Building Up Campus

Faced with a growing student population and limited living space during the late 1980's, the administration of John Brown University decided to build a set of townhouses to provide more independent living space for upperclassmen. The original plan was to build a series of three units. "Pragmatically, it was...more cost effective to construct two townhouses each year for three years rather than building another masonry dormitory," remembers Pat Gustavson, then Vice President of Finance and Administration. Construction for the first set of houses began in early 1990. The houses were designed to hold 32 male and female students who were granted admission to the townhouses based on class standing, GPA and leadership roles on campus. Students paid an adjusted room and board rate, which allowed to them the freedom to cook more of their own meals, thereby better preparing them for life outside the dorms.

One unique aspect of the construction process was the opportunity it gave students in the Construction Management program to gain hands on experience at the build site. Students chose to stay over the summer months and worked alongside their professors. Unforeseen delays prevented all of the students from moving into the buildings until the end of September. However, they soon settled in and set about making their new residences home. Classified ads in old copies of the Threefold Advocate tell the story of a fun loving community, full of pranks and laughter. The men of the townhouses formed Sigma Beta Chi, which they frequently referred to as a "not-fraternity", in order to encourage camaraderie between all the residents. Club members adopted female residents of the townhouses as "little sisters". Together they held events such as Christmas gift exchanges and Super Bowl parties.

In 1992, the university broke ground on the second phase of the townhouses. Once again, students and professors worked side by side to complete the buildings. Students moved in that fall while workers put on the final additions. This second set of residences included a lounge and laundry for the benefit of all the townhouse occupants. The basement also served the JBU community at large by housing the center of the Honors Scholars program for several years, until it moved in 2007.

As time went on and the student body continued to grow, the initial plans to build three townhouses expanded, bringing the current number to six. Students continue to enjoy the unique atmosphere they provide as a fun alternative to traditional campus living.

Milestones

September 27, 1963
The John Brown University fire crew became an official part of the Siloam Springs fire department.

September 30, 1980
JBU installs solar panels on old library building to heat building and provide practical experience for students.

September 10, 1982
The first brother/sister halls were implemented with the goal of encouraging social interaction between the dorms.
ECHOES OF THE PAST

Townhouse residents cry fowl about problem
April 10, 1997

Some townhouse residents have their feathers ruffled over three geese that have staked out the townhouse hill as their territory since spring break. A daily 6 a.m. wake-up regimen is something to honk about.

Siloam Springs animal control has been called, and a petition has been circulated. The petition was directed to the John Brown University administration in response to the problems the geese were causing: students being awakened early in the morning, students being chased and attacked, cars being attacked and messes being left on the porches, said senior Andrea Smith, who lives in one of the townhouses the fowl frequent. Smith said the petition asked the administration to take the geese far, far away from the campus so they can’t come back.

“I think the school needs to do something about it because someone called Animal Control, and it did not catch them,” Smith said. “The school said the geese would go away if no one fed them, but I think Spring Break is proof that it did not work. They were here to welcome us back from Spring Break.”

Animal Control officer Jeff Thompson said, “Every time I get close to the geese they take off. I just couldn’t get a hold of them.”

Junior Amber Rice said that the first time she saw the geese she thought they were cute. However, over the past month they have lost their cuteness. “There is nothing cute about attacking geese,” she said.

Senior David Fields, townhouse resident assistant, said, “At first I thought the geese were cool, but then I noticed what a mess they were making, what a stench they were making, and how no one was picking up the mess. That made me think about goose hash, goose leg, grilled goose. I wish they would just go away.”

Eric Boyd, senior, said, “I like the geese. I guess they do chase some people, but I don’t think they bite and it is kind of nice to look out the window and see them there.”

Smith said, “They crapped all over our porch so that now, when the weather is nice, we cannot enjoy our porch!”

Insights

Works from John Brown, Sr.

What the immediate future has in store none of us can know. One thing sure, everyone of us should push the battle for God and Christ and righteousness until the final culmination comes.

………The same admonition that Christ gave to his disciples just before the ascension (Acts 1:7) is just as applicable today as then——“It is not for you to know the times or season, which the Father hath put in His power,” and thank God the command there given is just as binding today as then (Acts 1:8) “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

Oh children of the King everywhere, our business is to push the battle; and let me assure you that if our Lord delays His coming and there is yet to come a mighty revival that is to sweep the nations and turn them back from the abyss, that revival will come because God’s people found their way back to the old place of petition and intercession.”

Excerpt from “Upon This Rock”