

Library News

W.W. Hagerly Library, Drexel University

Volume 1 Issue 8 November 2000

The Origins of the Drexel Dragon

Visitors to Drexel University Archives have inquired about Drexel's mascot -- the dragon. Specifically, these individuals have been interested in knowing *why* the dragon was selected. The material available at Drexel University Archives does not provide a definitive answer to this question because it appears that no conscious decision was made by the University to declare the dragon as the school's official mascot. Instead, the term was gradually used more and more frequently and applied to more and more of the school's sporting teams. The gradual acceptance of the term, 'Drexel Dragon,' was based upon its alliterative quality and the ease with which the Dragon could be represented -- visually (as a logo) and physically (as a mascot).



Drexel University Archives contains a complete run of *The Drexel Triangle* dating back to the first issue in 1927. This valuable resource reveals that the first reference to the 'Drexel Dragons' occurred on October 17, 1928. The headline of an article on the football team reads: 'Drexel Dragons Make Astounding Record as Victorious Team.' In the body of the article, the writer explains only that: 'the team -- has become known as the Dragons.'

During the late 20s, *The Drexel Triangle* regularly lamented the poor school spirit exhibited by most students. However, owing largely to the success of the 'Dragons' football team, school spirit improved noticeably during the early 30s.

By January 1929, *The Triangle* expanded the use of the term 'Dragons' to refer to the basketball team. Later, the term was applied to all Drexel sports' teams. Prior names for Drexel sports' teams had included: the Engineers, the Blue & Gold, and the Drexelites.

In November of 1930, *The Triangle* includes a report on a pep rally that featured a newly refurbished Drexel Dragon. Apparently during the previous year, the original Dragon had been badly damaged. The 'new' Dragon was constructed of steel and included improved 'breathing facilities' as well as:

'A small jar of titanium tetrachloride -- placed in the head with tubes leading to the nostrils. When the liquid comes in contact with the air, a dense smoke is formed, resembling the traditional fiery breath of these historic monsters.'

Students were strongly urged to attend that evening's pep rally in order to view the new and improved mascot of the Drexel Dragon. Surprisingly, images of the early Dragon are remarkably similar to the Dragon logo currently in use by the University.



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