

A BRIEF HISTORY OF  
THE WISCONSIN BUSINESS UNIVERSITY, LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN

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by  
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I recommend acceptance of this seminar paper to the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of this candidate's requirements for the degree Master of Science. The candidate has completed his oral seminar report.

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## ABSTRACT

A Brief History of the Wisconsin Business University La Crosse, Wisconsin, is a seminar paper written as partial fulfillment of requirements for a masters degree at Wisconsin State University of La Crosse between the fall semester of 1966 and the summer session of 1967.

The Wisconsin Business University, founded in 1892 by Frank J. Toland, grew with the city and prospered with it, drawing thousands of students from the tri-state area. Throughout the 48 years of existence under the Toland family the Wisconsin Business University graduated over 10,000 students. However, enrollments began to decline in the late 1930's, and the school was forced to close in September of 1941.

The school was operated on the second and third floors of the building at the northeast corner of Third and Main Streets, and at times utilized the old Keefe and Cone Business School quarters on the second floor of the building located on Fourth and Pearl when enrollments could not be accommodated at the Main Street facilities.

During its existence six members of the Toland family played a major role in the history of the school. The founder's three sons, Leigh, Ralph, and Hewitt, his granddaughter Patricia, and his brother Bernard Toland were full

or part-time instructors or administrative personnel.

## PREFACE

To the best of the writer's knowledge, this is the only historical account of the Wisconsin Business University of La Crosse, Wisconsin. In some respects, the absence of a history was the motivational force which stimulated the investigation that ultimately resulted in the following accounts and descriptions of the school. It is hoped that through this account, the reader will share with the author a greater appreciation of this La Crosse educational institution and the influence it had on the community and the individuals who made up the student body.

No official records of the school exist; therefore, research has depended on local newspaper articles, official W.B.U. publications, personal interviews, and a questionnaire sent to one hundred graduates. Gratitude is due to those who took time from their daily schedules to help provide information. Particular appreciation is expressed to Mrs. Patricia McEldowney, granddaughter of the founder and daughter of Leigh Toland, William Ledegar, the oldest surviving alumnus of the school, and Mr. Walter Hampe, a teacher at the institution from 1924 to 1934. Although many helped, these three gave considerably of their time and efforts.

Because of the lack of year by year information and

because the history of the Wisconsin Business University encompasses only forty-eight years, a topical approach was used.

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## CHAPTER I

### BUSINESS EDUCATION AND THE TOLAND NAME

The name Toland was associated with business education in many areas of the Midwest for over fifty years, a period from the late 1880's to the early 1940's. Frank J. Toland founded business universities in twelve midwestern communities, representing five midwestern states: Ottawa, Nebraska City, Sioux Falls, Celwein, Mason City, Mankato, Fairmont, Winona, Wausau, Eau Claire, Monroe, and La Crosse.<sup>1</sup>

In the La Crosse area six members of the Toland family influenced the development of the Wisconsin Business University<sup>2</sup> which Frank Toland founded in 1892. During the existence of this school the founder's brother, Bernard J. Toland, his three sons, Leigh, Ralph, and Hewitt, and his granddaughter Patricia were full or part-time instructors or served in administrative capacities from time to time.<sup>3</sup>

The name Toland was originally Fitch. Frank Toland's parents were Dr. and Mrs. Cyrus Fitch; however, Frank did

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<sup>1</sup>La Crosse Tribune, March 11, 1956.

<sup>2</sup>The term, University, will be used in this paper for further references to the Wisconsin Business University.

<sup>3</sup>La Crosse Tribune, April 1, 1950.



not like the name Fitch, so he took his mother's maiden name, Toland, as his family name. He was educated in the public schools of Canton, Illinois, the family home. Upon his graduation from high school in 1869 he entered a business university in Chicago. After completion of this phase of his education Frank Toland taught writing in public schools, normal colleges, and business universities for a period of about twenty years.<sup>4</sup>

It was during this time that Professor Toland wrote The Handwriting Teacher, a book designed to help teachers establish a program for the teaching of handwriting and which also contained helpful information concerning the establishment of business schools. In the text are numerous examples of Frank Toland's educational philosophy, some of which are illustrated below:<sup>5</sup>

There can be no good business writing without a free, rapid movement, and having placed the muscles under control of the mind, the average pupil has sufficient knowledge of form to execute business writing without copies, drafting tools, a knowledge of higher mathematics, or the supernatural gift of being born a natural writer.

...as to teachers who cannot teach, I must admit that there are some in nearly every school, but they are a disgrace to the profession that employs them.

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<sup>4</sup> Frank J. Toland, The Handwriting Teacher (Canton, Illinois: Registered Printing, Inc., 1887), preface.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pp. 3, 6, 49. The use of the title, Professor, was common in the sources consulted for this paper although the persons bearing it were not associated with colleges or universities of the traditional sorts.

Never attempt to organize a school in a town where the majority of citizens are Swedes, Norwegians, Bohemians, or Hollanders. They are difficult to interest, hard to please, narrow in their views, clannish, poor pay, and never willing to pay a fair tuition fee.

The first of the several business colleges founded in the Midwest by Frank Toland opened in Ottawa, Illinois, in 1889. Within three years this school grew and became the second largest business university in Illinois outside of Chicago. By 1892 the Ottawa Business University had outgrown its facilities. When Ottawa refused to build a suitable building for the accommodation of his business college for what he considered a reasonable rental, Frank Toland decided to relocate. Professor Toland stated that he had selected La Crosse, Wisconsin, as the community for the location of his new school because of its reputation as a growing business center.<sup>6</sup>

An Ottawa newspaper commenting on Frank Toland's departure stated:

'Professor Toland is an accomplished gentleman, thorough going, and progressive; a man who impresses one with superior ability in his profession and who is a leader in the field which he has chosen. He is a gentleman and a scholar and a man whose word is as good as gold; also the hardest, most energetic and successful hustler that Ottawa has known for many years.'<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>The La Crosse Daily Press, August 3, 1892.

<sup>7</sup>Ottawa Daily Free Trader, April 29, 1892, quoted in The La Crosse Daily Press, August 3, 1892.

To help in the establishment, organization, and advertisement of the new school Professor Toland took his brother, Bernard, with him to La Crosse. Bernard J. Toland served as business manager of the school until 1905 when he moved to Mason City, Iowa, to direct the program of the Toland Business College founded in that city.<sup>8</sup>

Frank Toland was president of the La Crosse Business school until 1907. In April of that year he announced the passage of active management of the University into the hands of his son, Leigh. Leigh Toland acquired a general school education embellished with an academic course from Carleton College. He supplemented this with work, under the tutelage of his father, as a pupil and later an instructor at the University. His first managerial position in a school founded by his father was at the Eau Claire Business College. From there he moved on to the management of the Mason City, Mankato, and Winona universities, all schools established by Frank Toland.<sup>9</sup>

Upon Leigh Toland's departure from Winona a local newspaper told its readers:

'Leigh Toland's revision of the Eclectic System of shorthand has created a furor in the shorthand world. Experts declare it the greatest ever presented to English speaking people. Mr. Toland has prepared more young men and women for business

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., and La Crosse Tribune, March 11, 1956.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., April 22, 1907.

life than any man his age in the country,<sup>10</sup>

Frank J. Toland made this statement concerning the managerial capabilities of his son:

I am satisfied that with his successful experiences Leigh Toland has won his spurs as a most competent commercial school manager. He knows every department of the business. I shall not hesitate to put him in charge of the most important schools. I know none that equal him in executive ability and mastery of detail.<sup>11</sup>

Leigh Toland continued in the position as president of the University until its closing in 1941, except for a period between 1927 and 1932 when the ownership changed. Throughout the years of his management the university flourished because of innovations and modernizations under his direction and guidance.<sup>12</sup>

Ralph and Hewitt Toland, the latter the youngest of the founder's three sons, also worked at the University. Both were graduates of the school and both served in instructional and administrative capacities. Ralph, however, had the least amount of influence on the school and after a brief association left for New York City to pursue a career in the entertainment field. Hewitt went with his brother to New York and studied advertising and promotional

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1936-1937,  
p. 11.

work. During this time he worked as sales agent for several nationally known concerns and gained valuable experience that aided in his work as manager of the University from 1933 to 1940. The school administration attributed much of its success during this period to Hewitt Toland's abilities in advertisement and promotion. He also taught courses in salesmanship and advertising which were recognized by school personnel as valuable additions to the curriculum.<sup>13</sup>

The youngest member of the Toland family to work at the school was Patricia Toland (presently Mrs. Winton McEldowney of La Crosse, Wisconsin), the granddaughter of the founder and the daughter of Leigh Toland. Her association was from 1937 to 1941, one year as a student and graduate and three years as an office manager and instructor. Miss Toland taught office practice, typing, and business English until the final dissolution of the University in September of 1941.<sup>14</sup>

The closing of the Wisconsin Business University marked the end of the influence of the Toland family on business education in the La Crosse area. However, their fifty year association in this area of education characterized the correlation made in a local newspaper article dealing with the University's early development:

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<sup>13</sup>La Crosse Tribune, April 1, 1950, and Ibid., March 11, 1956, and Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1936-1937, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup>La Crosse Tribune, April 1, 1950.

A business college graduate that bears the Toland label has more than adequate credentials. The Tolands know their business and have the confidence of big employers of office assistants.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., April 15, 1907.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT

FRANK J. TOLAND PRESIDENT 1892-1907

The Wisconsin Business University, La Crosse, Wisconsin, represented the second of twelve such schools established in five states of the midwest by Frank J. Toland. There were three primary reasons for the selection of La Crosse as the location for the business university: 1) The first business school started by Toland in Ottawa, Illinois, outgrew its facilities and the community; 2) La Crosse, at that time, was a centrally located area and a growing business center; and 3) The new school could start immediately due to the availability of facilities of the Wallace Business School founded in La Crosse in 1866 and sold to Frank Toland in 1891. This location,<sup>1</sup> the second and third stories of the building at the northeast corner of Third and Main Streets, remained the center of the school until its closing in 1941.<sup>2</sup>

One of the community's daily newspapers greeted the new institution with this laudation:

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<sup>1</sup>The legal description of the property according to the La Crosse County Tax Records, Volume 4, 1890-1900 is McMillan, Bliss, and Sill subdivision, 334-2, lots 6 and 7.

<sup>2</sup>The La Crosse Daily Press, August 31, 1892.

The Wisconsin Business University offers advantages equal to any in the land, and La Crosse has been highly favored in being chosen as the seat of such a reputable school.

The Wisconsin Business University occupies spacious quarters in the central part of the city, on Third and Main Streets. It is equipped with elegant furniture adapted to its need. Each department is in a separate room fitted especially with regard to the work required. First class and modern perhaps describes it throughout as well as to mention details. In fact, no expense or pains have been spared here.<sup>3</sup>

The University incorporated and the first classes met on September 24, 1892. The Corporation sought to conduct and maintain a collection of educational departments under one head. Capital stock of the company was originally nine-thousand dollars, one hundred and eighty shares each having a face value of fifty dollars. The four stockholders of the corporation, who also made up the Board of Directors, were Frank J. Toland, Bernard J. Toland, Margaret Leigh Toland, wife of Frank, and William G. Lowe, a teacher at the school.<sup>4</sup>

The basic goals, objectives, and philosophy of the school did not change from its inception to its closing. It came into existence to prepare young men and women for clerical positions by giving practical instruction in commercial

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<sup>3</sup>The La Crosse Daily Press, August 31, 1892.

<sup>4</sup>La Crosse County Corporation Records, Volume 3, pp. 190-192.



branches and the requirements of business. Also, one of the original objectives dealt with the preparation of teachers by giving instruction in all the branches required to secure teachers' certificates. The philosophy of the school remained essentialist in nature in that it stressed fast training, hard work, and intensive study to obtain a high degree of education and skill, the prerequisites for job placement.<sup>5</sup>

Besides Professor Toland and his brother, Bernard J. Toland, two other experienced instructors made up the initial faculty of the business university. Professor McCormack was principal of the bookkeeping department, and William G. Lowe taught secretarial courses. Mr. Lowe left the school in 1911 and opened a business school known as the La Crosse Business University located at Fifth and Main Streets. He later taught commercial subjects at the La Crosse Vocational School.<sup>6</sup>

The original courses of the school incorporated business training along the lines of two major departmental divisions, secretarial and bookkeeping. The secretarial course included penmanship, business English (spelling),

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., and General Reference, information obtained from various personal interviews, and questionnaires sent to graduates of the school.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., and La Crosse Daily Press, August 31, 1892.

typing, shorthand, and filing. Bookkeeping concerned courses related to accountant work and banking.<sup>7</sup>

The structuring of course design and instruction to fit the abilities and training of the individual students helped to alleviate difficulties caused by a wide variation of educational backgrounds. Two plans, named regular and advanced characterized the approach used in this method. Each arrangement was complete in itself and entitled the student to a diploma for the courses. Students selected their course of training, in regard to these two divisions, according to their general education, eighth grade or below or one year of high school and above. However, selection could be based on intelligence, business experience, age, and responsibility. Although the school abandoned this practice as public educational demands at the high school level increased, a policy of allowing students to advance according to individual ability and desire remained a practice of the institution.<sup>8</sup>

Three students of the school, William Ledegar (1904-1905), Joseph Calloway (1905-1906), and Harry W. Tietz (1907-1908) estimated early tuition costs at between

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1922-1923, pp. 18-19, and General Reference, information obtained from various personal interviews, and questionnaires sent to graduates of the school.

forty and sixty dollars. This cost represented the expenses for a complete course, generally one school year, September to June, in either secretarial training or bookkeeping. From this minimum, tuition costs increased and in 1937 a one-year combined business and secretarial course (see Appendix A) cost two hundred and fifty dollars. Although the University never granted scholarships, some students worked for their tuition by helping in the business office, doing custom office work for businesses in La Crosse, or performing general janitorial duties.<sup>9</sup>

The area of influence of the University remained relatively stable throughout its history. Students came from a radius of about one hundred miles of La Crosse and primarily from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Frank Toland recognized that the young people who were not able to finance a college education or lacked educational qualifications to enter college were in need of a system by which they could obtain training that would give them a chance to increase their ability to earn a better living.<sup>10</sup>

In 1892, the first year of operation, the school had sixty-four students. A year later enrollment increased to ninety-seven. From these small beginnings the University

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., and Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1933-1934, p. 41.

<sup>10</sup>La Crosse Tribune, July 28, 1911.

grew to an enrollment of three-hundred pupils by 1907. Because of this increased demand the facilities of the institution expanded. The University added an annex by leasing the facilities of the Keefe and Cone School of Stenography. The Keefe and Cone School, founded in 1890, maintained a program of business education until 1907 on the second and third floors of the building located at the southwest corner of Fourth and Pearl Streets.<sup>11</sup>

According to a local newspaper there were two primary reasons for the successful growth of the school during this period: First, the percentage of business failures among its graduates, according to school records and reports from business served, was less than that of any similar institution in the midwest. This report maintained that the majority of graduates from the University stood high in the business and social world of the communities to which they belonged; and second, extensive advertisement attracted students from the surrounding area. Professor Toland had ads in about one hundred papers in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Also, through concentrated soliciting, administrative personnel sold courses directly to parents of prospective students.<sup>12</sup>

It was the success of the University that led to the change of administrative leadership of the school. The

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

success brought increasing confidence to Frank Toland and gave impetus to his plans for a syndicate of business universities in various parts of the country. Having been given the opportunity to open new schools in Nebraska City, Nebraska, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota, by such inducements of businessmen there as buildings, scholarship guarantees, and general support, Frank Toland wanted to devote more time to the administration of his progressive plans. He gave up the La Crosse school and in 1907 announced the passage of active management into the hands of his eldest son, Leigh. Because of Leigh Toland's experience in teaching and administration at other schools founded by his father the change was viewed by those associated with the school as no detriment to its operation. Frank Toland also announced that he would continue to make La Crosse his headquarters.<sup>13</sup>

Upon receiving the appointment to head the operations of the La Crosse school Leigh Toland summarized his views on the position of business education:

It will not be long before it will be generally realized all over the country that the college education for the man who is required to earn his own living will retire before the advance of the business and agricultural schools. The coming of this period can be seen by the great strides which the agricultural and business courses have taken in the last few years in the state and private universities. To my mind a man is not a

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<sup>13</sup>La Crosse Tribune, April 22, 1907.

real man until he is able to support himself, to purchase with his own labor the food and clothing which he requires. And the best time for a man to get the necessary training to enable him to do this is not after he has wasted four of the best years of his life,<sup>14</sup> but when he is still young and capable of learning.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE ADMINISTRATION OF LEIGH TOLAND

1907-1940

Leigh Toland illustrated his ability to follow in his father's footsteps by enlarging the school until it became one of the leading business schools in the Northwest. Enrollments at the school continued to increase and by 1911 had grown to four hundred and twenty-five students. This figure represents the maximum number of students who attended the University during any one school year.<sup>1</sup>

Continued success in placing its graduates generated the dynamic growth of the school; in all, the facilities of the school located more than ten thousand students in positions of good standing in the business world. According to the administration this success related to the school's policy of using only the most practical and up-to-date methods and office appliances in every branch taught, and the maintenance of a student-teacher ratio that allowed semi-individual instruction. Both Frank and Leigh Toland believed that the success of an institution of this nature depended largely upon the faculty as well as upon the management.

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<sup>1</sup>La Crosse Tribune, July 20, 1910. (Enrollment figures for various years of operation appear in Appendix C.)

Therefore, the Tolands always tried to employ the best teachers in their respective lines. Graduates of the University who had achieved impressive records made up the majority of the faculty members. Leigh Toland, commenting on the growth of the school, stated, "I am here and I intend to stay here in this business for a good long time. If I want to keep up the high record of my school, I must build gradually with a firm foundation."<sup>2</sup>

One of the first changes instituted by Leigh Toland was an improvement in the typewriting department by an expenditure of five thousand dollars for new machines. A complete line of modern Underwoods replaced the entire stock of Remington models formerly used at the school. At the time, 1911, this was said to be among the largest amounts ever spent by a business college for equipment for any department.<sup>3</sup>

The charter of the school underwent numerous revisions under Leigh Toland's early direction. In 1916 he increased the capital stock of the corporation to thirty thousand dollars, consisting of three hundred shares each having a

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., and La Crosse Tribune, July 28, 1911. (This represents a quote made for an article dealing with the history of the University.)

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



face value of one hundred dollars. The Board of Directors at the time of this revision consisted of Leigh Toland, Ralph Toland, and D. F. Powell, a faculty member at the University. A year later, 1917, Toland again revised the charter and dissolved the corporation and all one hundred and eighty shares of outstanding stock. The same year the corporation reorganized without capital stock. The corporation limited membership to "any reputable individual interested in the development and education of and the giving of instruction to young men and women to prepare them for business positions."<sup>4</sup>

Leigh Toland also modified course offerings of the school and in 1922 presented for the first time at the University the combined commercial course which correlated training in stenography and bookkeeping. The combined course was structured in such a way that it did not require twice the work or twice the cost. Advertisements concerning the new program described the work and study in the two departments as being co-ordinated so that students did not have to finish the work of one department entirely before taking up the work of the other. The major objective of this change was the training of a student who would be capable of handling both the work of a stenographer and a bookkeeper

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<sup>4</sup>La Crosse County Corporation Records, Volume 5, April 18, 1916, pp. 548-549, and Ibid., Volume 6, April 24, 1917, p. 57, and Ibid., Volume 7, May 3, 1917, p. 59.

and be able to fill positions in offices where work was not sufficient to require the services of two specially trained individuals. This became, by far, the most popular course at the University and was selected by about seventy-five per cent of students.<sup>5</sup>

Another innovation instituted at the school in 1921 and designed to increase the scope and influence of the school was course offerings by correspondence. The correspondence courses were exactly the same as the work in the resident courses; benefits and tuition costs were also the same. Students could begin their studies by correspondence and then enter school at any time without extra charge. In selling this type of course to the students the University maintained that it was one of the few in the United States that offered both correspondence and residence courses and guaranteed its correspondence courses by permitting the students to attend school at any time.<sup>6</sup>

A major administrative change came in 1927 when Leigh Toland sold the school to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Parrott. Both of the Parrotts had taught at the University since 1924; Charles Parrott taught bookkeeping, and Edith Parrott

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p. 8. <sup>5</sup>Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1922-23,

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

worked in the secretarial department. Leigh Toland gave two major reasons for the sale of the school. First, he wanted more time to devote to his major hobby, writing. One of his major publications of this period, which has been placed in the archives of the Chicago Historical Society, is entitled "This Old House" and describes his early boyhood in Canton, Illinois. Secondly, he and his brother Hewitt wanted to investigate the possibilities of founding other such business universities in major cities of the Midwest.<sup>7</sup>

Charles Parrott appointed James R. Kerr, another member of the University faculty, as president, and he himself assumed the management of the school for the fall term in September, 1927. However, because of poor management and financial difficulties, Toland regained control of the University in 1932. At this time the Parrotts and Kerr left the school. Leigh Toland reinstated himself as president, and Hewitt Toland took over the acting management.<sup>8</sup>

After regaining control of the school Leigh Toland revised the corporation charter. The purpose of the school

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<sup>7</sup>La Crosse Tribune, June 14, 1927, and La Crosse Tribune, March 11, 1956.

<sup>8</sup>Personal interviews with Mr. Walter Hampe, instructor at the University from 1924 to 1934, and Miss Mary Murphy, private secretary for Leigh Toland 1932 to 1938. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Parrott presently live in Tomah, Wisconsin, but were unwilling to cooperate in giving any details about the school during their period as owners and managers.

changed to better suit contemporary definitions of this type of school. One example being that the University no longer offered training which could secure teachers' certificates in the area of business education. The basic purpose now dealt with conducting and operating a school for instruction in all commercial and business subjects. The Board of Directors made up of Leigh Toland, Hewitt Toland, Charles J. Johnson, and Walter Hampe, the latter two both members of the University faculty, established a capital stock of five thousand dollars, consisting of five hundred shares each having the face value of ten dollars.<sup>9</sup>

Advertising done by the school illustrated the major objectives of the new administration. The policies initiated by the Tolands upon regaining control sought to revitalize the University to make it more suitable to up-to-date educational demands. Leigh and Hewitt Toland started with a concentrated effort of advertisement and solicitation. Ads appeared in newspapers throughout the area, prospective high school students received circulars describing the school, and University personnel visited high schools and described advantages of their institution's program. Revamped programs and courses at the school put stress on a broader business training base in the shortest amount of time.

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<sup>9</sup>La Crosse County Corporation Records, Volume 7, September 4, 1932, p. 47.

For example, course titles included: "High-speed Secretarial Course," "High-speed Accounting Course," and the "Combined Business and Secretarial Course" (with studies related to stenography, accounting, and civil service.) The administration used student incentives to stimulate growth of the school. Contests held for the purpose of enrolling new students for the coming year included dividing students into teams and awarding prizes on the basis of the greatest number of new students recruited. Also, beginning in 1934, the University granted scholarship awards to the three graduating students who most fittingly portrayed a University student at his best. Finally, school personnel formulated an extra-curricular program designed to make the social aspects of the institution a definite attractive quality and create a more collegiate atmosphere. In the period from 1932 to 1939 such extra-curricular activities included a school newspaper, The Leaguer, a school yearbook, The Big Leaguer, a student council, a drama club, a glee club, and a national business sorority and fraternity, the Alpha Iota National Commercial Sorority, and the Phi Theta Pi national fraternity.<sup>10</sup>

Although these new programs served their basic

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<sup>10</sup>Interview with Mrs. Patricia (Toland) McEldowney, and Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1933-1934, p. 24, and Ibid., p. 35, and Ibid., p. 6.

purpose in stimulating a revival of the school, pressures of modern educational trends were too great and no amount of initiative and change could keep it alive.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>General Reference, information obtained from various personal interviews, and questionnaires sent to graduates of the school.

## CHAPTER IV

### CLOSING OF THE SCHOOL

With continued declines in enrollments and increased financial difficulties, Leigh Toland announced the closing of the University on September 8, 1941. He had, before this time, in an appearance before the Vocational School Board on December 4, 1940, stated that in order to maintain the program and facilities of his school an enrollment of one hundred and fifty students was necessary. He further pointed out that during the last three years of operation the University had failed to meet this enrollment minimum.<sup>1</sup>

The financial burden of trying to continue a program under such decline in student enrollment had put the school in debt to publishers, office supply firms, advertising agencies, and the teaching personnel of the school. Toland received constant pressure from various business firms for payment of bills, and the members of the faculty threatened a lawsuit if they did not receive the money due them. Toward the end of the 1940-41 term the administration would ask the teachers how much they could get along on for the next week and paid according. Upon the threat of

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<sup>1</sup>La Crosse Tribune, December 4, 1940. (See reference in Appendix C.)

court action, Leigh Toland drew the remainder of school funds from the bank to settle with faculty members. After the closing of the school many firms took equipment in partial payment of debts still owed.<sup>2</sup>

In interviews, former students and faculty members of the University gave many reasons for the gradual decline of influence and success of the business institution. The increase of commercial courses in high school curricula, the growing influence of the La Crosse State Teachers' College (now known as Wisconsin State University, La Crosse) in attracting young men and women into four-year study programs, less availability of positions in business offices for men, and poor management of financial aspects of the University were factors which led to the discontinuation of the training program offered by the school. However, the majority of those interviewed felt that the competition offered by the La Crosse Vocational School, in providing relatively the same education almost free of charge, was the major factor in the demise of the Toland-managed business university.

The La Crosse Vocational School opened in 1912. Originally, the purpose of the school pertained to providing vocational training in the crafts and trades for high school

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<sup>2</sup>Interview with Mrs. Patricia (Toland) McEldowney.



dropouts in the immediate La Crosse area. As the school continued to grow the curriculum expanded and in the early 1930's commercial courses in typing and shorthand started in part-time evening classes. In 1937 enrollments had doubled in a six-year period, and business education on a full-time basis became part of the courses of study at the vocational school. A complete business-training course, including typing, shorthand, office machines, and book-keeping, gave students the opportunity to use modern machines and offered training at a cost with which no privately run institution of the same nature could compete. John Coleman, director of the La Crosse Vocational School from 1916 to 1963 and for whom the school is now named, stated that the handwriting was on the wall in regard to the closing of business institutions such as the Wisconsin Business University and only the continued reluctance of Leigh Toland to face this fact caused the school to close with such financial deficits.<sup>3</sup>

The reluctance to accept the inevitable and the perserverance of Leigh Toland in maintaining the institution founded by his father is illustrated in his charges against John B. Coleman and the staff of the Vocational School

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<sup>3</sup>La Crosse Tribune Supplement, "Coleman Technical Institute," August 28, 1966, and Lorraine Niedfeldt, A History of the La Crosse Vocational and Adult Schools, Vocational School Press, La Crosse, 1963.

at a meeting of the Board of Vocational Education. At this meeting Toland presented his grievances and complaints concerning unethical practices of the Vocational School. He began his presentation by reading a letter from an official of the Wisconsin Business Schools' Association which commended his stand against the state and branded the vocational schools as greedy and covetous. The basic contention of Leigh Toland's attack was that state money financed the education of people with money, and asked for protection of the rights of the private school. He brought out that the Wisconsin Business University had a total enrollment of eighty-seven students; the Vocational School had two-hundred and forty-two in its commercial course.<sup>4</sup>

The complaints registered by Leigh Toland were centered around four major requests made to the Board of Vocational Education. First he asked for a repudiation of alleged attacks and campaign of competition, slander, threats, lies, and mistatements directed against the University intended to destroy its reputation and make it impossible for the school to continue to operate. Toland declared that he had found evidences of propaganda against his school in high schools visited throughout the area. Second, he wanted the College of Commerce at the Vocational School to cease accepting non-resident students. Toland maintained

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<sup>4</sup>La Crosse Tribune, December 4, 1940.

that the Vocational School had accepted students who originally had come to La Crosse to enroll at the University, and by doing so had taken people from territories outside of their original authorization. Third, Toland asked in his presentation that the Vocational School, with regard to business education, return to its original purpose, its most practical and most needed service, the night school, or part-time courses for workers. Finally, Leigh Toland requested that the Vocational Board co-operate in a friendly and helpful spirit with the Wisconsin State Association of Commercial Schools to secure legislation that would protect the private business schools.<sup>5</sup>

In conclusion Toland stated:

We are assured on every side that there is a place for the private commercial school. The proof of this is our present enrollment of nearly one-hundred students several of whom prefer to attend the W.B.U. and pay tuition rather than attend the Vocational School without charge. The vocational system and Mr. Coleman in particular, have challenged our right to business life. On behalf of my students, my associates, and myself, I accept this challenge.<sup>6</sup>

However nobly accepted, the challenge was not met.

The University did not open its doors for the fall term of 1941. Leigh Toland stated in the dissolution of the charter that after considering the statements of officers and

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., and La Crosse Tribune, September 13, 1940.

<sup>6</sup>La Crosse Tribune, December 4, 1940.

stockholders, it appeared to be for the best interest of the corporation that its business be terminated, the corporation dissolved, and the assets distributed according to law. The president claimed that all holders of the five-hundred shares of the capital stock of the company voted on the proposition of discontinuation of the educational program offered by the school.<sup>7</sup>

The news of the school's closing did not come as a surprise to citizens of La Crosse who knew the situation in which the school found itself. However, some viewed its dissolution as a detriment to the community, and many graduates responded with feelings of concern. In an article published in the community's daily newspaper, concerning the termination of the University, it was stated:

There is no question but that the school has been a force for good in La Crosse and the surrounding area since it was established. Thousands of young men and women who make up the proud alumni of the school benefited by the high caliber of business and social training that was always characteristic of the Wisconsin Business University. The benefits derived from this institution cannot be estimated. In the long run they exceed any attempt at their evaluation.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>La Crosse County Corporation Records, Volume 8, September 8, 1941, pp. 168-169.

<sup>8</sup>La Crosse Tribune, September 10, 1940.

## CHAPTER V

### CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE SCHOOL

The value of the University to La Crosse was three-fold. First, it offered a place where consistently well-trained and qualified individuals could be obtained for positions in the growing business community. Second, programs of the school gave young people in the city and surrounding area who might otherwise have had to forego any type of career training an opportunity to benefit from further education. Finally, in its years of existence the average revenue brought into the city each year by the institution totaled between \$125,000 and \$200,000.<sup>1</sup>

According to a local newspaper, files of the University contained hundreds of letters of recommendation from former students who accredited their success to the training received at the La Crosse institution. Acclamations characteristic of those given to the school are illustrated below. Although these statements came from publications of the school and advertisements that appeared in the La Crosse Tribune, they are representative of the high esteem attributed to the school by graduates and signify the student contributions of the business college.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>La Crosse Tribune, April 1, 1950.

John I. Ward, 1892 graduate:

"I am writing this, not because the Wisconsin Business University needs such a recommendation, but in personal appreciation of what the W.B.U. did for me in preparing me for my future work, and as a message to each and every young man and young woman who is desirous of entering and succeeding in the business world. The success of your thousands of graduates continually reflect the high ideals of the school and the splendid training they received as students there, and I merely wish to say that each year I realize more and more that whatever measure of success I have attained or may hope to attain, I may attribute largely to the thorough training received as a student at the W.B.U. The School with an ideal is without a doubt what the Wisconsin Business University may be called."<sup>3</sup>

Dora O. Doud, 1916 graduate:

"In my own case, having no assets except a common school education and an ordinary amount of horse-sense and push, I attribute my success wholly to the excellent training, friendly guidance, and encouragement received while at the W.B.U."<sup>4</sup>

Lawrence Berg, 1917 graduate:

"The training I received in your school enabled me to just double my earning capacity in two years."<sup>5</sup>

W. W. Withee, 1920 graduate:

"I am one of your graduates and have at times sent you a number of students. All who completed their work have prospered. I know of none of your graduates who have not done well."<sup>6</sup>

Elmer J. Berg, 1922 graduate:

"I and two brothers graduated from your school. I know of hundreds of your graduates for whom you have secured positions, and I owe my present position and success to the training you gave me."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Proof, a Wisconsin Business University publication, 1923, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 4.      <sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 8      <sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>7</sup>Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1922-23, p. 19.

Walter Flieth, 1923 graduate:

"My earning capacity at present is in excess of \$6,000 a year. I am confident that there is no other school that gives its students such thorough preparation for success."<sup>8</sup>

Lucian L. Newberry, 1924 graduate:

"The training received in your school has been a vast benefit to me. To my personal knowledge my classmates have also experienced fine success in the business world, and all associate this success with the training offered by your school."<sup>9</sup>

Melvin J. Elstad, 1926 graduate:

"My brother and two sisters are also graduates of your school, and we are holding good positions. We have found that your courses are applicable to any kind of business."<sup>10</sup>

Kari Dammen, 1934 graduate:

"For a thorough business training, a thorough business life, and the best teachers available attend the W.B.U. I am gratified to the W.B.U. for the fine training I received there, and for the position I am now holding."<sup>11</sup>

Gordon Nueman, 1936 graduate:

"I am proud to be mentioned as one of your graduates. You secured me my first position. Since graduating from the Wisconsin Business University I feel that I have been exceptionally successful and owe my success to the thorough instruction I received."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>9</sup>Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1926-27, p. 43.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>11</sup>La Crosse Tribune, September 10, 1939.

<sup>12</sup>La Crosse Tribune, September 10, 1939.

Paul Bisek, 1939 graduate:

"Your graduates have an advantage over those of other schools, not only do you give them a more thorough and practical preparation but you secure employment and boost them along as they prove their ability."<sup>13</sup>

Various business firms and employers also benefited from the quality of graduates characteristic of the University. Their appreciation for the contribution the institution made in supplying well-trained people to fill employment vacancies was expressed in letters of recommendation sent to the school.<sup>14</sup>

Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad:

"We have been employing your graduates for the past ten years and you have never sent anyone that was not thoroughly competent."

Swift Packing Company:

"You certainly prepare your students for practical work. Those sent us have proved unusually satisfactory. Let us hear from you whenever you have promising material."

Marshall Field and Company:

"We have had a number of your graduates in our employ and all have given excellent satisfaction. Your methods and program produce individuals capable of filling high positions with our firm."

Great Northern Railroad Company:

"We take pleasure in stating that your graduates employed by this company have given satisfaction as is shown in frequent promotions."

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., September 1, 1940.

<sup>14</sup>Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1922-23, pp. 10-13.



The Studebaker Corporation:

"This company is using quite a number of your graduates, all of whom are giving satisfaction and showing evidence of the good training received under your direction. If your school will maintain the high standard of efficiency which has characterized its work in the past, I can assure you a place for a goodly number of your graduates in years to come."

General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis:

"Your graduates are always given the preference in positions we have open in our secretarial or accounting offices. This company has employed over a hundred of your graduates and we know of none who have failed to give satisfaction."<sup>15</sup>

The major contributions made by the University are exemplified in the success of its graduates. Alumni rose to positions of prominence in many areas of business life, and many attributed their success to the training they received at the University. Two of the first students enrolled at the school and who were members of the first graduating class in 1893 were "bellwether" of the business achievement that would become the record of University graduates; Mr. John I. Ward became president of the La Crosse Laundry, and Mr. Herman Klein advanced to the position of president of the Batavian National Bank in La Crosse. Future graduates gained esteem in industry, banking, retail merchandising, government, and business education.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-21.

<sup>16</sup> La Crosse Tribune, September 29, 1939, and Wisconsin Business University Catalogue, 1936-1937, p. 11, and General Reference, information obtained from various personal interviews, and questionnaires sent to graduates of the school.

In industry, A. G. Rumpf, a 1913 graduate, advanced from the position of general secretary to the position of Executive Secretary of the Studebaker Corporation and the Vice-president of the Willys-Overland Corporation. Other industrial executives that were graduates of the Wisconsin Business University include Rueben Trane, the Trane Company, La Crosse; Fritz Hanns, of the Hanns Motor Company, La Crosse (this firm later was known as Auto-Lite); Dora O. Doud, Executive Secretary of the American Druggist Syndicate; John E. Walters, Executive Vice-president of the International Harvester Company, Springfield, Illinois; Albert Funk of the La Crosse Rubber Mills; Lucian L. Newberry, Executive Secretary and Treasurer of Mirro Aluminum, Inc., Manitowoc, Wisconsin; Roy Kumm, President, and Henry Rhodes, Purchasing Manager of Heilemans' Brewing Company, La Crosse; and Wyatt W. Newberry executive of the La Crosse Cooler Company.<sup>17</sup>

Three graduates who achieved executive stature in local banks were Harold Klein, President of the Batavian National Bank, A. C. Hintermann, and Joseph F. Bartl, both associated with the First National Bank of La Crosse. Mr. Bartl, a 1915 graduate of the Wisconsin Business University, accepted a position as assistant cashier at the First National Bank where through continued promotion he became president.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>General reference--Information obtained from various publications of the school, La Crosse Tribune articles, personal interviews, and questionnaires sent to graduates of the school. (Appendix F)

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

Graduates of the University originated many local, retail businesses. The list includes: E. R. Tausche, Tausche Hardware Company; Richard Wiggert, Wiggert Brothers; Edward T. Gautsch, the Roosevelt Company; Albert Gantert, Gantert's Furniture Company; William Trapp, Bodega Lunch; Henry Mader, Mader's Mens Wear; and Harry Dahl, the Dahl Company.<sup>19</sup>

Two former members of the University student body who have achieved office in local government are Everett Runge, La Crosse County Register of Deeds and Julian Johnson, a 1929 graduate, who is presently the La Crosse County Treasurer.<sup>20</sup>

The majority of faculty members of the University were former students who illustrated ability and achievement during their studies. The University administration used this technique as a feeder system to maintain a high caliber of faculty personnel and an adequate student-teacher ratio. Others interested in the field of business teaching gained success in other schools or areas of education. H. J. Holm, a member of the 1914 graduating class, became president of the Gregg Shorthand School in Chicago, Illinois; R. E. Ecklund, a 1907 graduate, purchased from Frank Toland the business college in Oelwein, Iowa; B. J. Campbell was president of the Jackson Business University, Jackson, Michigan; and William H. Kaiser became executive president of the American Book

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

Company, Chicago, Illinois.<sup>21</sup>

The history of the University is a history of success and especially successful graduates. It gained esteem due to continued ability to place its graduates in good positions. Being represented in all parts of the country, the school enjoyed a nationwide reputation and according to school records graduates were holding positions in every major country in the world at salaries comparable to those from any similiar type training.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>La Crosse Tribune, July 20, 1910.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE SCHOOL IN RETROSPECT

Because of the lack of sufficient records of the school and to aid in research for this paper, personal interviews and a questionnaire (see Appendix E) were used to gather information. Besides the general information these people offered their opinions on the basic qualities of the school and from these comments five aspects stand out as being significant. The intense training, school spirit, social aspect of training, placement facilities, and student evaluation at the University were the concepts deemed most characteristic. Of the people contacted these criteria were mentioned in some context or another in every case.

Roy Kumm, president of the Heileman Brewing Company, commenting on the intense training summed up the opinions of the others when he stated:

Training was intense beyond anything I have ever been able to witness either in grade, high school, or other higher education. By intense I mean you were forced to learn against a timed schedule. Hours meant nothing--training for results only. For example, in high school typing for one year most students average 30 to 40 words per minute. Those who took typing at the W.B.U. were typing 70 or more by three months. Shorthand was super intense.<sup>1</sup>

In regard to the school spirit that permeated the

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<sup>1</sup>Roy Kumm, Questionnaire.

University, Henry W. Rehban, Traffic Manager for Allis Chalmers Company Inc., put it this way:

Since most students came from the surrounding small town areas and the majority from families of limited income, their W.B.U. experience was in many cases their first real outside activity. Students readily identified with one another, and the more advanced students helped those having trouble and the beginners. The school was managed as one family, and every student felt a strong sense of belonging.<sup>2</sup>

Social education, although not a basic objective of the school, saw its place in the training program. The University had a tradition of social affairs throughout the year. Fall and spring formals took place every year for the forty-eight year history of the school. The student body periodically held assemblies during which guest speakers or faculty members would speak on and discuss various social concepts.<sup>3</sup>

Doris (Horton) Wayne, La Crescent, Minnesota, gave this view of social training offered by the University:

Personally, this school did more to bring me out of my shell than any other single factor. I came to the W.B.U. a very timid, small-town girl. I felt that the school did an excellent job in not only training us, but also taught us how to get along with our fellow man.<sup>4</sup>

The University placement facilities were successful throughout its entire history. School publications indicate

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Henry Rehban.

<sup>3</sup> The Big Leaguer, 1938, pp. 36-37.

<sup>4</sup> Doris Wayne, Questionnaire.

that in forty-six years over ninety percent of the students graduating from the University took positions. According to the students interviewed, they went to the business institution confident that upon completion of the required training they would receive an adequate position from the school placement bureau.<sup>5</sup>

A retired executive of the La Crosse Cooler Company, Wyatt W. Newberry, stated: "A W.B.U. diploma was enough recommendation to obtain a good position in any business field."

Student evaluation at the University was indicative of the type of training and demand made on the students. Strict evaluation of the students promoted responsibility and growth which were necessary to maintain the caliber of student significant of the University label. Diplomas were granted in recognition of completion of course requirements; however, a "C" average was necessary.<sup>6</sup>

Some insight of the University in retrospect is possible through the evaluation of the questionnaire which was sent to one hundred graduates. From the forty-five responses the majority paid positive tribute to the school. There were very few negative responses to the choices given,

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<sup>5</sup>Wisconsin Business Catalogue, 1936-37, p. 42.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 1938, p. 12.

and the comments, in general, gave support to the strong feeling of respect that these former students had for the University.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>See calculated questionnaire, Appendix E.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Proof, Wisconsin Business University Publication, 1923.

This booklet was published because of the claims of the Accredited Business Schools Association (of which the W.B.U. was not a member). The association tried to discredit schools that were not members and this challenge was printed as the W.B.U.'s answer to this association. It is a compiled listing of statements by graduates, places of employment, and general information about the record of the school.

La Crosse County Corporation Records, La Crosse County, 1878 to present date.

These are complete listings of all corporation enactments, revisions, and dissolutions in La Crosse County from 1878. They contain information on the purpose of the charter, capital stock, if any, rules of the corporation, and the Board of Directors.

La Crosse Tribune, April 5, 1907 through June 12, 1956 (specific date of issue has been referred to in footnotes).

The La Crosse Tribune is a daily newspaper in the city of La Crosse, Wisconsin. The paper has been published daily from May 16, 1904 to date. A great deal of information regarding the Wisconsin Business University was found by using the microfilm available at both the Tribune offices and the La Crosse Public Library.

The La Crosse Daily Press, August 31, 1892.

A paper published daily in La Crosse from 1885 to 1903. This particular edition concerned the opening of the Wisconsin Business University.

Toland, Frank J., The Handwriting Teacher, Registered Printing, Inc., Canton, Illinois, 1887.

This book was designed to help teachers establish a program for the teaching of handwriting and contained helpful information concerning the establishment of business schools. It was sold nationally and throughout many countries of Europe.

Wisconsin Business University Catalogues, published by the W.B.U.

A source of general information written for the purpose of advertising the school and sent to anyone requesting a copy. Brief information about the school included: history, faculty, entrance requirements, courses and classes, expenses, objectives of the school, and performance. This information is supplemented with a number of pictures taken in the school. Years of the publication used: 1922-23, 1926-27, 1936-37, 1938, and 1939.

SECONDARY SOURCES:

Advertising Circulars, published by the W.B.U. in 1936 and 1937.

Big Leaguer, Student Publication.

A record of the school year, pictures of activities, interests, and achievements of the students--a picture of life at the W.B.U. from the student's standpoint. Years used: 1936, 1937, and 1938.

La Crosse Tribune Supplement, "Coleman Technical Institute," August 28, 1966.

Niedfeldt, Lorraine, A History of the La Crosse Vocational and Adult Schools, La Crosse Vocational School Press, La Crosse, 1963.

APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A

The following list of course offerings is taken from the Wisconsin Business University Catalog 1936-1937.

Although there were variations this gives a general picture of broad outlines.

COMBINED COMMERCIAL COURSE

## STUDIES

Bookkeeping and Office Practice, Arithmetic, Penmanship, Spelling, Commercial Law, Business English and Correspondence. Gregg Shorthand, Typewriting, Office Practice for Stenographers. Use of modern office devices which includes Ediphone, Adding Machine, Mimeograph, Calculator, Check Protector and New York School of Filing System; Multigraph taught by special arrangement if desired.

## POSITIONS

This course prepared students for all general office work.

## TIME REQUIRED

Regular course, about twelve months.  
Advanced Course, about nine months.

BOOKKEEPING AND TYPEWRITING COMMERCIAL COURSE

## STUDIES

Bookkeeping and Office Practice, Penmanship, Spelling, Business English, Correspondence, Arithmetic, Commercial Law, Typewriting, and use of modern office appliances such as Adding Machine, Calculator, Protectograph and New York School of Filing System.

## POSITIONS

This course prepared students for any commercial positions requiring a general knowledge of business, especially those demanding typists.

## TIME REQUIRED

Regular course, about nine months.  
Advanced course, about seven months.

SHORTHAND AND TYPEWRITING COMMERCIAL COURSE

## STUDIES

Gregg Shorthand, Typewriting, Correspondence, Business English, Spelling, Office Practice for Stenographers, which includes use of modern office appliances such as Adding Machine, Calculator, Protectograph, Mimeograph and New York School of Filing System.

## POSITIONS

Prepared students for any position requiring a general knowledge of office work, particularly those relating to correspondence.

## TIME REQUIRED

Regular course, about eight months.  
Advanced course, about seven months.

BOOKKEEPING COMMERCIAL COURSE

## STUDIES

Bookkeeping, Office Practice, Penmanship, Spelling, Arithmetic, Business English, Correspondence and Commercial Law. Use of modern appliances such as Adding Machine, Calculator, Protectograph and a complete Filing System used by the New York School of Filing.

## POSITIONS

This course prepared students to accept any ordinary position as Bookkeeper, General Clerk, Cashier, Bank Clerk, Bookkeeping Commercial Teacher, and several departments of State and National Civil Service.

## TIME REQUIRED

Regular course, about seven months.  
Advanced course, about five months.

## APPENDIX B

## SUBJECTS

The following is taken from the Wisconsin Business Catalogue of 1938-39. It lists some of the subjects offered within the courses and briefly explains each. This is a general listing; courses changed from time to time to meet new educational needs, but this list affords the reader some idea of the varied program offered by the W.B.U.

**GREGG SHORTHAND:** Consists of shorthand taught by the Functional Method developed by the Gregg Company. This method proved to be greatly superior to any other.

**SECRETARIAL STUDIES:** Students in this course gave practical application to their knowledge as the WBU office itself was run almost entirely by them.

**VOCABULARY:** Every student was required to take this course which the school felt was most important. It stressed spelling, meaning, and the actual use of words.

**BUSINESS ENGLISH:** This course provided a thorough knowledge of grammar and construction. It also helped to develop the students powers of expression.

**LETTER WRITING:** All facets of business correspondence were studied in this course.

**OFFICE MACHINES:** This course familiarized one with all standard office equipment.

**DICTAPHONE:** These machines seemed to be the coming thing and WBU felt that their students know how to transcribe as well as dictate.

**BUSINESS ARITHMETIC:** Students were taught to handle figures rapidly and accurately. This course covered all the standard business calculations in a comprehensive manner.

BOOKKEEPING; ACCOUNTING: WBU offered both fundamental accounting and a more advanced course to those students who showed an ability in this area.

PENMANSHIP: The WBU through the years became well known for turning out people with very legible good handwriting.

COMMERCIAL LAW: This subject was taught from a thoroughly practical standpoint. Modern business laws which would enable the business worker to avoid lawsuits were stressed.

SALESMANSHIP: The science of selling was taught by lectures, class work, and actual demonstration.

ADVERTISING: This subject included all forms of newspaper, retail and wholesale advertising, proofreading, and actual construction work.

CIVIL SERVICE PREPARATION: This subject specifically acquainted the student with the forms and contents of Civil Service exams. Many WBU graduates made outstanding records in Civil Service positions.

FILING: The teaching of filing was thorough and was based on the standard system of filing then in general use in the business world.

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT: This course included business conduct, personal salesmanship, and the methods used in getting positions.

TYPING: The WBU was noted for its typing courses. The most advanced methods of teaching were used with good results.

STENOTYPE: This was the machine method of taking dictation. Students could elect to take Stenotype instead of Shorthand.



## APPENDIX C

## ENROLLMENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Enrollment figures are not complete for every year of operation of the school. Period 1894-1905 is not available in any newspapers on microfilm at La Crosse Public Library. No record of other various years not stated could be found in the La Crosse Tribune or school catalogues.

1892-93.....	64
1893-94.....	97
1906-07.....	300
1908-09.....	347
1909-10.....	359
1910-11.....	388
1911-12.....	425
1913-14.....	327
1914-15.....	300
1916-17.....	227
1917-18.....	204
1920-21.....	276
1922-23.....	240
1927-28.....	207
1932-33.....	184
1933-34.....	276
1934-35.....	258

1935-36.....	287
1936-37.....	204
1937-38.....	243
1938-39.....	137
1939-40.....	124
1940-41.....	87

## APPENDIX D

## FACULTY

Information obtained from various publications of the school, La Crosse Tribune articles, personal interviews, and questionnaires sent to graduates of the school.

NAME	POSITIONS HELD AT WBU
Frank J. Toland.....	President 1892-1907
Bernard J. Toland.....	Manager 1892-1905
Professor McCormac.....	Principal-bookkeeping 1892-1906
William G. Lowe.....	Instructor-secretarial 1892-1912
Charles Owen.....	Instructor-bookkeeping
Sarah North.....	Instructor-shorthand
V. G. Marti.....	Principal-bookkeeping dept.
Mrs. V.G. Marti.....	Instructor-secretarial
D. F. Powell.....	Instructor-bookkeeping
Leigh Toland.....	President 1907-1941
Ralph Toland.....	Instructor-bookkeeping
Charles Parrott.....	Manager 1927-1932
Edith Parrott.....	Instructor-secretarial
James R. Kerr.....	President 1927-1932
Edith Wogan.....	President-secretarial dept.
Ada Jagow.....	Instructor-secretarial
Katherine Schwirtz.....	Instructor-secretarial
Walter Hampe.....	Principal-bookkeeping dept.

Hewitt Toland.....Manager 1933-1940  
Clifford Johnson.....Office Manager 1935-1940  
Howard Kondow.....Principal-bookkeeping dept. 1935-40  
Clifford Quammen.....Manager WBU Extension 1935-1940  
Gunver Quammen.....Dean of Women  
Arnold Renslo.....Instructor-accounting  
Lois Borchard.....Principal-Stenographic dept.  
Georgia Bellingham.....Instructor-shorthand  
Patricia Toland.....Office manager and general instructor  
E. H. Stachling.....Instructor-secretarial  
William Matuska.....Instructor-bookkeeping

## APPENDIX E

May 4, 1967

Dear Former WBU Student:

Presently, I am engaged in work for my Masters' Degree in education at La Crosse State University.

As part of the requirements for my degree, I am conducting a study to compile a historical paper on the Wisconsin Business University.

I would sincerely appreciate the help you could provide by filling out the brief questionnaire enclosed.

Also, if you would happen to have any catalogues or yearbooks or other materials from the school that I could look at, please call 785-1439.

Please use the self-addressed envelope included with the questionnaire.

Thank you for your cooperation in aiding me in my research.

Sincerely yours,

Richard Rogers

RAR/rr  
Enc. 1

Name and Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

General information questions: to the best of your knowledge and recollection, please answer the following questions.

1. Years you attended the Wisconsin Business University. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Size of the enrollment at the time (Approximately). \_\_\_\_\_
3. Courses you took at the school.
4. Tuition costs. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Most memorable teacher at the school. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Prominent local businessmen or other graduates of the school who achieved high success in the business world.
7. Did the school place you in a position after graduation? yes no
8. In your opinion, was your WBU education worthwhile in your later life; were you able to make use of the training? yes no

Please check one answer for each of the following.

1. Basic goals or objectives of the school:
  - 8 A. Provide adequate training necessary for business career.
  - 0 B. Provide opportunity for student to become a more productive citizen.
  - 13 C. To illustrate that success is achieved through hard work and sacrifice.
  - 24 D. All of the above.
2. Did the education offered by the school meet the foregoing objectives?
  - 28 A. Yes
  - 1 B. No
  - 6 C. Unable to comment

3. Did you personally feel that your WBU education was superior in comparison to other business colleges in the surrounding area?
- 14 A. Yes  
2 B. No  
29 C. Unable to comment
4. Were course offerings suitable to meet employment standards:
- 5 A. Business training superior for employment needs.  
36 B. Provided adequate business background for employment.  
0 C. Did not meet business requirements for employment.  
4 D. Unable to comment.
5. Facilities of the school:
- 8 A. Equipment was superior for the time and purpose.  
37 B. Equipment was adequate.  
0 C. Less than adequate.  
0 D. Unable to comment.
6. Method of instruction:
- 8 A. Made learning interesting and exciting.  
16 B. Basically rote memorization and drill.  
2 C. Offered little challenge.  
12 D. Unable to comment.
7. Tuition:
- 5 A. Got more than your money's worth.  
37 B. Was appropriate for training received.  
0 C. Too expensive for training offered.  
3 D. Unable to comment.
8. School spirit:
- 23 A. Felt definite pride in being a member of student body.  
7 B. No real feeling of school loyalty.  
0 C. Association with the WBU was cause for embarrassment.  
15 D. Unable to comment.

9. Was the school more interested in profit or helping their students achieve a degree of excellence?
- 2 A. Profit  
41 B. Student achievement  
1 C. Unable to comment
10. Were students aided by the school in selection of courses best suited to their abilities?
- 15 A. Yes  
13 B. No  
17 C. Unable to comment
11. Why did you attend the WBU?
- 10 A. Best type of training for cost involved.  
9 B. Nearness of school to home.  
13 C. Desired a business career.  
13 D. All of the above.
12. Faculty of the school:
- 9 A. Teachers were of highest ability and quality.  
32 B. The faculty was adequate in regard to training.  
0 C. Faculty, in general, did little to provide the training necessary for business career.  
4 D. Unable to comment.
13. Extra-curricular activities:
- 12 A. Definite attractive quality of the school.  
23 B. Provided adequate social activities.  
     C. Not sufficient for school of type and size.  
8 D. Unable to comment.
14. What do you feel was the primary reason or reasons for the closing of the school?
- 2 A. No longer served original purpose.  
41 B. Competition with free education of similar nature.  
     C. Other comments:
15. If you have any other comments about the school that you feel would be of help to me or would like to expand on any of the questions I have asked, feel free to do so as I would appreciate your personal remarks.

Thanks again for the help.