

HISTORY OF THE HOUSE

The present home management house was built in the year . It originally stood just beyond Sibley Hall, but it was moved to its present location because the space was needed for Niccolls Hall. It was used as a sorority house by Eta Upsilon Gamma, one of the two sororities of the Junior College, and was called the Gamma House. When the administration decided that sororities were no longer advisable, the cottage remained vacant for awhile. Since there was need for a place where faculty, students, and friends could gather for visits and snacks, it then became the "Tea Hole."

The Tea Hole was attractively furnished with tables for two and four, and the cozy nooks are still spoken of and pointed out by visiting alumnae. "Do you remember when" is a familiar refrain as various ones visit the cottage today. The color scheme of that early Tea Hole was yellow and orange. The windows were curtained with yellow and white checked gingham, and the chair back covers were made of orange Indian head material. When the checked gingham curtains were found in the attic two years ago, some napkins were made of this and are being used today.

The Tea Hole was most popular because its nearness to Roemer made it possible for faculty and students to run over between classes for coffee, soft drinks, or snacks. Adn even today, 1961, it is deplored by some faculty that the distance of the present facilities does not permit this.

As the college grew, there was great need for a larger, more modern place, and so when Cobbs Hall was built and occupied in 1949, a Tea Hole was included in the plans. Thus, the cottage was vacant once again.

By this time the Home Economics Department was growing and the college was seeking status with the State Department of Education for its majors in this field. In order to be approved for teaching training in vocational home economics, one requirement was residence in a home management house. This approval meant that home economics graduates had wider choice of positions upon graduation and could teach vocational home economics in any approved high school in the United States.

However, that was only one need for a home management residence. Another important need was for a laboratory where students could carry out management principles learned in theory in the home management discussion class, and thus gain first hand experience in management as applied to all phases of homemaking. Thus, not only would this experience meet the requirement for teaching, it would also enable a student to obtain those valuable acquisitions for a happy adjustment in her own homemaking after marriage or when embarking upon a career.

Realizing this, Mr. and Mrs. McCluer seeing the cottage empty, decided it could be used for this purpose. Therefore, we consider them our "Founders." In 1950, a contractor was employed and help was obtained from the Planning Service of Union Electric of St. Louis. Downstairs a living room, dining room, guest room with bath, hallway, and kitchen were planned. Also, on this floor a living room, bed room and bath were arranged for the adviser. The Union Electric Company also made the plan for the kitchen arrangement. A divider was placed in the center, providing a kitchen on one side and a laundry area on the other side. Space for a breakfast nook in one corner proved adequate.

Equipment for kitchen and laundry areas was purchased on a five-year consignment plan from different manufacturers: Westinghouse, Hotpoint, and Frigidaire. Miss Lindsay wrote the Hoover Company, who donated a floor shiner, two vacuum cleaners, a coffee percolater, and a steam iron free of charge.

The Hoover Company changes these as new models are placed on the market.

Upstairs three bed rooms and one bath were provided, together with a hallway and a storage attic. A screened front and back porch completed the plan. Although there is a large basement, this was not included in the plans. However, there is great need for this for storage space and for a recreation area.

Mrs. McCluer, with the assistance of an interior decorator from Scruggs, Vandervoort, and Barney of St. Louis, planned the decoration of the cottage. For the living room, dining room, and guest room, early American furniture in keeping with the type of architecture was used. This was made by the Drexel Furniture Company from California sugar pine. The breakfast table and chairs were maple. Some early American accessories to complete the decor were selected.

Some people thought the window seat in the living room should be removed, but Mrs. McCluer said that it should remain. This has proved to be a happy decision.

Curtains selected for the living room were a provincial chintz, and the curtains for the dining room were yellow rayon. The rug for the living room was linen yarn, and the rug for the dining room was a braided oval rug.

Furniture for the adviser's rooms was brought from an area in one of the dormitories as was furniture for the students' bed rooms.

The dishes were found packed away in the home economics laboratories, and at the suggestion of Dr. Roberts, the dean, they were selected for the "best dishes." They are the famous onion pattern, Dresden, not Meissen. They were purchased in 1914 by _____ who was the head of the home economics department at that time. The glass ware selected was an American pattern, the Jefferson, from Cambridge Glass Company, Cambridge, Ohio.

Throughout the years from 1952 to the present time, March 1961, each student except two who has lived in the house has contributed a gift, sometimes individually and often as a group. These gifts are quite valuable in the overall decorative scheme of furnishings and accessories. A list of these gifts is to be found elsewhere in this scrap book.

At last the house was ready for occupancy in 1951. Since there were only two teachers in the department that year, Miss Margaret Lindsay was asked to assume the duties of adviser, together with her regular teaching load. She moved in the fall session 1951-52. She also served in this capacity the following year, 1952-53.

In the fall 1952-53 Miss Sophie Payne Alston was added to the staff as Chairman of the department. In January 1953 Dr. Paulena Nickell, world renowned in the field of home management, assumed the office of Academic Dean of Lindenwood College. She asked Miss Alston to become adviser of the home management house the following year, therefore, this change was effected in the fall, 1953.

Although Dr. Nickell's interest was no longer in the field of home management solely, she was most understanding, of course, of the role of an adviser of a home management situation and of the life of the students while in residence. She gave wise counsel in this area until her retirement in 1960. Her retirement was a great loss because of that and because she is a "name" in home management not only in the United States but also in many foreign countries where her text books, "Management In Family Living" is more widely used than any other. It has been translated into several foreign languages and Braille. Elsewhere in this scrap book is to be found a bit of philosophy which Miss Alston asked Dr. Nickell to write for a syllabus which she (Miss Alston) was compiling for her home management discussion class.

During the summer of 1955 the students' rooms were painted, and new furniture was provided. Ruffled curtains and Bates bedspreads were added. This was a great improvement.

During the fall of 1958 Miss Alston re-decorated her living room and bed room herself as a gift to the college. The walls were painted a nutmeg color by the college. Draperies to harmonize were selected, sofa and chair was reupholstered, Venetian blinds in the bed room were repaired and painted, and sofa pillows were added.

As the years passed, Miss Alston felt the need for a definite name for the cottage, so she asked the Board of Trustees to bestow the name, "The McCluer Home Management House." This action was taken by the Board in 1957. Then when the new dormitory was under construction in 1960, and it became known that it was to be named McCluer Hall in honor of Dr. McCluer, Miss Alston talked with Dr. McCluer about the advisability of re-naming the home management house in order to avoid a great deal of confusion due to terminology. Two names were discussed: Mrs. McCluer's and Dr. Nickell's. The Board, at the fall 1960 meeting, decided on the name "The Ida Belle McCluer House," in honor of Mrs. McCluer.

During the Christmas holidays of 1960 Mrs. McCluer showed her appreciation of this act by presenting to the house a beautiful gift. This is an early American chest, Apothecary design, for linens, and the gift included an ornamental balance scale containing exoctic fruits. In presenting the check to the college, Mrs. McCluer indicated to Miss Alston that she wanted her to purchase something beautiful and needed which was not included in the regular budget. This gift has filled a great need. A picture is to be found elsewhere in this scrapbook.

And so this is the history of the little cottage from its inception to the present writing in March, 1961. Since 1952, 141 girls have enjoyed life within

its walls. One hundred forty-one girls have worked and laughed together; they have burned some fingers; they have mopped some floors; they have scrubbed, dusted and washed some windows; brought in wood, built and enjoyed the open fire; cooked many "firsts"; arranged many unique table arrangements and settings; made records and balanced the budgets; entertained guests and shared the hospitality of the cottage and have done all the "skill" things that go along with homemaking.

But these 141 students have also learned that, as important as these technological aspects of life are concerned, they have gained many more valuable acquisitions also. They have learned that management is a mental process taking place, as has been said, "above the neck." They have realized that at times management is knowing "when to pull the shades" and not dust at all. They have learned that "management" is the reasoned way of doing things. They have found out that management is knowing how to use available resources to get what they want, and these 141 students have used our management "formula" over and over again, at first consciously perhaps, and later, as the natural way to accomplish desired goals. This formula is (1) determining the goal, (2) planning how to accomplish it, (3) carrying out the plan, and (4) evaluating results.

And best of all, they have learned that the human comes before the task, and that in good management, maintaining happy relationships transcends everything else in the area of homemaking and group living.

As the years pan, history will record new chapters in living in this little cottage. May a happy reasoned way of life continue within its walls.

Sophie Payne Alston

Sophie Payne Alston, Adviser
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