

8.1.2 Staff

In 1908, Modern Languages was one of the nine departments created. Instruction was offered for the first time in the academic year 1908/09 with Professor Luther Herbert Alexander teaching two courses each—the only ones available—in French and German. A year later, Dr. William Alexander Robb Kerr (who would later become Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and, subsequently, the University's third president) was appointed as Head of Modern Languages. In 1910, the first appointment exclusively in German was made with the hiring of Dr. Barker Fairley as a lecturer in Modern Languages.

Dr. Barker Fairley was born May 21, 1887 in Barnsley, Yorkshire, England. He was educated at the University of Leeds, earning a BA (1907) and an MA before obtaining a PhD from Friedrich-Schiller-University of Jena (Germany) in Germanics in 1910. Beginning in 1907, he served as *Lektor* in English at the University of Jena and joined the University of Alberta in 1910. He was hired as assistant professor of Modern Languages, leaving Professor Kerr free for the work in French.¹ The 1914 *Henderson's Directory* listed Professor Fairley as an Assistant Professor of German (residing in Athabasca Hall) and August von Zabuesnig as a Lecturer in German (residing in Assiniboia Hall).



Source: *Edmonton Capital*, Sept. 21, 1910, 1.

Die Strathconaer Alberta Universität zeigt auch in diesem Jahre wieder einen fabelhaften Aufschwung. Im vorigen Jahre hatten sich 103 Studenten eingetragen, für dies Jahr werden es zwischen 150 und 175 sein. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit soll künftighin der Deutschen Konversation und Literatur zugewandt werden. Von den elf Professoren der Universität haben mehrere in Deutschland (Leipzig und Jena) studiert.

A founding member of the Philosophical Society, Fairley was, for five years, a professor of German at the University of Alberta before joining the University of Toronto in 1915 as a professor of German. Taking leave from the University of Toronto in 1932, Fairley was a professor of German at Victoria University in Manchester, England before returning to Toronto in 1936. After retiring, in 1957 from his position as professor of German with the University of Toronto, Fairley took up painting and was a promoter of

Canadian art.

Fairley's professional affiliations include work as a translator of war information for the *Alberta Herald* [sic] (1914-15) and positions as a co-founder and contributor to The Canadian Forum and vice-president of the Canadian Council of American-Soviet Friendship, respectively. He was painter and scholar who made a significant contribution to the study of German literature, particularly for the work of Goethe. In recognition of his achievements, the University of Alberta presented Fairley with an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1958. In 1978, he was made an Officer of the Order of Canada for his "unique contribution to Canadian scholarship."² Fairley passed away on October 11, 1986 in Toronto.³

In 1915, the place left vacant by Dr. Fairley's call to Toronto was filled by **Dr. Ernest Otto C. Wooley**, Lecturer in German. Dr. Wooley had graduated from Indiana State Normal School in 1904 and taken his B.A. degree at the University of Indiana in 1907 and a PhD (1911) from the University of Leipzig. He had experience in education work, having been for four years superintendent of schools in Indiana, and for one year a lecturer in German at Wisconsin before joining the University of Alberta.⁴

In 1916, Dr. Wooley having resigned, **Dr. John F. Coar** was appointed Professor.⁵ John Coar had been born in Berlin on July 26, 1863. He attended the University of Bonn and received an LL.B. from Boston University (1885) and his M.A. (1898) and Ph.D. (1900) in literature from Harvard University. Before joining the University of Alberta as a professor of German, Coar was an instructor of German at Dartmouth College, Massachusetts (1897-1903), a professor of Germanic Languages and Literature at

Adelphi College in Brooklyn, New York (1903-14), and a professor of German at Rochester University (1914-16). Dr. Coar retired in 1934⁶ and went to a university in Pennsylvania.⁷ Dr. Coar died in Brockton, Massachusetts in 1939.⁸

Dr. Coar served as director of the Germanic Society of Canada (1910-14), was the founder of the Patriotic Society in Kingston, Ontario and the chairman of the Liberal League in New York (1923-28). Coar was an international relations advocate and served as a liaison between the German, Canadian and American governments. In recognition of his efforts to foster cultural relations between Germany and Canada, the *Deutsche Akademie* in Munich presented Coar with a silver medal in 1934. He was the first resident Canadian to receive such an honour.

Dr. Coar was intensely involved in university matters and cared deeply for his students. He was a strong supporter of the German Club and promoted regular get-togethers of students and others which came to take place in the Tuck Shop on campus.⁹ He gave lectures on campus and published them in the *Gateway*, e.g., a spirited criticism of the shortcomings of the German education system.¹⁰ After Hitler came to power, he spoke out repeatedly on campus against Hitlerism. Dr. Coar was the initiator of a German library (in 1915 there were no German books in the university library) and founded a nucleus by donating some of his own books. Later Professor Owen joined him in this undertaking. Additions were constantly being made, and it was hoped that the collection would ultimately reach 2,000 or more volumes. These books became the property of the University Library and were housed in the office of the German Department in Arts 204.¹¹

Dr. Francis Owen was born September 6, 1886 in Saltfleet, Ontario. He was educated at the University of Toronto and was the recipient of a 1907 Governor General's Medal. He earned a BA (1907), an MA (1909), and an Education Diploma (1910) before going on to earn a PhD (1926) from the University of Chicago and undertaking post-graduate work in Marburg (1908), Leipzig (1910), and Kiel (1932-33). An instructor of German at Victoria College at the University of Toronto from 1908-14, Owen, in 1919-20, was a modern language instructor for returned soldiers' preparatory matriculation classes at the university. Dr. Owen joined the University in 1920 as a lecturer in German, was an assistant professor of modern languages (1925-26), an associate professor of modern languages (1926-34), and was appointed professor of German and of modern languages after Professor Coar's retirement.¹² He served as head of the Department of Modern Languages from 1947 until his retirement as Professor Emeritus in 1952. Owen passed away December 22, 1975 in Edmonton.¹³

Dr. Owen was particularly interested in philology and the origin of the Germanic languages from the Indo-European stock, sometimes giving lectures on the "Indo-European problem" and enlightening the student body about the Indo-European language groups, such as Italic, Celtic and Germanic.¹⁴ After the War, he wrote *The Germanic People* (1960) on the history of the Germanic languages, as well as two novels, *The Ravens of Woldan* and *Tristan and Isolde*.¹⁵

Dr. Owen was a fierce opponent of National Socialism and played a very important role on campus enlightening the university of community about Hitler and his ideology and led the fight against it as a major in the C.O.T.C. (see???)

Private Course in German
FOR STAFF MEMBERS AND GRADUATE STUDENTS
Will be given by E. Mueller. All interested are invited to meet in A-311 on Tuesday, Nov. 28, at 4:30. Charges reasonable, depending on number of participants.

In October 1934 **Ralph Zuar** and **Erich Mueller** were appointed graduate assistants in modern languages.¹⁶

In 1939, former graduate student and graduate assistant (BA, 1932 and MA, 1934) **Erich Mueller** was promoted from instructor to lecturer in German.¹⁷ From 1936 to 1943 he worked as a lecturer of German, and in 1944 he became an assistant professor of German.¹⁸ He would select and edit poems by Dr. Owen in 1966.¹⁹

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- ¹ *TG*, Nov. 21, 1910, 10.
- ² Wikipedia contributors, "Barker Fairley," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barker_Fairley (accessed Apr. 12, 2015).
- ³ "Barker Fairley, University of Alberta Centenary 2008, http://www.ualbertacentennial.ca/cgi-bin/people/displaybio.php?bio_id=703 (accessed Apr. 12, 2015).
- ⁴ *TG*, Nov. 1, 1915, 3.
- ⁵ *TG*, Nov. 14, 1916, 1.
- ⁶ *TG*, Oct. 10, 1934, 10.
- ⁷ *DC&DH*, March 28, 1934, 4.
- ⁸ "John Coar," University of Alberta Centenary 2008, http://www.ualbertacentennial.ca/cgi-bin/people/displaybio.php?bio_id=692 (accessed Apr. 12, 2015).
- ⁹ *DC&DH*, Nov. 9, 1932, 4.
- ¹⁰ *TG*, Feb. 27, 1917, 1.
- ¹¹ *TG*, Nov. 1, 1915, 3.
- ¹² *TG*, Oct. 10, 1934, 1.
- ¹³ "Francis Owen," University of Alberta Centenary 2008, http://www.ualbertacentennial.ca/cgi-bin/people/displaybio.php?bio_id=563 (accessed Apr. 12, 2015).
- ¹⁴ *TG*, Dec 6, 1938, 1.
- ¹⁵ "Francis Owen," <http://www.ualberta.ca/ARCHIVES/guide/8INDIVID/owen.htm> (accessed Jan. 8, 2009).
- ¹⁶ *TG*, Oct 10, 1934, 1.
- ¹⁷ *TG*, March 10, 1939, 1.
- ¹⁸ "Erich Mueller," University of Alberta Centenary 2008, http://www.ualbertacentennial.ca/cgi-bin/people/displaybio.php?bio_id=552 (accessed Apr. 12, 2015).
- ¹⁹ "Francis Owen," University of Alberta Centenary 2008, <http://www.ualberta.ca/ARCHIVES/guide/8INDIVID/owen.htm> (accessed Jan. 8, 2009).