



September 30, 2013

### Countdown to Riverside City College's 100th Anniversary

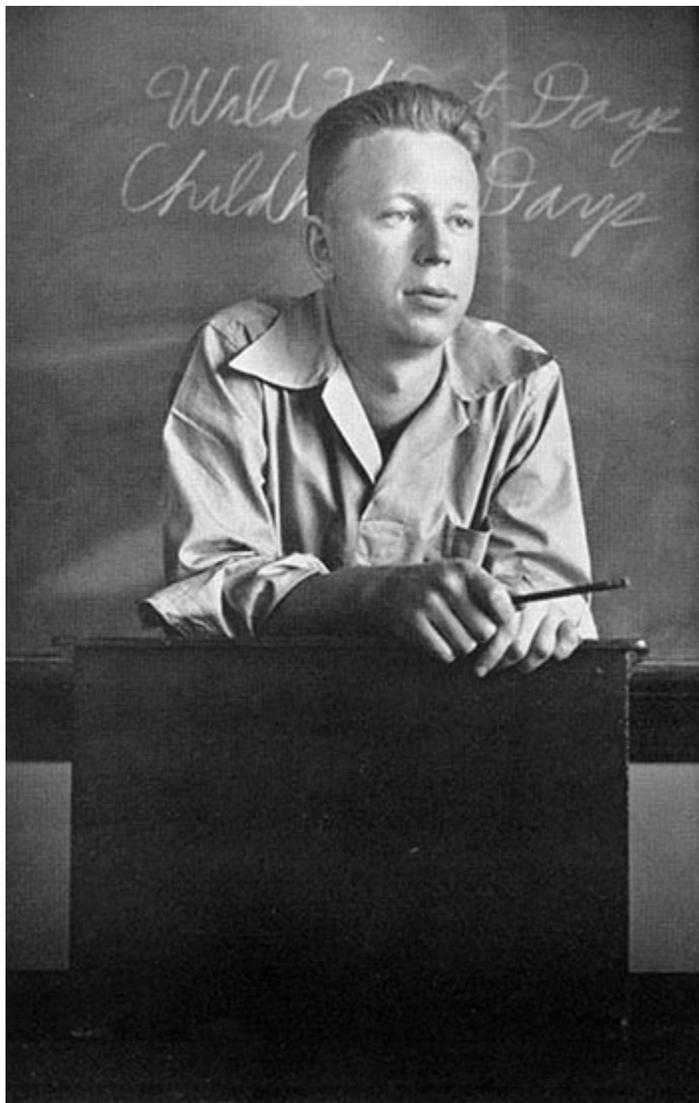
Last week's "Countdown" was on the subject of Riverside Junior College's longest enduring dormitory, Fraser Hall. It was a women's dorm that was in operation from 1933 to 1939. The last dormitory to be opened by RJC was Sheffer Hall which was only in operation for just over a year, from 1938 to 1939. In contrast to Fraser Hall, Sheffer Hall was a cooperative for men, primarily athletes. The house, a large three story structure on the west side of Main Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets in Riverside, was not far from the Mission Inn. It was leased from a Santa Monica firm through the efforts of Clarence Sheffer of the junior college coaching staff. His mother, Mrs. Bessie Sheffer, was a woman with hotel experience and she ran the house. All photos below are from the 1939 "Tequesquite" yearbook.



There were 21 males in the hall, most paying \$22.50 a month, some just \$20 if they took over some of the house duties of washing dishes, cleaning or even painting the house. Since most of the residents were athletes, a "training table" was maintained. That meant that, on the average, the men consumed 300 pounds of meat, 200 pounds of potatoes, 33 gallons of milk, and 21 pounds of butter each week, not to mention bread, fruits and vegetables in like quantities. Below is a photo of the Shaffer Hall residents dining at the "training table".



However financial problems were on the horizon for the cooperative dormitory. A controversy erupted when it was revealed that Associated Student Body funds in the amount of \$600 had been used to get the hall going before it opened on September 12, 1938. ASB President Albert D. Brown Jr. (RCCD Alumni of the Year 1978) pointed out that \$200 was an amount always provided by the ASB treasury to pay the expenses of the football team during the preliminary practice week before the actual opening of the college and that \$400 should be returned to the ASB Treasury. Below is a photograph of Albert D. Brown Jr. ASB President. He was later the Mayor of Riverside (1978-1990).



The financial controversy raged for two months in early 1939 with the Inter-Club Council calling for a complete investigation of the financial condition of Sheffer Hall. It was later revealed that many of the residents were not paying their rent. Operating expenses were estimated at \$360 a month and income was reported at only \$100. Amid the financial troubles arose the deeper problem of "pay for play." The "*Arroyo*" student newspaper wrote, "Dragged prominently into the controversy were alleged promises made to out-of-town athletes by various representatives of the junior college, claimed in one case to include 'room, board and some spending money.'" Basketball Coach Harry Griffin denied "with two exceptions" making any "definite" promises to out-of-town athletes. Student Albert Lewis replied "The student body has no right to pay men to come here to play football than to pay someone for making straight A's." Various money-raising benefits were proposed to help with the heavy expenses of beginning the house and the continuing growing costs. Below is a photo of the resident athletes of the house. Mrs. Shaffer can be seen seated in the center middle row.



Top row—Donald Clogston, Sherman Lahie, Woodrow Ross, William Gerding, Vincent Kane, Maurice Ayala.  
Middle row—Seferino Murrillo, Gerald Wright, Thomas Rush, Mrs. Bessie T. Sheffer, Wilbur Tomer, Allen Romberg, Louis Spelts, David Wheeler.  
Bottom row—Wilborne Harris, Arno Beuche, Jack Wetterhus, Harold Rowe, Albert Rich, Donald Trimble, Harold Herty, Howard Starnes.

Adding to the Hall's difficulties was a fire department injunction that stipulated that three fire escapes would be necessary if the third floor was occupied, plus fire extinguishers, first aid equipment and injury insurance. However the main controversy remained, paying the \$400 debit to the RJC ASB. But by October of 1939, Sheffer Hall was no more. The "Arroyo" made the announcement and additionally reported that the women's dormitory Fraser Hall would be closed as well. The women's dorm had not experienced the controversies and financial difficulties of the men's dorms, but they too seemed to have run their course. Thus, in 1939, Riverside Junior College's experiment with cooperative dormitories came to an end.

It is 2 years and 23 weeks until RCC's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on March 13, 2016.

The Riverside City College Instructional Media Center is bringing you this five year countdown to RCC's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Our intention is to give everyone a weekly glance at the many people and events that have been a part of the college.

Our thanks go to the RCC Digital Library Archives and the District's Office of Strategic Communications and Relations for allowing us to use their photo and newspaper collections. Thanks as well to all of the RCC students and Faculty Advisors that were a part of the yearbook and newspaper staffs. Thanks also to Tom Johnson and Gilbert Jimenez who wrote "the book" about RCC's history. "Riverside City College 1916-1981- A 65 Year History" is available in the RCC Digital Library.

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