

Time capsule will reveal secrets of the past

Contents collected by University founders date back 100 years

By Kirsten Bolin
Of the Emerald

A sealed copper time capsule containing items collected by the University's founders in the 1880s will be opened Saturday at 10 a.m. in Robinson Theatre as part of Villard Hall's centennial birthday celebration.

The time capsule, removed from a building cornerstone last Tuesday, was built into historic Villard Hall during its construction in 1885. Although no one is totally certain of the capsule's contents, a document tentatively listing 82 objects was given to the University Archives at the time of the building's completion.

"People in the auditorium will be the first ones to see the capsule's contents in the light of day for 100 years," says Horace Robinson, co-chair of the Villard Centennial and the person after which Robinson Theatre is named. "Some of the articles will be of interest in themselves, others will be of interest strictly as to why they are in there."

The second building constructed on the University campus, Villard Hall is now a National Historic landmark. It was the original home of many programs, in-

cluding the University library and the music school. Speech, telecommunications, drama, the Robinson Theatre and the KWAX studios currently reside there.

Villard Hall was named for Henry Villard, a wealthy Northern Pacific Railroad man who had earlier saved Deady Hall, the first University building, from bankruptcy.

Originally designed in Second Empire style, the building was allocated \$100,000 by the state in the 1940s to fund a renovation and expansion project. A new floor, wing and stairway were added at this time.

A major fundraising drive is now underway as University and Villard Hall officials try to raise the \$500,000 needed to return the building to its original appearance.

"We need to renovate the outside of Villard Hall to make it historically accurate," says Grant McKernie, head of the speech department.

Interior modifications and assorted new equipment also are badly needed, he says.

"We want to provide an up-to-date



Photo courtesy of University News Bureau

This late 19th century drawing depicts Villard Hall, the second building constructed on campus.

theater education and have up-to-date equipment," he says.

An anonymous \$50,000 donation to the fund was received earlier this week, which McKernie hopes will inspire others to give.

"We're hoping alumni in the Univer-

sity, particularly from these departments, will remember their fond times at the University," he says.

For more information about centennial activities or the fund raiser, contact the University speech department, 686-4171.

Railroad baron first significant donator

Villard saved Deady from financial straits

By Linda Hahn
Of the Emerald

Villard Hall should be named Hilgard Hall, after the real name

of the German immigrant whose \$7,000 donation saved Deady Hall from demise in 1881. Ferdinand Heinrich Gustav

Hilgard came to America from Bavaria at the age of 17 for adventure, fame and fortune. To allude the grasp of disgruntled parents in the old country, Hilgard changed his name to Henry Villard, the name of a school chum.

Journalist, railroad promoter, financier, philanthropist — Villard rose through the ranks to achieve his goal. He rubbed elbows with Horace Greeley, eminent journalist, when Villard covered the Pike's Peak gold rush in 1858.

He came to know the standard bearer of the Republican party in the 1860 presidential elections, Abraham Lincoln, on a first-name basis. He schemed with and outwitted the likes of Jay Gould, eastern financier, over railroad stock options in 1876. He conferred with Thomas Edison, inventor extraordinaire, to found the Edison General Electric Company in 1889.

The man credited with saving the University from financial uncertainty — the man remembered for his generosity, in the States as well as his home country, seems larger than life. But he was all too human, suffering from human ailments, succumbing to human

inclinations.

Villard will always be remembered for his role in the development of Oregon. On his first visit to the region, he was impressed with its possibilities and developed the idea of building a railway empire in the Northwest. However, according to Appleton's Encyclopedia of American Biographies, in the late 1860s when Villard worked as a journalist, he sent statistics to the New York Herald that were intended to influence the location of a Pacific railroad route.

During the years of 1879 to 1883, Villard was considered to be one of the most important railroad promoters in the United States. As president of the Northern Pacific Railroad, he fostered construction of the first transcontinental railroad to Oregon, increasing the settlement of the state. However, upon completion of the line in 1883, Villard was confronted with huge deficits and was forced to resign the presidency in early 1884. From 1884 to 1886 he was in Germany, recovering from a nervous breakdown.

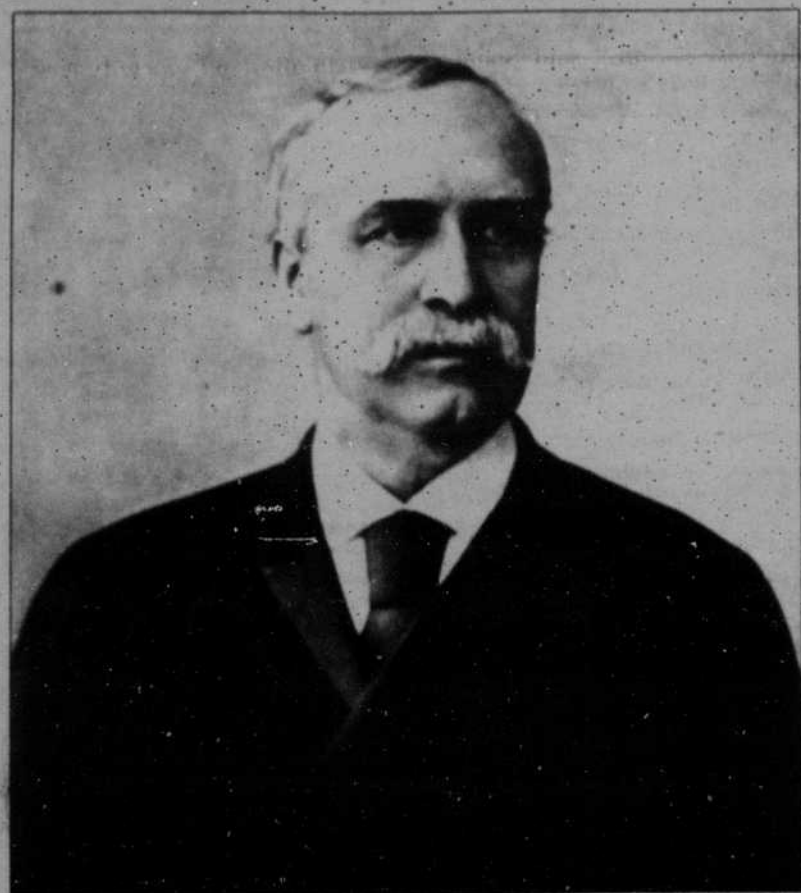
With the aid of German capital, Villard made a magnificent comeback in 1887, by saving the Oregon and Transcon-

tinental, a holding company of railway properties. He re-entered the board of the Northern Pacific in 1888, but was unable to reconcile conflicting interests within the company. In 1893, his railway career came to an end.

Villard was also an author of note, writing from his experiences as a journalist. He wrote a book on Pike's Peak and one on his conversations with Lincoln.

Villard's attention was drawn to Oregon again in 1881 when the news of the impending sale of the University's only building, Deady Hall, appeared in Portland newspapers. He wanted to develop the educational as well as the economic resources of the Northwest. Consequently, he assumed a \$7,000 debt and also presented the University with \$50,000 in Northern Pacific bonds from which \$3,000 annual income was derived. With this endowment, the University's days of financial insecurity were ended.

Villard's generosity attracted wide attention since his donations were the first of any importance to higher education in Oregon. Villard Hall stands as a testament to his achievements.



Henry Villard

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