



The Moss Killers, 1884. (seated in front, l-r) Edward A. Hall, IU janitor “Uncle Tommy” Thomas Spicer, and Morton William Fordice; (back row, l-r) James Zwingle, Alexander McCaughan, David Kopp Goss, Joseph Woods Wiley, and Rhorer Oakes. On the wall behind the group are the weapons they used to spy on the very-married President Lemuel Moss and Katherine Graydon, a single, 20-something professor of Greek. Photo courtesy of IU Archives

How a Scandal Helped Change IU Forever

PLUS
IU's Most Influential Presidents

&
Honoring the Contributions Minorities & Women Have Made to the University



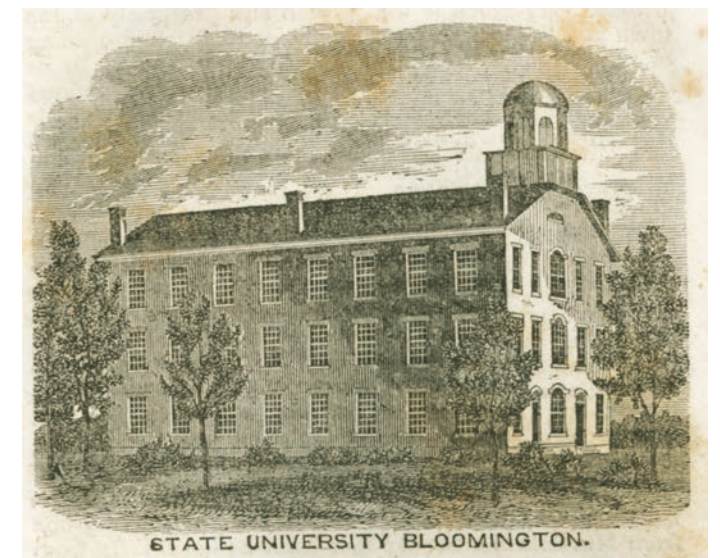
By Carmen Siering

Founded on January 20, 1820, as the State Seminary, Indiana University has grown from a one-building institution of learning—where a dozen young men were taught the classics by a single professor, Baynard Rush Hall—to a world-class research institution with more than 94,000 students and more than 21,000 faculty and staff on campuses in Bloomington and across the state.

The bicentennial was being discussed as early as 2007—the year Michael A. McRobbie became president. But planning for this one-time-only celebration of the university’s first 200 years kicked into high gear in 2015. That’s the year James Capshew was hired as the official university historian, and the Office of the Bicentennial, directed by Kelly Kish, began focusing on a myriad of Bloomington-based and statewide projects to coincide with the anniversary.

A website, magazine, blogs, podcasts, videos, oral histories—a true multiplicity of media representations—are all being utilized to disseminate the gathered research. And while there is still plenty that remains murky—meaning there is still plenty for future historians to uncover and debate—the years leading up to the bicentennial have provided opportunities to reexamine old assumptions and listen to previously unheard (or even silenced) voices.

Some things were already well known. Indiana Seminary was founded in 1820 by the Indiana General Assembly, at that time seated in Corydon. In 1822, construction began between what



An 1836 drawing of the First College Building, located at Seminary Square, published in *The Indiana Gazetteer*, or *Topographical Dictionary of The State of Indiana* in 1850. Photo courtesy of IU Archives

are now South College and South Morton Street and West 1st and West 2nd streets. That original location was (and still is) known as Seminary Square. Classes began in 1825.

In 1828, the school’s name was changed to Indiana College, and renamed again in 1838 to become Indiana University. IU moved to its current campus in the 1880s after a fire destroyed the 10-year-



(l-r) Kelly Kish and James Capshew.
Photo by Rodney Margison

old Science Hall on the old Seminary Square campus.

To move from a small, Midwestern seminary on what was then the nation's frontier to a modern research university took the insight, ingenuity, and effort of countless individuals. Planning was a big part of it. But, in some instances, it might seem, luck or circumstance may have played a part, too. Take the connection between one of IU's early scandals and its advancement from a 19th-century, enlightenment-driven university focused on a classical education to a modern, 20th-century university devoted to research and the scientific method.

The Moss Killers and the modern university

The shameful misconduct of politicians, athletes, celebrities, and, yes, even some high-profile academics, is standard grist for the rumor mill today. Nothing sells a tabloid faster (or gets a quicker click) than a scandal, especially one involving infidelity and questionable morality. It appears some things never change.

Take the case of the Moss Killers. This group of undergraduates—who didn't kill anyone—were responsible for the downfall of Lemuel Moss, selected in 1875 by the IU board of trustees as the sixth in an unbroken line of "Preacher Presidents."

According to an account on Blogging Hoosier History by Laura Bell, soon after the 1883 appointment of Miss Katherine Graydon as a professor of Greek, rumors began to swirl that the very-married President Moss was indulging in an

improper relationship with the attractive, 20-something faculty member. Six students conspired with the janitor to spy on the pair, going so far as to drill a hole in the ceiling of Graydon's classroom and standing watch to see what transpired. Eventually, they caught the couple in the act. Of kissing and hugging.

Newspapers as far away as *The Toronto Daily Mail* reported the details of the "improper and immoral conduct" of which the two were accused.

A witness testified he saw "... Miss Graydon sitting in the doctor's lap and embracing and kissing him; that the doctor gave her a gold pin and that she kissed and embraced him twice; that he kissed her six times in succession; that she patted him on the cheek and smoothed his hair; that when she started to go, he pulled her back and kissed her several times; that she put on her shawl and hat and he embraced her; that at the door he embraced and kissed her; and that when she went out he kissed her again."

The outcome of the scandal was the resignation of both Moss and Graydon, leaving a presidency and two teaching slots to fill—an unfortunate but not uncommon task. However, the Moss Killers scandal

would go on to have unforeseen and far-reaching consequences, shaping Indiana University in important ways for decades to come.

In *The Legacy of the Laboratory* (IU Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences), Capshew writes that Moss'



(l-r) Former IU presidents David Starr Jordan and Joseph Swain, taken June 4, 1920.
Photo courtesy of IU Archives

resignation allowed the university to move away from its "Preacher President" past when selecting the university's seventh president in 1884: "It encouraged the Indiana University trustees to look beyond ranks of the clergy for a new president, and they decided to appoint David Starr Jordan to the post. Already well known in the state for his research and public speaking, Jordan

was the first scientist to become president of an American college or university."

Capshew notes that Jordan was an educational reformer, introducing the elective system and revamping the curriculum to emphasize scientific subjects, and adding laboratories as a means to advance research and investigation. While the university could attract good faculty members, it was often difficult to retain them due to its rural location. Therefore, Jordan sought to build the faculty from within, encouraging promising undergraduates to pursue graduate study in hopes that they could be persuaded to return as faculty members.

The influence of William Lowe Bryan

Capshew writes that William Lowe Bryan was, at the time of the Moss Killers scandal, editor of the *Indiana Student* newspaper, which he had helped revive in 1882 with the help and blessing of President Moss. The scandal was widely publicized and sensationalized, but Bryan refused to comment beyond affirming his faith in the actions of the board of trustees, who had accepted Moss and Graydon's resignations without taking further action.

Bryan was born on a farm in Monroe County in 1860 and grew up in the shadow of Indiana University. IU offered a preparatory school and Bryan entered it in 1876. He matriculated into the university



William Lowe Bryan addresses WWI recruits during their induction ceremony on October 1, 1918. Photo courtesy of IU Archives



Former IU President William Lowe Bryan (left) stands with Registrar John W. Cravens (center) and an unidentified man on the newly built University Dam in the summer of 1915. Photo courtesy of IU Archives

the following year, graduating in 1884. Following graduation, Bryan was hired as an English instructor in the preparatory department.

As a result of the Moss Killers scandal and Graydon's subsequent resignation, Bryan was brought on board as part of the regular faculty, teaching Greek and English. Later, the scandal would further benefit Bryan when Jordan promoted him to acting professor of philosophy, replacing former President Moss.

With Jordan's encouragement, Bryan began pursuing one of the first master's degrees from IU, completing his studies in 1886, then traveled to Germany to serve as an experimental subject at the University of Berlin. Upon his return, he was eager to start experimentation. In 1888, Bryan opened the Indiana University Psychological Laboratory, only the second such lab in the United States.

Aware of his intellectual isolation in the Midwest, Bryan left IU in 1891 to earn his Ph.D. in psychology from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. He returned to IU in 1893 to accept a professorship in the psychology department and the appointment to vice president of the university. In 1902, he was named president.

"That transition from the 19th-century, enlightenment-driven university to the 20th-century scientific university? That's William Lowe Bryan," Kish says. "He's a renowned scientist early on in the IU history. Certainly in the psychology department. It remains one of our strongest, if not our strongest, department."

Kish offers up four compelling arguments for her assessment of Bryan as the president who has had the most influence on IU.

“The reason why I think he’s the most influential is that our modern university structures date to William Lowe Bryan’s presidency,” she says. “Joining the AAU [American Association of Universities]—which is a big coup in some ways, given our institution’s attributes at the time— which basically sets us on a trajectory of being a research institution rather than being a teaching institution. Second is joining the Big Ten, or its predecessor, which sets us on the trajectory of major college athletics, rather than a different type of competition. The third is the statewide presence of IU. It’s under Bryan’s tenure that we really developed the extension division and the campus structures across the state. And, [fourth], is the significant and challenging moving and opening of the medical complex in Indianapolis.”

Challenges of a “frontier” university

As president of IU in the early 1900s, Bryan faced challenges encountered by neither his East Coast contemporaries nor his modern-day counterparts.

“People today don’t appreciate that there are periods of Bryan’s tenure where there’s no coal for heating, where there’s no water for drinking or cleaning,” Bicentennial Director Kish says. “These are the challenges of—I hate to say we are still on the frontier 100 years into the statehood, but there are still real challenges of sustaining a growing college population. Those are the kinds of things Bryan had to face that, frankly, many of his colleagues around the country did not have to face because their sightings were in different kinds of locales or in major urban areas.”

One major, ongoing crisis was a lack of water. Water famines (i.e., a shortage of water necessitating a temporary shutdown of the university physical plant) were common, occurring in the years 1899, 1901, 1904, 1908, and 1913.

By 1909, the Indiana State Legislature took action, allotting \$20,700 to the IU water crisis and granting the IU administration freedom to devise a solution. As bicentennial intern Logan Dudley writes on the Voices from the Bicentennial website, IU engineers



(l-r) William Lowe Bryan and Herman B Wells at President Wells’ inauguration on December 1, 1938. Photo courtesy of IU Archives

originally thought wells in the Griffy Creek valley might provide a solution, but finally decided to dam a narrow gorge that could hold a significant amount water. Over the next few years the land was purchased and the water from what was dubbed University Lake was enough to maintain the physical plant for the next two decades.

William Lowe Bryan, IU’s 10th president, served from 1902 until 1937. During those years he oversaw the development of many prominent IU schools and departments, including the opening of the School of Medicine in Indianapolis in 1903, with nursing and dental schools following. He oversaw the creation of the Graduate School, as well as schools of education, journalism, music, and business. Bryan retired at the age of 76 after 35 years as president—the longest-serving president in the history of the university.

Herman B Wells: An unexpected presidency

Bryan’s successor was equally important in the transformation of IU, though by the time Herman B Wells took the reins, many of the physical hardships that had challenged Bryan had been sorted out. Still, Wells faced his own challenges, and while he was a new man for a new era, he was, in

some ways, similar to Bryan.

“It’s neat to think about Wells and Bryan in the same breath,” University Historian Capshew says. “In some ways they have similar kinds of outlooks and focus on the local, on Indiana ... and, beyond that, the nation and the world. They had that kind of philosophy that the university is about service to individual people, to liberate their talents. At base, they shared similar visions.”

Wells was born in 1902, the same year Bryan took over as IU president. He began his college studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign in the fall of 1920 but transferred to IU at the beginning of his sophomore year. At IU, he was active in campus life, serving as treasurer and then president for his fraternity, Sigma Nu. He graduated with a bachelor’s degree in commerce, the equivalent of a business degree, in 1924. After graduation, he returned home to live with his parents and to work with his father at the First National Bank of Lebanon for two years before heading back to IU to earn his master’s degree in economics.

The summary of Wells’ career trajectory seems straightforward. In truth, it was not. He started work on a doctorate at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in 1927,

only to leave a year later to take a job with the Indiana Bankers Association (IBA). In 1930, while continuing to work for the IBA, he accepted a position as an instructor in the Department of Economics and Sociology at IU.

Capshew writes in “Herman B Wells: The Man Who Shaped Our World” (*Bloom* February/March 2009 issue) that in 1931, in the midst of the Great Depression, Wells was appointed secretary and research director for the Study Commission for Indiana Financial Institutions, a group charged with investigating bank failures and devising remedies. The Indiana General Assembly adopted many of the reforms advised by the commission in the report authored by Wells.

In 1933, Wells took a leave of absence from IU to oversee the implementation of the new banking regulations. After two years away from Bloomington, Wells was lured back in 1935 when President Bryan offered him the position of dean of the School of Business Administration.

Bryan’s selection of Wells, just 32, as dean is reminiscent of Bryan’s own cultivation under Jordan. Capshew writes that while there were many factors at work in Wells’ selection (not the least of which were his many supporters among the IU faculty and members of the banking

community), it was Bryan who played the key role.

Capshew writes of Bryan, “He had kept his eye on Herman Wells for several years, and he decided the young assistant professor deserved a chance to prove himself as dean. In addition, Wells probably improved his chances by being absent from campus during his two-year leave. Had he stayed on campus, he would have continued to develop a reputation as a good teacher and to jump from Assistant Professor of Economics to Dean of the School of Business would have been extremely unlikely. Instead, he went to the State House and straightened out what was a ‘horrible mess,’ proving that he had administrative talent.”

If Wells’ selection as dean was a bit of a shakeup at the university, the resignation of Bryan as university president in March 1937—and the subsequent search for his successor—was an earthquake. Bryan had led the university for 35 years, and in those years he had ushered in a new era at IU; no one doubted that. But, as Capshew writes, “The Bryan administration was running out of steam. Not only was the president himself a septuagenarian, but also the school’s department heads and deans—all Bryan appointees—were mostly of the same generation.”



Herman B Wells is engulfed with congratulatory flowers after being appointed the 11th president of IU in 1938. Photo courtesy of IU Archives

A search began immediately, but Bryan was determined to step down at the end of the fiscal year—June 30—and so, as the months went on without a successor in place, it was determined that an acting president would need to be selected from among the faculty. Wells was young—only 35—but his name had been floated as a replacement for Bryan by his many supporters. The fact that he didn’t want the permanent job made him an acceptable candidate for the temporary one.

Capshew writes Wells’ response to the request: “‘Under these circumstances,’ Wells replied, ‘if you will promise me that during this period you won’t consider me for the Presidency—I don’t want to get involved with that—I’ll do it. I’ll try to be a good soldier and do it, if you will let me get back to my dean’s job as soon as possible.’”

As acting president, Wells moved the university forward. One priority was, as Capshew says, to ease out older faculty and administrators. In his first two weeks, Wells interviewed every faculty member who was 70 or older. He attended board meetings, impressing the trustees with his business acumen. He continued to be a favorite with the faculty. The search for a president went on. And on. By early 1938, nearly a year after Bryan’s resignation, Governor Clifford Townsend, tired of the delay, put pressure on the board to make a decision. Wells’ name had been among those under consideration from the beginning, and as acting president he had only made himself a more attractive candidate. At a special board meeting on March 22, 1938, the vote was unanimous in its election of Wells as IU’s 11th president. Despite his initial protestations, Wells accepted the job. He liked being president.

Hands-on leadership

Wells’ leadership style was hands on—from the selection of faculty to replace those he encouraged to retire to the purchase of cultural artifacts he felt would enhance the campus. An example of the latter is the acquisition of the *Indiana Murals* commissioned by Thomas Hart Benton for the 1933 World’s Fair in Chicago. The 12-foot-high, 250-foot-long depiction of the social and industrial history of Indiana



Takekuma Okada was IU's first non-European international student. A native of Japan, Okada earned his master's degree from IU in 1891, the same year this photograph was made. Photo courtesy of IU Archives

had been part of the state's exhibit at the fair, but afterward was stored and, seemingly, forgotten. Not by Wells. He had been to the World's Fair and had seen the murals, and though he wished to acquire them, there was no space large enough for their display. The construction of IU Auditorium, which opened in 1941, presented that opportunity, and the murals remain a centerpiece of IU's vast art collection to this day.

Wells was instrumental in the mobilization of the campus during World War II, when academic routines changed as special training was offered to the armed forces and faculty members focused teaching and research on defense projects. He was a statesman following the war, serving as the cultural affairs liaison for the U.S. Military Government in Germany, helping to resurrect the German educational system, media, and culture.

This work sensitized Wells to the global dimensions of education, and IU became an early leader in international programs. Wells was recognized for his efforts, and in 1970 he was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for promoting international understanding.

In the midst of promoting international understanding, Wells had the opportunity—

and, it seems, he felt the obligation—to promote more egalitarian treatment of American citizens at IU and in Bloomington. A Methodist, Wells firmly believed in the equality of all people and was well aware of the racial barriers facing African American students at the university. Wells took it upon himself to listen to black students' complaints and work with them to come up with a solution. Capshew writes of how Wells integrated the campus swimming pool simply by having a popular black football player—J.C. “Rooster” Coffee—jump in. When no one seemed to notice, the pool was integrated. Other stories of how Wells worked to improve the situation for black students—from integrating restaurants and dormitories to aiding individual students in times of need—abound.

Capshew writes in his biography that Wells' administration was built on the foundation of tolerance for racial and ethnic differences, noting that in May 1938, “he negotiated with Abram L. Sachar, national Hillel director, to establish a chapter of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation on campus. ... At the time, the Bloomington student body was less than 3,000, with about 175 Jewish students, of whom nearly a third came from the New York area. ... Replacing the informal Jewish Students Union, the IU Hillel chapter opened in the fall of 1938, in a house on East Third Street.” When, just a few years later, WWII broke out, the IU Hillel Foundation became among the first to bring refugee students to an American campus.

Summarizing Wells' service to the university, Bloomington, the nation, and the world is daunting. Some gestures were very personal, such as his insistence on hand-signing each diploma—more than 62,000 over his presidency. Others were far-reaching, like his post-war

efforts, including serving as an observer for the Greek elections in 1946 and as a delegate to the United Nations General Assembly in 1957. Still others have had a long-lasting impact on the campus. Under his guidance, the size of the Bloomington campus increased from approximately 130 acres to more than 1,800 acres, and he oversaw the construction of many iconic campus locations, among them Beck Chapel and the Fine Arts Plaza.

Wells stepped down as president in 1962 at the age of 60 but continued serving IU in a post created especially for him by the board of trustees—University Chancellor—until he was 97. The influence of Bryan, who was inaugurated in 1902, and Wells, who remained chancellor until his death in 2000, was very nearly a century long.

Challenging assumptions

It's a fascinating story, and yet for all that these two men did to shape the university, they were, in fact, just two actors among a cast of thousands. Their stories are only two stories—and, for many people,



Sarah Parke Morrison (circa 1869). Morrison was the first woman to attend Indiana University, the first woman to graduate from IU, and the first woman to become a member of its faculty. She came to IU in 1867 and graduated in 1869 with an A.B. degree—the equivalent of a bachelor of arts. From 1873–75, she was an adjunct professor of English literature. Morrison Hall in the Wells Quadrangle is named in her honor. Photo courtesy of IU Archives



The first class of women students at Indiana University, taken in 1868. (front row, l-r) Laura Turner, Jennie Bray, Susannah Hamilton, Sarah Parke Morrison, Elizabeth Harrison, Siena Green, Mel Rogers, and Mattie Moffitt. (back row, l-r) Rachel E. Cox, Clara E. McCord, Helen Alford, Sarah Craig, and Ella Fellows. Photo courtesy of IU Archives

maybe not the most important or even the most interesting ones. A big part of the bicentennial effort has been to collect oral histories from alumni, as well as former faculty and staff—and not just from Bloomington, but from all IU campuses.

“To date, we've logged over 1,200 interviews,” Kish says. “The transcripts will all be available in full audio and in transcribed form through a new system online pioneered by the folks here in the IU Libraries system.”

Including the voices of those from the regional campuses was important to those working on the project. Kish notes that by 1930, there were more students taking IU classes outside of Bloomington than at Bloomington. That's still true today. “People don't take the time to realize that two-thirds of our students aren't in Bloomington,” Kish says.

“That's part of the reason that we're really focusing on the whole IU system of campuses,” Capshew says. “They have their own traditions, their own culture, their own history that needs to be known. IU is not a

hierarchical system; it's one university with several campuses.”

Another aspect of the oral history project is to gather history from multiple perspectives and include voices that haven't been heard before. That has been the thrust of the bicentennial research being conducted as well, much of it by students and volunteers.

“We're trying not to use the top-down histories that we have now that were written from the trustees' minutes and presidential papers,” Capshew says. “We're trying to get people's stories who might have been staff members, or faculty, or alumni, who aren't world famous or whatever, but they had a significant contribution to the university.”

One of 26 bicentennial signature projects, Bridging the Visibility Gap brings into the university history the untold stories of women and underrepresented minorities.

“Think of how many people didn't know about Lin Ostrom until after she won a Nobel Prize,” Kish says. “Our objective now

is going back and finding these unknown or untold stories. Some of them are quite inspirational, and many of them make you take pause and say, ‘How is it that I don't know about this person?’”

Kish says that universities depend heavily on tradition and storytelling to cultivate identity. Who we talk about when we tell those stories is important. “Sort of facetiously, I introduce the [Bridging the Visibility Gap] project by saying if you read any of our current history, you'd be led to believe that only Herman Wells and Alfred Kinsey ever worked here,” Kish says with a smile. “And at the very heart of it, the reason why that resonates and why everybody always laughs, is because there's some truth to that.” She goes on to say, reading traditional histories of IU, it sometimes seems there was ever only one president, one artist, one journalist, one

musician, one sex researcher. All of them men. And, indeed, each of them has been honored quite visibly.

In June, IU President Michael A. McRobbie announced that a statue of Elinor Ostrom would be placed outside Woodburn Hall, where she was a professor in the Department of Political Science. Ostrom was the first woman to receive the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences. Hers will be the first statue of a female professor on the IU campus. *



For more information on the Indiana University bicentennial, including more IU history, signature projects, and events—including the upcoming 200 Festival, to be held September 21 through 29—visit the bicentennial website:

220.iu.edu