

The Johns Hopkins University Fun Facts

“The public is sensitive to little things, and they wouldn’t have full confidence in a college that didn’t know how to spell ‘John.’”

-Mark Twain

Why the extra S? **Johns Hopkins’** given name was the maiden name of his great-grandmother, Margaret Johns.

Johns Hopkins’ formal education ended when he was 12, after his devout Quaker parents freed their slaves and put Johns and his brothers to work in the fields in 1807. When he was a young merchant, Johns temporarily fell out of favor with the Quakers because he and his brothers sold whiskey, which was known as “Hopkins Best.”

The university’s **Peabody Institute**, which celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2007, was the first academy of music established in America.

Johns Hopkins University was the first research university established in the United States. Contrary to popular belief, there were undergraduate students from the time the university opened on October 3, 1876. The first doctorates were awarded in 1878 and the first bachelors in 1879.

The **Johns Hopkins University Press**, founded in 1878, is the oldest continuously-operating university press in the United States.

In 1879, an important commercial discovery emerged from the laboratory of **Ira Remsen**, the university’s first chemistry professor and second president. While working under Remsen’s direction, post-doctoral fellow, Constantine Fahlberg, discovered **saccharin** and later made a fortune with the commercial development of the new sweetener. Incidentally, Remsen’s ashes are interred behind a plaque in the campus chemistry building bearing his name.

The university motto, ‘**Veritas vos Liberabit**,’ or “The truth will set you free,” was adopted by the Board of Trustees in 1885, though it may have been in use informally before that time. The exact reason that biblical phrase (John 8:32) was chosen is not known today.

Woodrow Wilson is the only U.S. president to have an earned Ph.D., which was bestowed on him by Johns Hopkins in 1886.

While a history graduate student, Wilson joined the Johns Hopkins Glee Club and, in 1884, first sang “The Star-Spangled Banner.” In 1916, President Wilson proposed the “Star-Spangled Banner” as the national anthem.

In 1890, Hopkins geologist, Harry Fielding Reid, led an expedition to **Glacier Bay, Alaska**, and named a major glacier for Johns Hopkins and a much smaller one for Daniel Coit Gilman. While there, the party was joined by famed naturalist John Muir.

In 1892, the **Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine** was endowed by the **Women's Fund Committee**, with the lion's share coming from the personal fortune of Mary Elizabeth Garrett. The gift was conditional upon the school's accepting women on the same basis as men and maintaining unprecedently high academic standards, which changed the course of medical education in this country.

Gertrude Stein studied medicine at Johns Hopkins 1897-1902 but took no degree.

Jesse Lazear (BA 1889; faculty, School of Medicine) served as a member of the United States Yellow Fever Commission and, in 1900, contracted the disease after allowing himself to be bitten by an infected mosquito. When he died shortly thereafter, Lazear was widely hailed as a "martyr to science."

On February 1, 1896 at a now-demolished rink on North Avenue in Baltimore, Johns Hopkins played Yale in the **first intercollegiate ice hockey game**, which ended in a 2-2 tie.

In 1916, the Faculty of Philosophy (now known as the Krieger School of Arts & Sciences) moved to the **Homewood Campus** and was joined there by the new School of Engineering, which had been established and admitted its first students in 1912. The first building that the university constructed on the campus was the Botanical Laboratory (Greenhouse), built in 1908.

The oldest building on the Homewood campus is, of course, **Homewood House**, which was the architectural inspiration for the campus buildings. The construction of Homewood House was funded by Charles Carroll of Carrollton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, as a wedding present for his son and daughter-in-law, Charles Carroll of Homewood and Harriet Chew. It was built between 1801 and 1803 and is considered one of the finest extant examples of federal period architecture. The House is a National Historic Landmark and, in September 1987, opened to the public as a period house museum.

Controversy marked the career of Hopkins professor of psychology, **John B. Watson**. Regarded as the "father of behaviorism," Watson was infamous for his conditioning experiments with "Little Albert," which would now be viewed as highly unethical. In 1920, he left the University in the midst of scandal when his wife sued him for divorce because of his affair with a graduate student. (Introduced as evidence in the suit, Watson's love letters included his profession of love: Rosalie, every cell I have is yours, individually and collectively.") His academic career ruined, Watson rose through the ranks of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency and made his mark promoting behavior manipulation in the rising consumer culture of the 20th century.

The Cambridge Arms Apartments, now **Wolman Hall**, was once the home of F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald.

Claiming he did not deserve the salary he was offered, **Albert Einstein** turned down an invitation to join the Johns Hopkins faculty in 1927.

In the 1930s and '40s, students, in order to attract their fellows to assemblies, advertised that a dean-psychologist **G. Wilson Shaffer**- would hypnotize people at the assembly.

Sculpted in 1935, the **Johns Hopkins Monument** at Charles and 33rd streets was in the center of Charles Street until a series of accidents caused it to be moved in 1955 to its present location. The male figure represents Knowledge (University) and the female, Healing (Hospital).

In 1939, alumnus and Baltimore attorney, Alfred Jenkins Shriver, left the University the residue of his estate to build a lecture hall. According to the peculiar conditions of the will, **Shriver Hall** was to be adorned with murals depicting the Hopkins class of 1891 (Shriver's class), the original faculties of philosophy and of medicine, the original boards of trustees of the University and the Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore clipper ships, ten Baltimore philanthropists, and ten "famous beauties of Baltimore," who were named in Mr. Shriver's will. The last mural has inspired controversy from the time it was publicly announced, including objections from some of the women named in the will, who did not wish to be painted. The university was forced to accept the terms of the gift- or lose it.

In 1946, Applied Physics Laboratory scientists attached cameras to a captured German V-2 rocket and snapped the **first picture of Earth from space**.

Johns Hopkins University's eighth president, **Milton S. Eisenhower**, advised eight U.S. Presidents: Coolidge, Hoover, Franklin Roosevelt, Truman, Dwight Eisenhower (his brother), Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon.

Why is the **Milton S. Eisenhower Library** constructed partially underground? Contrary to the stories that go around, it was *not* mandated in Gilman's will-or anywhere else for that matter- that the Gilman clock tower had to be visible from Charles Street. What actually happened was that, in the early 1960s when the library was designed, the University and its architects were concerned that a six-story library would dwarf the older, smaller buildings on campus. So they opted to put four and a half stories underground.

Johns Hopkins psychology faculty member, the late **Alphonse Chapanis**, who conducted research for Bell Labs, was responsible for the layout of the telephone keypad.

Johns Hopkins introduced **lacrosse** to Japan in 1986, and today more than 20,000 Japanese are playing the game.

Former Johns Hopkins astrophysicist, **Sam Durrance**, flew twice on the space shuttle in the 1990s with the Hopkins Ultraviolet Telescope.

Researchers at the Johns Hopkins **Applied Physics Laboratory** were the first to land a spacecraft on an asteroid. They now have a probe headed for Mercury and another on its way to Pluto.

Johns Hopkins Malaria Research Institute director, **Peter Agre**, who won the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2003, got a "D" in high school chemistry.

The Egyptian mummy in the **Johns Hopkins Archaeological Collections** is nicknamed "Boris."

The **Hopkins-Nanjing Center** has the only open-stacks library in the Peoples Republic of China.