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A historical look
at A.W. Patterson House
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'Animal House' leveled to make way for clinic

By Julie Freeman
Of the Emerald

A pile of splintered wood is all that remained Sunday of the aged, two-story structure known nationwide as "Animal House."

Crushed beer cups and a sign advertising a \$1 sale of bricks from the house litter the front yard, where students and other onlookers gathered Thursday to watch bulldozers destroy the turn-of-the-century building, featured in National Lampoon's 1977 movie about fraternity life.

"For the house's sake, it was sad to see it go because that's what most of America saw as the image of a fraternity," said Ted Smith, president of the Sigma Nu fraternity, located next door to the famed structure.

News of the planned destruction became widely known in October when Ron Braatz, a local developer, announced plans to build a new medical clinic on the site.

Petitions and requests for historical status failed to save the unofficial University landmark, located at 751 E. 11th Ave.

A boarding house for the last several years, the building was once the home of A.W. Patterson, one of Eugene's most prominent pioneers. Patterson plotted and surveyed the town in the mid-1800s

with Eugene Skinner. But to most, the house probably will be remembered best on film, said University Archivist Keith Richard.

"Since (the house) was located off-campus, there will not be much of a historical record kept in the University archives," he said.

Any memorabilia will be housed in the Lane County historical museum, he added.

"I think that the memory of the house will probably fade now that it's gone," said Smith. "All we're going to be able to say now is that the house used to be there."

On-site construction of the new medical clinic should begin by the middle of February, Braatz said.

The building will provide space for the Women's and Children's clinic, which will soon lose the lease on its current building, located across the street from where the house stood.

Braatz and his partner Harry Rubenstein, a local businessman, received city approval for their development plan in early September.

Initially, Braatz said he was interested in preserving the building and adapting it for the clinic.

But the poor structural condition of the house made this economically unfeasible, he said.



Photo by Karen Stallwood

The last recognizable piece of the A.W. Patterson house was reduced to splinters by Sunday morning.

However, plans to save one of the two lesser-known buildings, which were behind the main house, are still underway.

Used as duplexes in recent years, the two buildings are believed to have been built in 1924. Noel Osheroff, the owner

of one building, said she has been told the one-room duplexes were built for graduate students by the Patterson family.

Osheroff is planning to have her home moved to a section of land east of the Hendricks Hill area sometime this week.

King's contributions praised at celebration

By Kirsten Bolin
Of the Emerald

Americans can either celebrate the life of former civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. passively, by simply remembering his triumphs as a positive part of history. Or they can celebrate it actively, by utilizing his ideals today and expanding upon them in order to overcome current moral problems, said Vincent Harding, former director of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Center.

Harding spoke to more than 150 people Sunday evening at the Martin Luther King Jr. birthday celebration held in Gerlinger Lounge.

The speech, sponsored by the Black Student Union, was titled "Still Striving to Keep the Dream Alive." It marked the first national holiday of King's birthday. The official government holiday is January 20.

"King opened up to all of us the possibility that we would stop being schizophrenic and hypocritical about racism in America," Harding said. "He made it so parents no longer have to explain to their children why they can't get a sandwich where everyone else does."

Harding, a history professor at Swarthmore in Pennsylvania, worked full-time in the Southern-based black freedom movement in the early 1960s and was coordinator of the nationally televised CBS "Black Heritage" series.

Despite a strong place in

history 18 years after his death, many Americans only know or remember King for his early and less-controversial civil rights activities, Harding said.

Events such as the King-led March on Washington in 1963 were accepted more generally by Americans than many of his later actions, he said. Because of his open opposition to the Vietnam War, King was considered America's "most dangerous negro" by the FBI in the late 1960s. King was

assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee in 1968.

King's contributions to American society transcended divisions of race and the work he accomplished made him perhaps the most influential individual in this country's history, Harding said.

"King tried to break through from within the black community to others in America," he said. "He opened up a way for us to decide if we're going to go on."

Harding emphasized the relative youth of the civil rights movement and singled out hiring practices at American educational institutions as an

example of progress made since activities began in the late 1950s.

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Photo by Derryl Hewitt

Vincent Harding spoke in remembrance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday Sunday night. The birthday celebration was sponsored by the Black Student Union.

fessors at America's great Universities in the North," he said. "King and his movement opened up a space."

Harding later opened the floor to questions and gave people his opinion about how King would respond to a variety of current problems, including the issue of apartheid in South Africa.

"He would be very, very humble, very slow to speak and absolutely unable to pass judgment on the oppressed," Harding said. "He would try to engage in a profound dialogue."

This year's Martin Luther King Jr. birthday commemoration is the sixth such event sponsored at the University by the BSU, said co-director Melissa Dahl. But this year is special because of the national recognition the holiday will receive, Dahl said.

"This year is special because it is the first day there has been a national holiday to honor him," she said.