between male and female residents, there definitely are perks to living in an all-female facility.

"It's nice on my floor because the girls like to get together and just have fun with random game and movie nights, so there is a stronger sense of community, I think," she said.

Students seek switch, leave Truman

Some question fit at University, adviser urges consideration

Alicia Collins
Staff Reporter

Not everyone is destined to be a Bulldog.

More than 3,556 students transferred from public universities in Missouri in a single semester last year, according to the Missouri Department of Higher Education.

Marcy Graham, an academic adviser with the Residential College Program, said she primarily sees first-year students and often has had students come to her with thoughts of transferring.

"The students might have concerns about how they go about transferring, or they may just have questions in their mind about whether this is a good fit for them," she said.

There is a wide range of reasons as to why students transfer, Graham said.

"There are a lot of intangibles involved, and sometimes it's even hard for the student to say what their primary reason for transferring is," she said.

Graham said she tries to find out what the student is involved with and whether or not they are finding a way to make connections with other people because a lot of fresh-

men find that difficult.

"Sometimes they just don't find a niche here, and that is certainly a big concern of mine," she said.

Brian Krylowicz, director of the University Counseling Services, said transferring is among the issues students are concerned about, and they try to offer the opportunity for students to talk about the problem without trying to persuade them to remain at the University.

"We get people who are really struggling, and they just don't know what to do, so we try to help them through the decision-making process and help them to make a decision that's right for them," he said.

Some students come to the University with expectations, and when those expectations are not met, they think transferring is the best solution, Krylowicz said.

"A lot of people look really quickly to go somewhere easier, or they get here and decide they miss their friends from home and want to transfer instead of trying to find friends here and making it work," he said.

Krylowicz said for some students it is a great idea to transfer,

but others leave too quickly based on the wrong reasons, and they end up wanting to come back.

"I think life is way too short to be that unhappy," he said. "If someone is a first-semester student, they just got here and should try and make it work. But in all essence, if someone is really unhappy, and they really tried to make it work, we hope they find somewhere to be successful and happy."

Students come here and realize Kirksville is not St. Louis, Chicago or Kansas City and decide they do not want to stay, Krylowicz said.

"The one thing I tell students to really focus on is that to be unhappy is to look at what you don't have, but to be happy is to notice what you do have, and a lot of times students who just get here are looking at a lot of things that they don't have," he said.

Krylowicz said that when students are here, they feel removed from their families and friends, but when they go home during a long break, they suddenly realize being away from home is not as bad as they imagined.

Students should get involved,

"Sometimes [students] just don't find a niche here, and that is certainly a big concern of mine."

Marcy Graham
Academic Adviser

attempt to take classes that interest them and talk to a wide variety of people on campus because doing so might provide another way of looking at the situation, Krylowicz said.

"I tell people if you run away from something, usually within six months your troubles find you, and so unless you do something about it, nothing will happen," he said.

Freshman Melissa Rodgers is among the students who have used the University Counseling Services to help with the stress of deciding to transfer at semester because of a conflict with her major.

Rodgers said it took her nearly three weeks of contemplation before making her decision, and the Dr. Seuss book "Oh, the Places You'll Go" helped her realize what she should be doing.

"In one part he describes 'The Waiting Place' where people sit around waiting for things to happen to them, and I realized that Truman, in many ways, is my waiting place," she said. "I've done all I could here, and I'm never going to achieve anything if I just sit around waiting for other people to let me."

Rodgers said this is the hardest decision she has ever had to make but thinks it is the best choice for her academically.

"I made this decision based on my personal aspirations because I know where I want to go with my life, and I don't want to waste a moment trying to get there," she said.



Nick Corich/Index

Marcy Graham
Adviser

Things to consider before transferring

- Evaluate the difference between homesickness and extenuating family circumstances
- Determine whether that significant other is as committed to the relationship as you are
- If Truman is too academically challenging, identify better study management habits

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