

Building and Place Name Evaluation

BENTON HALL AND ANNEX BUILDING EVALUATION WORKSHOP

October 17, 2017

MU Ballroom Room



**Oregon State
University**

Welcome and Introductions

- Who are we?
- What are our roles?
- Who else is in the room?

Roadmap

- Intentions and expectations for today's workshop
- Criteria for evaluation
- Historical information on building and namesake
- Table discussions on building and namesake

Intentions and Expectations

- What is the intent of today's workshop?
- What can you expect from this process?
- What we expect from our community during this process?

What happens next?

- Weeks 1-5:
 - Historical reports on the buildings and namesakes
 - Community engagement workshops to discuss the process and the four building names under review – Arnold Dining Center, Avery Lodge, Benton Hall and Annex, Gill Coliseum
 - Meetings with community stakeholder groups
- Weeks 6-9: Deliberation by workgroup, Architectural Naming Committee and President Ray
- Week 10: President Ray announces decision
- Full timeline available at <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/building-and-place-names>

What happens next?

- What happens if we decide to rename a building?
 - OSU will engage in a process to select a new name for the building
 - The university will create permanent educational information so that current and future community members will be able to learn about the building's previous name and namesake, how and why the decision to change the building's name was made, and why the new name was chosen.
 - Permanent education could be in the form of a plaque, exhibit, website or other mediums.

What happens next?

- What happens if we decide not to rename a building?
 - The name of the building will remain
 - The university will create and place permanent educational information so that current and future community members will be able to learn about the building's name and history of its namesake, why the name was evaluated, and why a decision was made to leave the name.
 - This permanent education could be in the form of a plaque, exhibit, website or other mediums.

How did we get here?

- National context
 - Conversations about race, exclusion, history, and reconciliation
 - Conversations about memorials, statues, buildings and names
 - States, cities, universities and colleges

How did we get here?

- Oregon State
 - Pre-2000s - Examining building and place names; renaming buildings
 - Articles exploring the origin of OSU building names
 - Buildings named for a variety of reasons – function, donors, alumni, students, faculty/staff
 - Long history of renaming buildings at Oregon State for a variety of reasons, including buildings under evaluation
 - 2000s – Concern regarding whether names reflect Oregon State’s values
 - 2015 – Committee to establish criteria for examination of building names
 - 2017 – Student demonstration regarding building names
 - 2017 – Process announced to evaluate the names of four buildings on Corvallis campus

How did we get here?

- Why examine the names of buildings? Why now?
 - The names of buildings speak to our core values as a public, land grant university serving the well being of the citizens of Oregon
- OSU's core values:
 - **Accountability**
 - **Diversity**
 - **Integrity**
 - **Respect**
 - **Social responsibility**

Building and Place Name Evaluation Criteria

- Should a building be renamed because the “context” of an individual’s life and legacy is inconsistent with OSU’s contemporary mission and values?
- “Context” is evaluated by the following criteria:
 - Actions taken by an individual vs. viewpoints held by an individual
 - The individual's public vs. private persona
 - The progression of an individual’s viewpoints and life as a whole
 - Whether and how an individual’s actions and viewpoints aligned with OSU’s mission and OSU’s and society’s values at the time
 - How the current OSU community engages with the “context” of an individual’s life

Historical Review

- Conducted by a team of five scholars
 - Four historians, three from OSU and an emeritus professor from Lewis & Clark College; one sociologist from OSU
- Purpose
 - Gather and analyze historical evidence to explore, reveal, and contextualize the lives and viewpoints of the namesakes, and the histories of the buildings.
 - Not answering the question of whether to rename; providing history and context
- Process
 - Research in archives and our primary sources
 - Extensive documentation of sources
 - Oral histories, where available

History: Benton Hall and Annex, and Thomas Hart Benton

- The naming history of Benton Hall and Benton Annex
- The naming history of Benton County
- Thomas Hart Benton

About Benton Hall

- The oldest building on the Oregon State University campus.
- Erected in 1887-88 as a multipurpose facility.
- Long known as the Administration Building, it housed the offices of the president, deans, faculty, auditorium, classrooms, laboratories, and the campus library.
- Today, Benton Hall houses the College of Liberal Arts' music program.



Photo: College building (now Benton Hall), 1890 (HC0038), Harriet's Photograph Collection



Photo: Benton Hall photo by University Marketing,

The Story Behind the Naming of Benton Hall

- In 1885, Oregon legislature passed an act requiring citizens of Benton County to pay for construction of a college building at the cost of at least \$25,000
- Over the next two years, the citizens of Benton County (~1,400 households) raised sufficient funds to begin construction
- In 1947, OSU President August Strand asked the Oregon State Board of Higher Education to rename Administration Building to “Benton Hall” to honor the citizens of Benton County who were the driving force behind its construction

The Naming of Benton Annex

- Erected in 1892 as the “Station Building” - administrative office and chemistry lab
- Between 1902 and 1972 - a mining lab, the campus bookstore, student health service, and a paleontology lab; expanded in 1920
- In 1972 – Re-named as Benton Annex
- Since 1973 - Home of the Women’s Center



Women’s Center, circa 2010s, photo from the Diversity @ Cultural Engagement website

The Naming of Benton County

- Benton County was created on December 23, 1847, by an act of Oregon's Provisional Government.
- The county was created out of lands originally inhabited by the Kalapuya people and used by the Klickitat people as hunting grounds.
- Many of the people who crossed the Oregon Trail in the 1840s came from Missouri. Missouri senators – Lewis F. Linn and Thomas Hart Benton – were advocates of westward expansion and a donation land law to grant public domain lands to white settlers in the Willamette Valley
- There are seven states, including Oregon, with counties named after Benton.

Thomas Hart Benton

- Biographical Information
- Benton's Views and Action Taken Pertaining to:
 - Slavery and African Americans
 - Indian Removal
 - Manifest Destiny

Thomas Hart Benton (1782-1858)

Biographical Information

- Born in Harts Mill, North Carolina.
- Grew up on the family farm worked by slaves in Orange County, North Carolina; inherited slaves.
- Became a lawyer and later an influential newspaper editor in St. Louis.
- Elected U.S. senator from Missouri who served in the chamber from 1821 to 1851, and in the House of Representatives between 1852-1854.

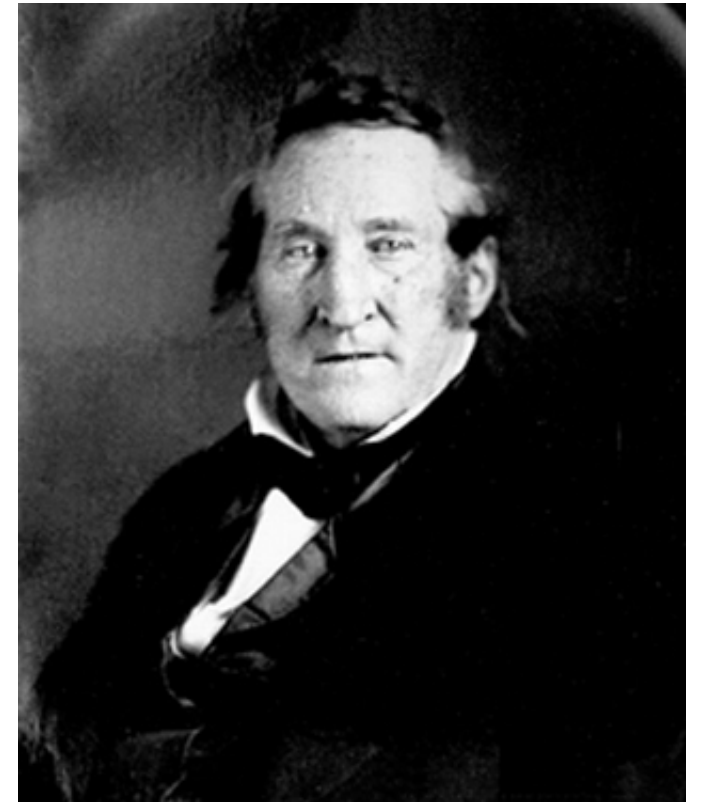


Photo: Thomas Hart Benton, from Wikimedia Commons, the free media repository

Views and Actions - Slavery

- 1810s – Benton argued that to prohibit slavery was “contrary to the rights of the State.”
- 1840s – Rise of the abolitionist movement coincided with discussion over whether slavery would expand westward
- 1840s – Benton believed slave-holding was protected by the U.S. Constitution, however refused to endorse expansion of slavery into new territories
- 1858 – Published an essay disagreeing with the *Dred Scott* case which ruled that Scott was not entitled to his freedom even though he had lived in free states

Views and Actions – Removal of Indigenous People

- Benton supported the Indian Removal Act of May 28, 1830 that authorized the removal of tribes living in the southeastern U.S. from their homelands and resettle them in what is now Oklahoma
- Advocated opening Indigenous lands for white settlers
- Claimed that the tribes were eager to abandon their traditional lifeways, religion, and languages and wanted to assimilate into Euro-American society

Views and Actions – Manifest Destiny

- Staunch supporter of “Manifest Destiny”: the belief that God had chosen Euro-Americans to conquer and settle the North American continent
- 1840s - Senators Benton and Linn of Missouri became eager backers of westward expansion along the Oregon Trail, including settlement of the Oregon Territory
- Championed the Caucasian race as “far above the Eth[i]opian, or Black—above the Malay, or Brown (if we must admit five races)—and above the American Indian, or Red.”

Summary

Naming history of Benton Hall and Benton Annex

- Benton Hall named in 1947 to honor the citizens of Benton County who raised money for its construction in the 1880s
- Benton Annex renamed various times; it has been the home of the Women's Center since 1973

The naming history of Benton County

- Benton County established in 1847; named to honor Thomas Hart Benton, U.S. Senator from Missouri

Thomas Hart Benton, 1782-1858

- Supported the institution of slavery, though not to new states
- Advocated for removal of indigenous people and supported policies that benefitted Euro-Americans
- Was a proponent of Manifest Destiny and championed the superiority of the Caucasian race

What happens next?

- Workshop plan
 - Intentions of RESPECT
 - Table introductions
 - Facilitated table conversations and gathering input

Intentions of RESPECT

- Intentions of RESPECT
 - Recognize your communication style
 - Examine your own perceptions and assumptions
 - Speak from your own experiences
 - Participate honestly / Pass openly
 - Engage in the learning process
 - Consider confidentiality, seek curiosity
 - Take responsibility for your actions

Table introductions

- Introduce yourself and why you came to this workshop today
- Note your community affiliation on sign-in sheet for purposes of evaluation only

Dialogue Session

- Facilitators at your tables will lead you in a dialogue
- Remaining time is allotted for dialogue
- You can also provide input on comments cards

Closing

- Note-takers will summarize input and it will be considered in evaluation
- Upcoming session:
 - October 19 – Gill Coliseum
- More information and full schedule available at:
 - <http://leadership.oregonstate.edu/building-and-place-names>