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Endless Challenges: A History of Student Housing at The University of Mississippi

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ENDLESS CHALLENGES:
A History of Student Housing at The University of
Mississippi

by
Clayton Anderson James

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of
Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of
the McDonnell-Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
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Approved by

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ABSTRACT

ENDLESS CHALLENGES: A History of Student Housing at the
University of Mississippi
(Under the direction of Ted Ownby)

The history of student housing at the University of Mississippi is one of endless challenges. Ranging from periodic room shortages to declining institutional concern for the needs of student housing, these challenges have shaped the lives of students who live on campus through today. Though these challenges have varied in source and nature over the years, they still confront administrators, faculty, staff, and most of all students, many of whom address these issues on a daily basis.

In the earliest years of the University, student housing was an important part of the campus, and it was recognized as such by everyone connected to the University. Over time, though, as the student body grew and the campus could no longer house all of the University's students, student housing took a lesser role in the life of the University. New buildings were constructed to ease

overcrowding on numerous occasions, but institutional concern continued to decline overall. Student life in the residence halls changed considerably with the arrival of women on the campus and with significant changes in the philosophy of student life put forth by administrators. Reflecting national trends, student housing changed its administrative structure and even adapted its philosophies to be more inclusive of the student body and build unique and viable communities among students.

However, through all of these achievements, student housing at the University of Mississippi still faced unique challenges because of the peculiar nature of its place and the ongoing circumstances that surrounded the entire culture of the University. Student housing should be no less important to the University today in 2001 than when the doors first opened in 1848. However, with the Phoenix Project's massive renovations signaling a new revitalization of student housing for a new millennium, the University still faces new challenges for the future that

can only work to make student housing better for all the students of the University.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Origins of Student Housing at The University of Mississippi: 1848-1865

Perhaps the best known perspective of life for all college students comes from their living experiences during the college years. Colleges and universities set out to educate the whole person, imparting critical knowledge, enhancing thought processes, and teaching life lessons through the entire collegiate experience. Not limited by the walls of the classroom, all colleges and universities seek to build an environment of safety and growth for their students in hopes of bringing them to an expanded understanding of themselves and the world.

Toward these ends, colleges and universities must adapt their structures and their facilities to the particular needs of the students they primarily serve. To keep students physically fit, many institutions have built

fitness centers, with exercise equipment and programs that rival the finest health clubs. To encourage student activities outside the classroom, colleges and universities build extensive meeting facilities for student clubs and organizations to gather. To encourage students to enter into a more complete community with one another outside the classroom, colleges and universities build residence halls, hoping to bring students together in new ways with diverse groups of people to build new and unique connections throughout their college years.

From the earliest days of the university system in France, students were housed on campus. These arrangements were seen as mutually beneficial, with students appreciating the diversity of people around them, the common meals that provided times of fellowship, and protected rents that limited costs; universities particularly enjoyed the supervision over students' lives that such arrangements allowed. Early American colleges began with a similar residential ideal designed to "foster

among all students a common social, moral, and intellectual life.”¹

The University of Mississippi provides no exception to these principles. From its opening in 1848, the organizers realized the importance of bringing students together in new and unique ways through student housing. Evolving over the 153 years of the University’s history, student housing has provided an integral element of the education of all of the University’s students over the years. From the earliest halls of 1848 to the ongoing renovations of the Phoenix Project, the University of Mississippi has provided unique facilities that offer students on-campus housing in the midst of the academic facilities of the University that encourage the expansion of the University and collegiate learning beyond the four walls of each classroom on the campus. However, the obstacles faced in this mammoth task never end. Whether building new facilities or changing policies governing student life, student housing is always changing, adapting to the needs of students and confronting

¹Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 65-7, 111-2.

the endless challenges that face such a concept in such a place.

When the University opened in November 1848, the importance of providing student accommodations was not ignored. From the very beginning, housing was a priority for the campus designers. On the south side of the Lyceum where the Old Chemistry building stands today, the University constructed a three-story dormitory consisting of three halls, Madison, Washington, and LaBauve. Madison and Washington Halls were named for presidents James Madison and George Washington, and LaBauve was named after Colonel Felix LaBauve, a state representative and humanitarian who established a trust fund designed to provide for the education of fatherless boys at the University.² An identical facility was constructed on the north side of the Lyceum where Peabody Hall now stands, composed of Jefferson, Lafayette, and Rittenhouse Halls. Jefferson Hall was named for President Thomas Jefferson. Lafayette Hall received its name from the Marquis de

²Personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton; Lynn LaBauve, "LaBauve Family History," Internet on-line, available from <<http://members.tripod.com/labauve/grid1.html>>, accessed 11 April 2001.

Lafayette, the famous French general, hero of the American Revolution, and namesake of Lafayette County where the University is located. Rittenhouse Hall was named after the astronomer and statesman David Rittenhouse of Pennsylvania who built the first telescope in the United States. These dormitory complexes remained in use until the early twentieth century, when they fell into disrepair and were demolished to make way for the academic buildings that stand on their sites today.³

These two residence hall complexes, among the first six buildings built on campus, were designed to match the architectural style of the Lyceum and appeared to be identical to the two faculty houses built at the same time. Each with thirty-six rooms, these dormitories housed a total of seventy-two occupants, but this was barely enough to house the first class of eighty students. Eight students from Oxford may have lived at home, but the others

³*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Rittenhouse, David," Internet on-line, available from <<http://www.britannica.com/seo/d/david-rittenhouse/>>, accessed 14 May 2001; "Ancient Building Found Unsafe," (*University*) *Mississippian*, 30 January 1918. The names for these buildings appear to have changed over the years, but the sites referred to in this and other articles match the original site descriptions from more reliable sources.

immediately filled the facilities to capacity. By the end of the first term, however, only forty-seven students remained, with departures for academic failures, disciplinary actions, and unofficial departures temporarily easing the strain on the University's limited facilities.⁴

Costs of student housing were set early on by the Board of Trustees. Room and board costs were eight dollars per month of the ten-month school year, placing the cost of housing at over double that of tuition, which was set for the first students at thirty-seven dollars for the term. Furniture was provided by the student or rented from the steward. Up until 1852, students paid a four-dollar servant fee to cover the cost of hiring servants to build fires, bring water from the well, and clean their rooms. After 1852, students were allowed to bring their own slaves, but the University reserved "the power to dismiss any servant for misconduct."⁵

⁴David G. Sansing, *The University of Mississippi: A Sesquicentennial History* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1999), 53; Allen Cabaniss, *The University of Mississippi: Its First Hundred Years*, 2d ed., (Hattiesburg: University & College Press of Mississippi, 1971), 13-14.

⁵Sansing, 54.

Student life in the dormitories in the early years quickly became strictly controlled. Though the day was filled with lectures, recitations, and free time for meals and recreation, students spent evenings studying in their own rooms. The first president of the University, George Frederick Holmes, encouraged the establishment of an honor code to govern student conduct. However, his expectations of students to behave as scholars and gentlemen were not met, and he was never willing to police student behavior. When order had completely broken down and Holmes was away from the campus, the Board of Trustees quickly replaced him and instituted a much stronger disciplinary code for student behavior that included strict rules on student housing.⁶

Faculty took the place of their students' fathers and sought to regulate student behavior without the intervention of the Board. As the initial point of contact for students arriving on campus, faculty had considerable charge over the students, checking to see if they were

⁶Ibid., 62; Drew Gilpin Faust, *A Sacred Circle: The Dilemma of the Intellectual in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 10, 32.

properly confined to their rooms in the evenings, patrolling the private parties and bowling alleys of Oxford looking for students away from campus without permission, and preventing fire by ensuring that students did not leave a candle burning while lying in bed in the evenings.⁷

With the implementation of strict rules and increased enforcement, the University saw a significant decrease in the number of dropouts and an increase in the number of students remaining beyond their first year. The ensuing increase in enrollment led to the first of many housing crises on campus as students were forced to find other housing arrangements within the restrictive policies of the University since there were no additional rooms available on campus. The University had been established in Oxford as a part of a broader trend that placed antebellum colleges in small towns, which were viewed as better locations to engage in academic pursuits, promote a strong character,

⁷Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 12 July 1849; Sansing, 62; Jon L. Wakelyn, "Antebellum College Life and the Relations between Fathers and Sons," in *The Web of Southern Social Relations: Women, Family, and Education*, ed. Walter J. Fraser, Jr., R. Frank Saunders, Jr., and Jon L. Wakelyn (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 117-8.

and protect moral virtue. Even in the midst of a small town, administrators viewed dormitories as the best way to control all aspects of students' lives, though they did not refrain from placing similar limitations on those students who lived off-campus.⁸

Even so, with more students living off-campus, disciplinary problems increased, and the Board of Trustees appropriated funds in 1851 for the construction of an additional dormitory. However, during construction the plans were changed to construct an assembly hall to be known as the "Chapel" (later known as the Y-Building and now the home of the Croft Institute for International Studies). In response to the ensuing housing shortage, the faculty voted in 1853 to allow students to board in the country, but they were specifically prohibited from staying in Oxford, reflecting an historic tension between the town and the University. Additional housing space was not

⁸Sansing, 53; Lucas, 126-7.

constructed on campus until 1857, with students surviving until then in overcrowded conditions.⁹

In the interim, however, significant changes had come to the University, its housing arrangements, and its regulations for students. With the appointment of Frederick Augustus Porter Barnard as president of the University in 1856,¹⁰ radical changes came to the entire University, but particularly to elements of student life and housing. With a vision of "making the University of Mississippi one of the premier institutions of higher learning in America," Barnard increased the academic focus of the University while somewhat liberalizing living conditions for students. Noting the importance of the faculty-student relationship, Barnard had strong feelings about proper student living conditions. He felt that the dormitory system should be eliminated and students housed instead in the homes of families in the community

⁹Sansing, 53; personal notes of Dr. Gerald Walton; Minutes of the Faculty of the University of Mississippi, 25 October 1853.

¹⁰Barnard became the first Chancellor of the University when the Board of Trustees changed his title upon his request in 1858.

because he believed that much of the nurturing of the students took place in the surrounding community, especially among the prominent families. He wanted the students to board with local families so those families would gain an understanding of the college and the students would be exposed to local businessmen and planters who would stimulate their ambitions and encourage them to do their school work. Barnard hoped that a boarding arrangement would recreate the home family setting and thus give the students guidelines to a civilized life in polite company.¹¹

Since Oxford was unable to accommodate all of the students in boarding houses, Barnard encouraged the Board of Trustees and the faculty to make significant changes to the structure of the dormitory system in the absence of its complete abolition. Beginning in 1856, students were no longer allowed to have personal slaves in the dormitory. Instead, they were charged a five-dollar fee for a servant who would perform certain specific tasks, limited to sweeping the room, making the bed, carrying water and wood,

¹¹Sansing, 120; Wakelyn, 116.

and building morning fires. (Most of these "servants" were actually slaves hired from local slave owners and faculty members and provided with quarters on campus.) Barnard also worked toward ending the daily room inspections by the faculty in hopes of granting students more freedom and giving the faculty additional time for research and teaching. He was instrumental in establishing new recreation facilities and time for students in hopes of relieving stress and providing what historian David Sansing calls "a respite from the drudgery of their studies" in ways other than pranks. Through these changes, students were empowered to take responsibility for their own actions and were "honor-bound to one another and thus willing to obey rules so long as they were not forced to inform on one another."¹²

Barnard's changes brought student life on the University campus a new vitality that was duplicated in construction and facilities. In 1857, Barnard oversaw construction of a new dormitory on the site where Hume Hall stands today. Composed of three halls, Odom, Jackson, and

¹²Sansing, 79-81; Wakelyn, 120.

Calhoun, it closed in 1917 when it was condemned. Nearby, students enjoyed one of the first gymnasiums built on a college campus. Completed in 1859, it provided a physical space for Barnard's hopes of keeping students active in other aspects of their lives while at college.¹³

As the Civil War approached, the campus clearly faced new challenges for the future. National tensions found local expression in the lives of students and faculty. In particular, slaves who served students in the residence halls were mistreated out of fear of a widespread slave insurrection. Students became active in the political issues of the day, particularly surrounding secession. After Mississippi seceded from the Union in January 1861, some students flew Old Glory, the flag of the Union, from one dormitory, while other students flew the new, unofficial "Bonnie Blue Flag of the Confederacy" from another dormitory. These tensions surrounding secession did

¹³Handwritten notes on dormitories, Box 2, Folder 39, item (f), Buildings Collection, University Archives, Archives and Special Collections Division, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi; "Ancient Building Found Unsafe;" Sansing, 81. Information on the namesakes of these dormitories is unavailable, though they were probably named for John W. Odom, Andrew Jackson, and John C. Calhoun.

not end, but the students (and other Mississippians) "sublimated [their differences] and closed ranks in defense of their native soil and the Southern Way of Life."¹⁴

With the realities of war setting in around campus, students leaving to fight with the Confederate army, and faculty supporters of the Union being ostracized from the community, the University campus quickly dwindled to a small group. Chancellor Barnard wrote in May 1861, "We are indeed inhabitants of a solitude. . . . Our University has ceased to have visible existence." Though the Board of Trustees did not close the University immediately following the departure of most students, they met in emergency session just before the fall term and closed the University for the duration of hostilities. The buildings of the campus, including the three dormitories, were left in the care of two professors during the war and came to be used as a hospital for Confederate troops in early 1862. These buildings escaped burning by two different Union generals during the war, and once the Union was restored, the University of Mississippi faced the tremendous challenge of

¹⁴Cabaniss, 49; Sansing, 102.

rebuilding in the midst of the South's defeat and the loss of most of its leadership.

CHAPTER TWO

The Aftermath of War, The Arrival of Women, and The Growing University: 1865-1900

When the University reopened after the end of the Civil War, faculty and administrators expected a small group of students to return. Hoping to gain a class of fifty students, they were surprised when some 193 students enrolled by the end of the academic year of 1865-1866. Though many of these students were unprepared for the challenges of a collegiate education, they were still accepted into the University's preparatory program. These students lived alongside regular students and were rarely any younger than the rest of the student body.¹⁵

After the war, the student body faced considerable tuition and board increases. With the financial devastation of the South, many students found it difficult to pay the

necessary fees. Tuition was set at seventy-five dollars per year (though it was abolished altogether in 1871), and board costs were fifteen dollars per month, a significant increase from the thirty dollar tuition and twelve dollar board just prior to the war. With the end of slavery, servants were no longer a fixture on the campus paid by special student fees, though policies did allow for students to employ them independently.¹⁶

Few students took advantage of this, as they found themselves in a financial situation that made it difficult even to survive. Faculty made arrangements to reduce the cost of meals for students whose families could not afford the boarding rates, and the administration granted broader exceptions that allowed students to board with families in Oxford. Some students even began to cook their own meals in

¹⁵Sansing, 117-8.

¹⁶Franklin E. Moak, "A History of Ole Miss" [manuscript], 1985, personal papers of Franklin E. Moak, 53; Sansing, 117-8.

their dormitory rooms. When the faculty were advised of the situation, they did not object and even opened additional unoccupied rooms to allow for the expansion of this practice.¹⁷

Housing shortages were apparently not an issue during this period. No history of the University takes note of such concerns, though all note the continual fluctuations in enrollment that the campus encountered between 1865 and 1900. Similarly, they all note the increasing prominence of the preparatory school in the enrollment of the University, with its students sometimes accounting for up to one-half of the total student body of the University.

Construction of new dormitories was not a priority of the increasingly frugal state legislature and Board of Trustees. However, the original dormitories were renovated somewhat in 1878 with the addition of a large veranda on the front of the original plain-front buildings.¹⁸ Board rates remained steady at fifteen dollars per month (\$135

¹⁷Ibid.; Cabaniss, 66.

¹⁸Photographs in Sansing; "Old Dormitory to Be Destroyed," (*University*) *Mississippian*, 8 October 1919.

per year), though an additional five dollar charge was newly levied for room rent. New academic facilities enhanced the campus experience for students, but stagnating enrollment limited the need for new dormitories, and the three existing buildings satisfied most housing needs until the twentieth century. Many years, the University was kept open only through a significant preparatory school population even as new programs attempted to attract students to the institution. In 1877-1878, the University achieved its highest enrollment prior to the twentieth century, matriculating some 471 students and housing them in facilities designed to accommodate 216.¹⁹

A fluctuating enrollment and the University's increasing dependence on preparatory students to fill dormitories exacerbated disciplinary problems on campus. Even with legislative prohibitions on the sale of liquor and the establishment of pool halls and bowling alleys within five miles of the University campus, students were involved in a number of enterprises that the administration

¹⁹Cabaniss, 83-5. This tremendous increase in enrollment can be at least partially accounted for in the ending of tuition charges in 1877.

considered improper.²⁰ Ranging from simple student pranks such as "tying balls of fire to the tails of calves on dark nights to see them run across the campus" to gambling and cheating, disciplinary concerns came to dominate discourse about the University and housing during Reconstruction and the years that followed. Faculty blamed the problems on the natural impropriety of the dormitory system that was exacerbated by the unnatural mix of student ages and maturity levels residing together in the residence halls. In hopes of bringing about an effective solution to this problem, they officially asked the Board to end the dormitory system in 1886. Their request was denied, and disciplinary problems continued. With a variety of maturity levels among students ranging from Confederate veterans to thirteen-year-olds, housing rules were difficult to enforce. Even so, Chancellor Alexander Stewart, hearkening back to his days as a professor at West Point, ordered weekly inspections of the dormitories by the faculty as had been the case in the early years of the University. Though these inspections attempted to improve the situation, they

²⁰Cabaniss, 86-7.

simply increased the problem, as many faculty objected to this role and their laxity encouraged additional misconduct.²¹

The height of student misconduct in the dormitories came in 1881. Chancellor Stewart discovered a "lewd woman" in a student's dormitory room whom several students had apparently "visited" during the course of the day. The woman was said to be an employee of the Oxford post office, and the chancellor informed the postmistress that her employees should behave in a more proper manner, lest the faculty lodge a complaint with the Postmaster General in Washington. The faculty blamed the situation at least in part on "corrupting influences in the town of Oxford." The student in whose room the woman was found was expelled, and other students faced disciplinary action. When informed of the situation, the Board of Trustees moved to abolish the fraternity system, but reversed its action before the end of its meeting.²²

²¹Sansing, 146-7.

²²Cabaniss, 97.

At about the same time, the campus faced new challenges with the matriculation of women students. Early discussion about the admission of women to the University began in 1875 with the publication of an article in the first issue of the *University of Mississippi Magazine*, a student publication by the joint literary societies, encouraging the university to allow women to attend. Widespread discussion continued, and the Board of Trustees voted to admit women to the collegiate department (but not the preparatory school or the law school) on 28 June 1882. However, records indicate that the first woman to enroll, Julia Augustus Allard, actually registered in 1881 before the Board's approval. The academic year of 1882-1883 brought the enrollment of eleven young women to the University.²³

During the early years of the coeducational University, women were not housed on campus. They lived instead with families or in boarding houses in Oxford. Strict separation of the sexes was maintained outside of the classroom; women had separate study rooms in the Lyceum

²³Moak, 94; Sansing, 137.

and were not permitted in the men's dormitories. Female students were prohibited from eating in the campus boardinghouses and were allowed to board on campus only in the homes of faculty members.²⁴

As the nineteenth century came to an end, the University of Mississippi fell into a comfortable pattern regarding its student housing. Facilities were taken for granted, and new construction was not attempted. Maintenance was kept to a minimum, and the fifty-year-old buildings began to fall into disrepair. During the administration of Chancellor Edward Mayes (1886-1892), considerable renovations were made to the existing dormitories, but these updates could not be maintained without significant financial support which the legislature could not provide. Behavioral problems continued in the dormitories, and concerns about inappropriate actions by students did not diminish with time. Nationwide trends brought a general softening of regulations and a

²⁴Ibid.

significant reduction in dormitory construction as the perceived importance of these facilities declined.²⁵

With the approach of the twentieth century, the University faced a number of important challenges to its physical plant with the increasing need for maintenance and the growing student population necessitating more housing, including buildings for women. These new initiatives brought a temporary vitality to student housing but did not end the ongoing struggle to provide students with adequate facilities to meet their needs.

²⁵Cabaniss, 103; Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 67.

CHAPTER THREE

Construction, Demolition, and Expansion: 1900-1945

The University of Mississippi entered the twentieth century with great needs in student housing that presented difficult challenges to the administration of the University. Over the course of the century, these challenges would only increase in magnitude. With rooms to accommodate only 216 students, the University's housing shortage could only mount as enrollment grew, and the growth of the student body was severely limited until additional housing facilities were made available on campus.²⁶

Before construction began on new housing facilities, Chancellor Robert Fulton spearheaded significant improvements to the University's infrastructure that would help to accommodate these new facilities. In 1896 the

University installed a deep water well and water tank, and two years later a sewer system was added to accompany this new equipment, allowing the installation of water closets inside the dormitories. Electricity and steam heat were installed to the residence halls in 1901, and telephone service was made available to women students in 1904 in the newly-constructed Ricks Hall.

Ricks Hall was the first residence hall to house women on the University campus. Opening in 1903, Ricks was named for Fanny J. Ricks, an early supporter of the University whose gifts helped to increase the availability of classes during the early years of the University's summer session. Constructed at a cost of nearly \$20,000, Ricks housed sixty students and offered space for socializing and entertainment. Among the many amenities of Ricks was a rented piano, justified to the Board of Trustees only through special action of Chancellor Fulton. Ricks Hall soon became known as "The Coop," and for several years the

²⁶Sansing, 160.

student newspaper titled its column of news from female students "News from the Coop." Ricks remained a fixture on the Ole Miss campus for seventy years, being renovated in 1947, but it was demolished in 1973 to make way for the new Ole Miss Union.²⁷

With the construction of Ricks Hall, the University fulfilled its significant need of on-campus housing for women. However, housing capacity for men had not increased since before the Civil War, remaining steady at 216 while enrollment increased significantly. Makeshift quarters were established in the Lyceum and the Chapel, but these were unsatisfactory living conditions and did not fulfill all of the housing needs for the campus. Taylor Hall, formerly used as part of the University's preparatory school and faculty housing, was renovated to serve as a dormitory and music building in 1905, but this additional space still did not satisfy all needs. Dining quarters were similarly cramped, with a dining hall designed to seat forty somehow serving eighty students at each meal.²⁸

²⁷Ibid., 158-9; Cabaniss, 111.

²⁸Sansing, 160-1; personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton.

Regulations on student life were as dated as the dormitories themselves. As the University moved into a new century, students had hoped for significant progress in treatment by their professors, but instead they found new stringent regulations on student life that hearkened back to the Victorian era. In particular, a ban on Sunday travel by athletic teams and the end of a long tradition of student-sponsored dances during commencement week frustrated students who sought new freedoms. The editor of the student magazine in 1901 blamed significant enrollment declines on these restrictive rules and criticized the total effect of the regulations as worthy only of "either cadets at a military academy, or pupils at a second-rate primary school." The editor was removed, and the rules remained in place for several more years.²⁹

After a 1907 report to the legislature by newly-appointed Chancellor Andrew Armstrong Kincannon detailing the immediate needs of the University's physical plant, particularly a men's dormitory and a new dining hall, the legislature made the largest appropriation the University

²⁹Sansing, 175-6.

had seen since it opened. Moving beyond the particular needs expressed to the legislature, the University built a number of new facilities intricately connected to student housing, including a new power plant, a campus laundry, and a student infirmary, in addition to the new dining hall and men's dormitory.³⁰

Gordon Hall was the first new residence hall built for men since the Civil War, with its cornerstone laid in November 1908 on the site of what is today Carrier Hall. Designed to house two hundred male students and provide dining space for twice that number, Gordon was an important step in resolving the housing crisis faced by the campus in the early 1900s. Gordon Hall opened in 1909 with a gala celebration, as all alumni of the University were invited back to take part in the ceremonies, beginning the grand tradition of homecoming celebrations for alumni. The *Mississippian* later noted that the processional during the dedication of the building was interrupted by a friendly scuffle between the freshmen and the three upper classes, but the juniors and seniors left the sophomores to battle

³⁰Ibid., 184-5.

it out. Gordon remained the primary residence hall for men until its destruction by fire in 1934, to be discussed in more detail later.³¹

Though it seemed to solve most of the University's immediate housing problems, Gordon Hall presented new challenges for the University administration over time. David Sansing describes the particular problems with Gordon Hall:

A few years after its opening, Chancellor Kincannon cited Gordon Hall as "the monumental error" of his administration. The concentration of two hundred boys in one building produced a noise level that virtually prohibited studying and sleeping and a mischief level that proved to be costly to the university. Boys shot firecrackers in the building's spacious hallways, whooped and hollered half the night, defaced the walls and furnishings, and in general badly abused the university's newest and largest building. After this unfortunate experience,

³¹Ibid.; personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton; "Did You Know . . .", *(University) Mississippian*, 8 February 1924; handwritten notes on dormitories.

Kincannon recommended that future dormitories be constructed on a smaller scale and house fewer boys.³²

With the construction of the new Gordon Hall, the campus' immediate housing shortage was remedied. However, students detected deeper problems in the University's approach to student housing, complaining that the cost of living at Ole Miss was unusually high compared to other colleges in the state. Students and parents, citing costs that were nearly double those of other state colleges, accused administrators of financial impropriety, such as being overcharged by campus facilities that did not give the University its appropriate portion of the profits. Others voiced concerns that the University did not receive an appropriate share of rent funds from schoolteachers who were housed in dormitories during summer institutes. The allegations against Chancellor Kincannon and other administrators were investigated by a legislative commission, but Kincannon resigned before the commission's

³²Sansing, 185. Such advice was generally followed up until 1960, when similar housing shortages brought equally large residence halls to the campus, and many of those buildings are popularly known for problems very much like those of Gordon Hall. One of those buildings was named for Chancellor Kincannon.

report was completed, and the chancellor was never found to be a party to any wrongdoing.³³

After Chancellor Kincannon's resignation, the University continued to grow. Over time, it worked to rid itself of an elitist image that hurt enrollment overall, cutting costs and changing policies to encourage students from outside the planter class to attend. Costs for housing were set as a part of overall tuition and fees, which in 1915 varied from \$108.75 to \$125.95, depending on the particular dormitory selected. In 1914 and 1915, the University set enrollment records, enrolling over five hundred students in 1914 and over six hundred students in 1915. Further growth was again limited by the lack of adequate dormitory space, with some students housed in the gymnasium in the basement of the Lyceum, and the University's 1916 goal of seven hundred students could not be met.³⁴

³³Ibid., 189-91, 194-5.

³⁴Cabaniss, 129-30; J.N. Powers to students, 11 August 1915, personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton; Sansing, 197.

The space limitations of the University's student housing reached crisis proportions again in 1918. In January of that year, the rear portion of Odom, Jackson, and Calhoun Halls collapsed and the residents of the facility were evacuated. Upon inspection after this incident, LaBauve, Washington, and Madison Halls, open since 1848, were similarly condemned as unsafe and demolished in 1920. Students were shuffled around campus, using any available space for housing, including classrooms in the Lyceum, unused space in Taylor Hall, and boarding houses in Oxford, since there were no legislative appropriations for new residence halls in sight. Problems continued for several more years, with some students moving in with professors and the children of prominent families taking rooms in Oxford hotels. Gordon Hall housed three men in each of its one hundred double-occupancy rooms. Space for female students was similarly limited, and some rooms in the infirmary were used to house women. Even with the makeshift housing arrangements, up to one hundred students were turned away each year for want of a place to live in the early 1920s.³⁵

³⁵"Ancient Building Found Unsafe"; "Old Dormitory to Be

Soon, though, the University would face a larger challenge than providing enough housing for its students, though it emerged from an attempt on its life with exactly what it needed to survive into the future. Opponents of the University in the state legislature brought forth a proposal to consolidate the three white colleges of Mississippi into a single institution at Jackson, in part due to the expense that was needed to repair the facilities at the existing institutions. When that proposal failed, others offered another option that would not consolidate the state's colleges but would instead move the flagship university from Oxford to Jackson. Once again, the plan failed. After all the wrangling, the legislature realized that it had to make some sort of appropriation to the University to repair and expand its physical plant in Oxford, so it passed a bill allocating \$750,000 to the University for capital construction.³⁶

The largest part of the \$750,000 capital construction allocation of 1920 was put toward five new residence halls

Destroyed"; Sansing, 198-9.

³⁶Sansing, 199-201.

for men and women. For women, the University built Ward Hall adjacent to the earlier Ricks Hall, which it was designed to duplicate. Named for Dr. B.F. Ward, a physician and Confederate veteran from Winona, Ward Hall opened in the fall of 1921 and cost nearly \$70,000. It was connected to Ricks Hall by a shared dining room. Later, Ward Hall was known for its unique sense of community among its residents, who went so far as to host a reunion for all its previous occupants in the 1960s. Ward was demolished along with Ricks in May 1973 to make way for the new Ole Miss Union.³⁷

Four new residence halls for men were constructed out of the same legislative appropriation. With the University noting the ongoing behavioral problems in Gordon Hall, the new facilities were much smaller, with only about thirty rooms each, but they still added a significant new capacity to the University's student housing facilities. Set considerably apart from the rest of campus, George Hall was later known as the "country club" because of its distance

³⁷Personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton; "New Dormitories Nearing Completion," *(University) Mississippian*, 23 September 1921; Judy Trott, interview by author, Oxford, Miss., 18 July 2000.

from other dormitories and the apparent upper-class status of its residents. The first state building to be constructed of concrete, George Hall was named for General James Z. George, one of two Mississippians honored in the National Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. George served as a United States Senator from Mississippi from 1881 until 1897, but he was most notorious for his role in reinstating conservative Democratic rule of the state in 1875 following Reconstruction. George Hall still stands today and was renovated in 1974 and expanded in 1993 to house the Department of Communicative Disorders and the Speech and Hearing Center.³⁸

The other three men's residence halls built out of the 1920 legislative appropriation formed a small quadrangle on the outskirts of the main areas of campus northwest of the Lyceum. Opening in 1921, Lamar, LaBauve, and Odom Halls each housed sixty students in thirty rooms on a common

³⁸Sansing, 202; "James Zechariah George -- NSH Statue," Internet on-line, available from <<http://www.aoc.gov/art/nshpages/george.htm>>, accessed 17 May 2001; D.W. Steel, "Mississippi Flag Proposal," Internet on-line, available from <<http://www.mcsr.olemiss.edu/~mudws/flag/>>, accessed 17 May 2001; "Rededication of George Hall" [program], 25 March 1994, personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton.

floor plan shared with George Hall. Odom and LaBauve Halls were named such after the dormitories bearing the same names were condemned and demolished in 1920. Lamar Hall's name was changed to Deupree Hall in 1930 when the Mississippi Bar Association named the new law school building Lamar Hall after L.Q.C. Lamar. Its new name was after John Greer Deupree, the first dean of the School of Education.³⁹

During the 1920s, student life in the residence halls as dictated by University policy hearkened back to the nineteenth century. Universities across the country had come to realize the advantages of controlling social life on campus through dormitories. Residence halls were seen as a moral necessity, as they built a tight community similar to the home environment and used peer pressure to encourage morality. They also offered adult role models outside the classroom, as some faculty often lived among the students. Coeducational schools provided more housing for women than

³⁹"Many Improvements Made on Campus," (*University Mississippian*, 29 September 1922; personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton.

for men, as university officials felt that "women students required more oversight than men."⁴⁰

In 1925, under the leadership of the revered Dr. Alfred Hume, the University faculty put in place the most stringent disciplinary code the campus had ever seen. In an attempt to focus students on their studies, rules prohibited hazing, no longer allowed dances on campus, banned automobiles, required class attendance with no excused absences, and directed daily attendance at chapel. Engagement in any of the traditional vices of college students (drinking, smoking, and the like) could bring expulsion. Because of the chancellor's personal connection to these ends and his deep devotion to the Presbyterian church, some termed the University "Hume's Presbyterian University." Even with his dated reforms, he remained known as one of the most popular and beloved chancellors in the University's history.⁴¹

⁴⁰Julie A. Reuben, *The Making of the Modern University: Intellectual Transformation and the Marginalization of Morality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 260-1, 343 n. 75.

⁴¹Cabaniss, 135; Sansing, 232-3.

During the late 1920s, the University faced yet another crisis that threatened its existence. Newly-elected Governor Theodore Bilbo supported a new effort to move the University to Jackson in order to give it considerable new facilities and locate it in a place more central to the state's population. The effort failed in the House of Representatives by an overwhelming vote of 109 to 9. Seeing that his initiative to move Ole Miss would not succeed, Bilbo put forth a call for a \$5 million appropriation for new buildings in Oxford and offered plans to connect the University to the state more efficiently through new hard surface roads to Oxford. Though Bilbo's effort for a large capital appropriation failed, the 1928 legislature did grant the University \$1.6 million for capital construction.⁴²

This significant capital appropriation, which set a new record for the largest amount allocated to the University, allowed construction to begin once again on the

⁴²Ibid., 221-3. The larger sum failed in part because Chancellor Hume did not submit any capital request to the Legislature in 1927 or 1928. Cabaniss theorizes that Bilbo attempted to move the University to bring its needs to the forefront of the agenda and force the Legislature to appropriate additional funds.

campus. The additional space added in 1921 had quickly been filled, and students had been using temporary housing around campus since 1922, when enrollment had first reached 700. Students had been regularly turned away for lack of sufficient housing. A new dining hall, now known as Johnson Commons, was built, along with several academic and support buildings and a number of athletic facilities. It also funded the construction of one women's residence hall and six men's residence halls that doubled the housing capacity of the University. The additional facilities were so badly needed that construction was pushed through an epidemic and Christmas holidays in order to get the new buildings opened as soon as possible. University officials later regretted this action when considerable problems were found with the construction, particularly flooding, poor materials, and generally shabby construction. In its early days, Isom Hall was known as "Iceland Hall" because of its ongoing lack of hot water and steam for heat.⁴³

⁴³Sansing, 202; Cabaniss, 143; "Delay Is Ended in Program for Local Buildings," (*University*) *Mississippian*, 22 September 1928; "Investigators Meet to Consider Chance of Draining Campus," (*University*) *Mississippian*, 30 November 1929; "Isom Co-Eds Forced to Vacate Building

The new residence halls and dining facilities moved the center of student housing away from the primary academic areas of the campus around the Circle. Isom Hall for women, built nearby Ricks and Ward Halls to house sixty residents, was named for Sarah McGehee Isom, the first woman to serve on the faculty of the University and the daughter of Oxford's first white settler.⁴⁴ The six new men's dormitories were built along what is now known as Dormitory Row. Each housing sixty residents, they shared a common floor plan and were arranged into two quadrangles.

Barr, Howry, and Falkner Halls comprised the quad closest to the Circle. Barr Hall was named for Colonel Hugh Barr, a resident of Lafayette County and longtime member of the Board of Trustees. It was later renovated to house portions of the Music Department and the Afro-American Studies Program. Howry Hall was named for Judge Charles B. Howry of Oxford, a state legislator, assistant attorney general, and judge on the United States Claims Court. Falkner Hall was named for J.W.T. Falkner, state senator,

Because of No Heat," *(University) Mississippian*, 5 October 1929.

⁴⁴Personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton.

University trustee, and uncle of William Faulkner. Howry and Falkner Halls are the oldest residence halls currently still in use for their original purpose.⁴⁵

The second quad of dormitories constructed with the appropriations of 1928 consisted of Vardaman, Hill, and Longstreet Halls. Vardaman Hall was named for Governor James K. Vardaman, known for his virulent white supremacist rhetoric and populist appeal as governor and United States Senator. Hill Hall was named for Judge Robert A. Hill, a longtime member of the Board of Trustees. Longstreet Hall was named for Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, the second president of the University who served from 1849 until 1856. These three buildings currently serve various campus departments as office buildings.⁴⁶

Even with the seven new residence halls and over four hundred new beds, the University was growing and needed additional space for student housing. This became a considerable challenge during the 1934-1935 academic year after Gordon Hall burned in the summer of 1934 just after

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

being renovated. Even with all the new construction, Gordon had accounted for one-quarter of the rooms for male students. Though parts of the building survived the fire and were used until the 1950s, no part of the damaged building could be salvaged for housing purposes. All of the campus' housing facilities were at capacity, and students were once again housed in every corner that could hold a bed. The new medical school building, later named Guyton Hall, housed forty-four medical and pre-med students. The upper levels of the new gymnasium were divided to house sixty-two students. Twenty-six students were assigned to the old biology department facilities in the basement of Peabody Hall. Eight football players were housed in the field house, and a two-story frame building at the University High School housed band members. Within two years, the University turned away two hundred students for lack of housing space.⁴⁷

Outgoing Chancellor Hume and new Chancellor Alfred Benjamin Butts lobbied the legislature to replace or rebuild Gordon Hall, but their requests went unanswered in

⁴⁷Sansing, 252-3; *(University) Mississippian*, 29 September 1934.

the midst of the financial crisis of the Great Depression. However, Chancellor Butts turned to two new sources in the late 1930s to fund the construction of new student housing, opening two new eras for the University. First, Butts looked to Greek housing to alleviate the pressures on the University. Fraternity Row was established on the south side of campus, and nine houses were built within the first two years of construction. The University retained ownership of the land but set up a long-term lease on the lot to the Greek letter organizations, who were then responsible for building the houses on their own, often with assistance from the Public Works Administration of the New Deal. By 1940, nineteen of the twenty-two Greek organizations on campus had constructed houses on Fraternity and Sorority Rows and had been instrumental in relieving the pressures on student housing that had limited the University's enrollment.⁴⁸

Butts also turned to the federal government for funding for student housing and other needed campus

⁴⁸Sansing, 253; Moak, 181-2; "Fraternity Row Nears Completion as Occupants Prepare to Move In; SAE, Phi Houses Finished in '36," *(University) Mississippian*, 10 April 1937.

buildings, bringing about a new era in the financing of residence hall construction that would continue through the 1960s. The federal government's first assistance to the University for housing came in 1934 when federal aid bought new mattresses for residence halls. Through later federal funding of the Public Works Administration, the University constructed six new residence halls, four for men and two for women, adding accommodations for some five hundred students and beginning to offset the loss of Gordon Hall. The two new women's dormitories, Barnard and Somerville, were designed to form a new complex with the older Isom Hall. Barnard Hall, housing 100, was named for Chancellor Barnard. Somerville Hall, housing seventy, was named for Thomas H. Somerville, former professor of law and Dean of the School of Law from 1906 until 1913.⁴⁹

Three of the new men's residence halls, each housing about seventy residents, were constructed in a new quadrangle on the new mall between the Lyceum and the

⁴⁹Davis Douglas Buchanan, *A Million Dollars in Concrete and Steel: Federal Aid to the University of Mississippi in the New Deal Era* (M.A. thesis, University of Mississippi, 1997), 36; Sansing, 253; Alfred Hume to Mr. J.A. Ellard, 31 May 1938, personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton.

hospital in an area of campus that had only recently been opened to development. Garland, Hedleston, and Mayes Halls composed this new quad. Garland Hall was named for Landon Cabell Garland, a former professor of physics and astronomy at the University from 1867 until 1875, when he became the first chancellor of the newly-organized Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee. Hedleston Hall was named for Winn David Hedleston, an 1883 University alumnus and longtime professor of philosophy and ethics. Dr. Hedleston, a Presbyterian minister, was also known for performing the marriage of William and Estelle Faulkner in 1929. Mayes Hall was named for Edward Mayes, the first alumnus of the University to be selected as chancellor, who was instrumental in securing new funding for the University and erected the first library building on the campus. Outside of the Garland-Hedleston-Mayes quadrangle, the federal funds provided for the construction of Leavell Hall, built between the two earlier quadrangles along Dormitory Row. It was named for Richard Marion Leavell, an

1859 alumnus of the University and professor of philosophy and political economy from 1890 until 1909.⁵⁰

With the conclusion of this major construction project in 1939, the campus was ready to house its much-enlarged student body. A 1939 brochure on the University described the facilities:

Ole Miss's dormitories are as modern as a 1939 hotel. The attractive maple furniture of each room includes single bed, study tables with indirect lighting, built-in book cases, and upholstered chairs. Each room has two clothes closets and hot and cold running water. Only two students are assigned to a room. The dormitories for girls are under the careful supervision of the Dean of Women, and each dormitory has a matron and an assistant matron in charge. Efficient maid service is provided in the girls' dormitories.⁵¹

⁵⁰Ibid.; Moak, 181; Sansing, 233.

⁵¹"The University of Mississippi" [brochure], University Archives, Archives and Special Collections Division, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi.

As the nation entered World War II, the University's facilities could finally handle its current student load. With declining enrollment during the war, facilities were less strained. However, the campus could not be prepared for the new challenges that would face it when the soldiers returned in 1945 and went to school.

CHAPTER FOUR

Bursting at the Seams: 1945-1971

After the end of World War II, colleges and universities across the country experienced a tremendous enrollment boom. Veterans returned home to hopes of increased opportunity that could be easily realized through the provisions of the GI Bill, which provided them a collegiate education at government cost. The University of Mississippi did not escape this trend toward increasing enrollment, and growth posed new and more difficult challenges regarding student housing to University officials. Enrollment in 1946 hit 3,213, nearly 1,000 students higher than just a year earlier, but the campus was still designed to accommodate just 1,500 students. In 1947, enrollment increased to more than 3,500, and over

1,000 students were turned away because the campus' physical plant could not handle them.⁵²

Immediate construction on new buildings began to alleviate pressing housing needs and anticipate future growth for the campus into the 1960s. War surplus buildings were set up around campus to be used as classroom and office space, and similar buildings also provided four hundred apartments for married veterans in what became known as "Vet Village." Construction began immediately on four new men's residence halls and one new women's residence hall.⁵³

The four new men's residence halls were built on an extended Dormitory Row on the west end of campus. Following a simple barracks-style plan, they were all completed in 1948 and named after University students who were killed in World War II. Baxter Hall, housing ninety students, was

⁵²Sansing, 263.

⁵³Ibid.

named in memory of Hermann Baxter, the 1942-1943 president of the Associated Student Body (ASB) who was killed in action in World War II. Baxter Hall was removed from service as a dormitory in 1971 and was renovated in 1990 to house the Telephone Exchange (later the Telecommunications Center). Lester Hall, following the same plan as Baxter Hall, was named for Drane Lester, a student from the class of 1921, a distinguished agent for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and a military intelligence officer who was killed in June 1941. It was closed as a residence hall in 1970 and now serves as a storage building for campus records. Gerard Hall was named for Gus Gerard, the ASB President during the 1941-1942 school year who was killed in action in World War II. Sam Hall was named for William Charles Sam, a vice-president of the ASB during 1941-1942 who was also killed in action in World War II. Gerard and Sam Halls each housed sixty-four residents before being closed in 1970 and 1971, respectively. In the 1980s, the deserted Sam Hall was often used by the Residence Hall Association for a haunted house each Halloween. Gerard and

Sam were later connected and renovated to house the University's printing services and publications divisions.⁵⁴

The enrollment of women students increased at a slower pace, and new housing facilities for women were not an immediate priority for the massive building programs on campus. The new women's residence hall, Eula Deaton Hall, did not open until 1952. It is named for Miss Eula Deaton, the first woman to receive a master's degree from the University. Miss Deaton later served as the University's first Dean of Women from 1903-1907 and as the first female faculty member in the English department.⁵⁵

Deaton Hall was the last of a generation of residence halls on the Oxford campus. It was the last hall to be built in a style to match the historical central campus areas, and it was the last residence hall not to be air conditioned. It was also the last hall to be funded through a state appropriation, as later halls were built out of

⁵⁴Personal files of Dr. Gerald Walton; "Spirits and Phantoms: RHA Spooks for Students," *(University) Daily Mississippian*, 29 October 1985.

⁵⁵"New, Modern Women's Dorm Ready Early Next Semester," *(University) Mississippian*, 2 November 1951.

federally financed bonds repaid from increased student rents. At the same time, it introduced a number of new features to residence life on campus. A consultant familiar with university residence halls was hired to assist in the design process, and several rooms were designed for single occupancy by female graduate students. Many rooms on the upper floors were painted a variety of different colors, and a modern buzzer system accompanied the first elevator in a residence hall to make life easier for the women who lived in the new facility. A lounge and a porch on each floor completed the excellent design of the facility. The built-in furniture was a true novelty - being the first residence hall on campus to have this amenity, the campus newspaper noted, "...almost everything but a roommate is built into the wall."⁵⁶

When Deaton opened in 1952 after two years of construction at a cost of \$295,333, it had already seen a number of problems. The building's opening was delayed several months due to problems with construction, including

⁵⁶"New Girl's Dormitory Construction to Start," *Oxford (Miss.) Eagle*, 20 October 1949; Kacky Salmon, "New Dorm Proves Mark of Distinction for Ole Miss," *(University) Mississippian*, 15 February 1952.

at least one rejection by building examiners. Seventy-three minor repairs were deemed necessary to resolve problems such as bad paint jobs, incomplete landscaping, missing bathroom fixtures, faulty door hardware, defective bed springs, and misaligned drawers in the built-in furniture. Once the building opened in the spring of 1952, though, it received rave reviews from its new residents, as its new amenities and facilities brought women's housing into a new era at the University.⁵⁷

After its early years, Deaton Hall continued to build a history of its own. From 1971 until 1974, Deaton was closed due to an excess of available rooms after a large number of new buildings opened. It reopened in 1974, continuing to house women students. In 1977-1978, Deaton had a unique resident in the presence of young Tommy Russell, the son of the hall directors, who made friends with the women in the building and brought a bit of childhood to the residents of the hall with his four-year-old antics. In 1985, Deaton was air-conditioned and became a men's residence hall. Hall legends purport that the

⁵⁷"New Dormitory for Women Refused by Building Examiners," *Oxford (Miss.) Eagle*, 1 November 1951; Salmon.

building is haunted by the ghost of Eula Deaton (who died long before the hall opened), and students blamed the ghost for trapping two students in the elevator in 1985. The breakdown was later attributed to an electrical problem.⁵⁸

At the same time as the construction boom, the campus witnessed at least a temporary transformation in student life. Students who had been on their own as veterans of World War II found it difficult to adapt to the stringent rules of the University. Their sheer numbers and consistent pressure on University officials brought significant change to the campus. They took an active role in designing their education, demanding changes to the curriculum to better meet their needs. College was no longer something that could only be enjoyed by the elite, and the educational system changed as students from the middle class began to be an active part of the University community. The Associated Student Body, once ignored by the University's leadership, played an important role in the removal of Chancellor Alfred Butts in 1946. The number of married

⁵⁸"An Only Child with Lots of 'Sisters'," *Jackson (Miss.) Daily News*, 19 May 1978; Toni Lepeska, "Stuck 1-Hour in an Elevator," *(University) Daily Mississippian*, 18 September 1985.

students increased significantly and changed the composition of the student body. The changes were clearly noted by dramatic differences in social life. Frank Moak, himself a student at the time, noted that "social life was much in evidence, but the kind of freshman pranks were different from the typical ones before the war. The veterans had much at stake. They felt that years had been lost. They didn't have the time for nor interest in frivolous activity."⁵⁹

As the 1950s wore on, the student veteran population decreased significantly after reaching its peak in the 1951-1952 academic year, but the overall student population continued to grow as a college education became more important and more accessible to the growing American middle class. The University hired the Olmstead Brothers in 1947 to make significant plans for campus expansion through a master plan for growth that called for continuing use of existing buildings and significant new construction, including the construction of several academic buildings in

⁵⁹Sansing, 258-9, 260; Moak, 195.

the Grove. Beginning in 1955, this necessary expansion would finally be realized.⁶⁰

In the fall of 1955, the *Mississippian* reported that preliminary plans were being made for new residence halls on campus, including dormitories for men and women and construction of permanent married student housing facilities to replace the temporary "Vet Village." In 1956, the University called on the state legislature to assist in the renovation of thirteen residence halls at a total cost of one million dollars. The plea to the legislature noted, "Renovation is necessary in part because of deterioration of plumbing and heating facilities, and because the obsolete wiring is a fire hazard and unsuitable for modern electrical equipment. It is uneconomical to maintain the old dormitories in their present state." There is no record of the legislature appropriating these necessary funds for renovation.⁶¹

⁶⁰Sansing, 263.

⁶¹"University Makes Plans to Construct New Dormitories," (*University*) *Daily Mississippian*, 4 November 1955; "Things That Can Not Wait" [brochure], University Archives, Archives and Special Collections Division, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi.

Even though the state did not provide funding for building new residence halls or renovating existing facilities, new buildings had to be built to accommodate the influx expected in the early 1960s when the first children of the "Baby Boom" would arrive on campus. The federal government, noting the lack of assistance from states in new construction on growing college campuses, helped universities to build new facilities through financing low-interest loans which would then be paid back over time out of rent fees. The first buildings to be constructed under this arrangement were Miller and Powers Halls for men and Hefley Hall for women.

Miller Hall, a men's residence hall designed to house 120 residents and completed in 1959, was the first residence hall designated for athletes during its construction. Designed to house, feed, and support male athletes, Miller Hall was named for Martin Van Buren Miller of Meridian, Mississippi. Miller was an alumnus of the class of 1908 and named "Man with the Most College Spirit" during his senior year. After graduation, Miller practiced law in Meridian and continued actively supporting the University and education in Mississippi through service in

local and state elected and appointed offices, including a term as the first president of the constitutional Board of Trustees of the Institutions of Higher Learning in Mississippi. He served as president of the Alumni Association from 1931 until 1934 and later worked with other alumni groups in the state to encourage adequate state funding for Mississippi's system of higher education.⁶²

The original cost of Miller Hall was \$538,129, and the building included a variety of unique features that provided special services and facilities for the athletes who originally lived there. The original plans contained a great deal of common space, including facilities for dining, studying, tutoring, and team meetings. The ground floor also featured shared bathrooms between every two rooms, a first in residence halls on the Oxford campus. Common areas, including the lounge, cafeteria, and counselor's suite, were air conditioned. After the construction of Kinard Hall in 1975, Miller's extensive

⁶²Moak, 170-1.

athletic support space became the offices for the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life.⁶³

Powers Hall, which also opened in 1959, was designed to house 116 residents. It was named for Chancellor Joseph Neely Powers who served from 1914 until 1924 and again from 1930 until 1932. Constructed on the west end of Dormitory Row just west of the Garland-Hedleston-Mayes complex, it was the last dormitory constructed in the original residential areas of campus. Built at a cost of \$305,000, Powers had three stories, with a lounge on the first floor and built-in furniture in each room. Powers Hall closed as a residence hall in 1982, and it was renovated in the late 1980s to serve as offices for the Office of Information Technology and the Mississippi Center for Supercomputing Research.

Hefley Hall, a women's residence hall designed to house 150 students, was completed in 1959 and named for Miss Estella Garner Hefley, who served as Dean of Women at the University from 1933 until 1957. During her tenure, Miss Hefley served as an example to female students of the

⁶³"Dorm Dedicated at Mississippi; Honors Miller," *Commercial Appeal (Memphis, Tenn.)*, 22 March 1959.

roles women were to play in the professional world while still retaining the particular virtues of womanhood of the time. On campus, Dean Hefley is most remembered for her protection of the "delicate women" of the University and the planting of the magnolia trees along Magnolia Drive in memory of those Ole Miss students who died in military service during World War II.⁶⁴

Hefley Hall was built at a cost of over \$450,000 and contains over 33,000 square feet of total space. It was the first residence hall to be designed with central air-conditioning. The extensive common areas of Hefley, including a main lounge, a sun deck, and kitchenettes on each floor, were unique to campus when it opened, and the elevator was only the second to be installed in a residence hall. When Hefley Hall officially opened on 28 May 1959, the entire women's social community of the University and Oxford participated in a formal dinner, a dedication ceremony, and a formal open house and tea table. Today, Hefley Hall continues to serve as one of the primary

⁶⁴Judy Trott, interview.

women's residence halls and is the first building to see major renovations under the Phoenix Project.⁶⁵

The same building program that constructed Miller, Powers, and Hefley Halls also built a considerable number of new apartments for married students. A total of fourteen buildings were constructed at a cost of \$2.41 million. These facilities contained 120 one-bedroom apartments in ten buildings and eighty two-bedroom apartments in four buildings, each with a complete kitchen. These apartments, which now make up the major part of the Village, were completed in 1959.⁶⁶

About the same time as these major construction projects concluded, student life in the dormitories also saw a significant shift. Up until 1957, women lived under strict rules in the residence halls, particularly regarding evening hours spent in the halls. University policy specified that women had to be in at 8:30 and spend the

⁶⁵Mrs. Gill Johnson, "Socially Speaking: Hefley Hall Opened with Gala Events," *Oxford (Miss.) Eagle*, 28 May 1959.

⁶⁶"Mass Building Program Makes Steady Progress," *(University) Daily Mississippian*, 21 November 1958.

time from 8:30 until 10:30 in their rooms. On weekends, hours were extended until 11:00, and students with a B average were allowed out until 9:30 during the week. These restrictions were lessened after 1957, but they continued in some form until the 1970s. Visitation by members of the opposite sex was not allowed on a regular basis until 1975.⁶⁷

With the financing of new facilities placing a considerable burden on the University, students found notable increases in the cost of their residence hall accommodations. For the 1959-1960 term of the University, rent rates were set at \$70 per semester for men and \$82.50 per semester for women, a considerable increase from the previous year's rent of \$50 per semester for men and \$65 per semester for women.⁶⁸

Construction on new housing facilities continued through the 1960s, with the final residence hall of the building boom in response to the Baby Boom being completed

⁶⁷Judy Trott, interview.

⁶⁸Minutes of the Student Housing Committee, 2 October 1958, University Archives, Archives and Special Collections Division, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi.

in 1971. All of these new facilities were radical departures from the earlier days of student housing on campus, occupying previously undeveloped areas of campus and housing substantially more students in individual facilities than before.

Guess Hall was the first residence hall since Gordon Hall to house more than two hundred students. Completed in 1960, Guess Hall was named for Richard Malcolm Guess, Dean of Men at the University from 1932 to 1955. During his tenure, Dean Guess was often recognized for his unique commitment to students, and the student yearbook *The Ole Miss* was dedicated to him twice during his years of service to the University. He was also a noted member of the Oxford community, active in a number of service organizations and other community institutions. Dean Guess lived to see the dedication of the building named for him on 26 April 1961, and he continued his service to the University even in retirement until the very day of his death.⁶⁹

Built with the assistance of the Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency, Guess Hall was the largest and most

⁶⁹Moak, 217-9.

expensive of the residence halls on the Oxford campus when it opened, costing \$647,600. It was the first men's residence hall to have central air conditioning. At the time it opened, Guess Hall was noted for its rooms, among the largest on campus. The unique design of Guess, with two wings, each connected to the lobby and the other wing only on the first floor, now allows it to house both men and women students. When Guess Hall opened in 1960, rent per person was the highest on campus for male students at \$75 per person per semester.⁷⁰

Guess Hall has changed considerably over the years. In June 1968, Guess was designated a separate residence hall for graduate students, and in 1984, it became the only hall to house both men and women, though in separate wings. Guess became the first residence hall to have its own computer lab when, in 1987, five computers were installed

⁷⁰"Guess Hall Opens Formally December 1," (*University Daily Mississippian*, 6 October 1960; "New Men's Dormitory Opens Soon," (*University Daily Mississippian*, 10 November 1960.

as part of a campus-wide effort to make computers more accessible to students.⁷¹

After Guess, new dormitories continued to grow larger. Brown Hall, a women's residence hall completed in 1961, was designed to house 250 students. The third building to be built on the Women's Terrace, it was also the third residence hall to feature full central air conditioning, and the third floor originally contained a sun deck open to students on the roof of the building. Brown opened its doors known as "New Dorm," but in 1965 it was officially named for Mrs. Maud Morrow Brown, an alumna of the University and a prominent figure in the Oxford-University community. The entire Brown family was active in the University community and recognized for their contributions to the University. Mrs. Brown's husband, Dr. Calvin Brown, was a celebrated teacher who taught William Faulkner. Her son Calvin was the thirteenth Rhodes Scholar from the University in 1928. Mrs. Brown herself was noted for her work on local history, including *The University Greys*,

⁷¹Amy Stewart, "After Waiting 3½ Years Some Dorms Get Computers," (*University*) *Daily Mississippian*, 16 February 1987.

chronicling the history of the unit of University students who were killed in the Battle of Gettysburg, and *The History of First Presbyterian Church*.⁷²

Stewart Hall opened in 1963 as the largest residence hall for women to that time. Designed to house 294 students, Stewart Hall is named for the fifth chancellor of the University of Mississippi, General Alexander Peter Stewart, who served from 1874 until 1886. Known as "Old Straight Stewart," Chancellor Stewart was the only Confederate general to later serve as Chancellor, and his military career was quite distinguished. Before taking the top administrative and faculty position at the University, Stewart taught at West Point and at other military schools throughout the country. Chancellor Stewart saw the University through a period of great change as it began to admit women, employ a full-time librarian, offer the Ph.D., and appoint women to its faculty.⁷³

⁷²Moak, 169-70, 220.

⁷³Ibid., 93; Sansing, 134-5; "Alexander Peter Stewart," *UM Web Chancellor's Profiles*, Internet on-line, available from <<http://www.olemiss.edu/hospitality/about/chan/STEWART.html>>, accessed 2 August 2000.

Constructed at a cost of \$918,448 from state funds and federal loans, Stewart featured spacious common areas and other luxuries that the female residents greatly enjoyed. In early references to the new building, its residents called it the "Stewart Hilton" because of its superior facilities for that time. Kitchenettes on each floor, two elevators, a large lobby, and a large central staircase were among the amenities it offered its residents. The only complaint shared by Stewart residents was the climb up the hill to the rest of campus.⁷⁴

Also opening in 1963, Kincannon Hall is the second largest residence hall on the University of Mississippi campus. It is named for Andrew Armstrong Kincannon, the seventh chancellor of the University who served from 1907 until 1914. A native of Noxubee County, Mississippi, Chancellor Kincannon had attended the University as an undergraduate but received his degree from National Normal University in Lebanon, Ohio. He taught at Mississippi A & M (now Mississippi State University), served as state superintendent of education, and served as president of the

⁷⁴"New Stewart dorm: Afford hotel conveniences," *Oxford (Miss.) Eagle*, 27 January 1964.

Industrial Institute and College for Women (now Mississippi University for Women) prior to his appointment as chancellor. During his tenure, Kincannon led the University toward a stronger sense of democracy and encouraged a broader base of students to attend by adding a work-study program and establishing the forerunner of the Associated Student Body. He also encouraged a great deal of expansion of the University's physical plant, including the construction of Gordon Hall.⁷⁵

Kincannon Hall opened at the start of the 1963 summer session after 82 weeks of construction. With 105,948 square feet of total space, it was by far the largest residence hall built on the campus to that point. Kincannon Hall was noted for its air conditioning and its unusual elevator configuration that has one elevator serving the odd-numbered floors and another elevator serving the even-numbered floors.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Sansing, 182-7.

⁷⁶Bob King, "Hall named for famed Chancellor," *The Mississippian (University)*, 11 June 1963.

Since its opening, Kincannon has had a unique history, serving many male students in its first six years of use. However, in 1969, with the opening of the Twin Towers complex (now known as Martin-Stockard Towers) and increasing vacancies in men's residence halls around campus, Kincannon was converted to use as a female residence hall. In the spring of 1974, after the opening of New Dorm (now Crosby Hall), Kincannon was returned to service as a male hall. In July 1976, two unoccupied rooms on the fifth floor of Kincannon were damaged by a small fire. In 1984, a student filed a lawsuit against the University for burns he sustained in an elevator because there was no working light fixture and another student in the elevator flicked a lighter that ignited his clothing.⁷⁷

The largest facility for student housing on the University of Mississippi campus is the combined Martin-Stockard "Twin Towers." Each housing some 450 residents, the complex opened in 1969, and the individual halls are the tallest buildings on the University's Oxford campus,

⁷⁷"Dorm Fire Confined to 2 Rooms," *Daily Corinthian* (Miss.), 2 July 1976; Katie Smith, "Student Files Suit Against University," (University) *Daily Mississippian*, 24 October 1985.

each with eleven stories. Martin Hall, the east tower now housing women, is named for John D. Martin, a prominent resident of Oxford who in 1841 offered the state 320 acres of land provided that it be used for the state university. He was compensated \$10 for his deed once the Legislature narrowly approved the placement of the university at Oxford. Stockard Hall, the west tower now housing men, is named for James Stockard, who made a similar donation of an equal amount of land to the state for the university campus. Stockard continued to live near the campus, and his home was later the home of John Faulkner, a noted writer and artist.⁷⁸

Built at a cost of \$3.78 million, Martin-Stockard offered a number of new amenities at the time of its construction, including a large parking lot that accommodated over fifty percent of its student capacity in vehicles, an unusually large percentage at that time. An

⁷⁸"Request for Approval of Change of Name of the Structure Known as Twin Towers," *Chancellor's Report to the Board of Trustees*, 16 February 1984, Office of Special Events and Protocol, University of Mississippi; Frank Moak to George Street, "Naming of Stockard and Martin Towers and Ventress Hall," 30 January 1984, Office of Special Events and Protocol, University of Mississippi.

automatic conversion system between air conditioning and heating systems offered improvements in comfort for students. The buildings were originally intended to house only male students, but conversation during construction had noted that the two towers could house students of opposite sexes. In 1985, just after the building was officially named, Martin-Stockard was modified to allow men to live in the west tower (Stockard) and women to live in the east tower (Martin). With the renovations accompanying the conversion of Martin Hall to accommodate women, many students complained that Stockard Hall did not receive similar renovations, though they eventually took place.⁷⁹

The final residence hall built as part of the University's accommodations for the Baby Boom was Crosby Hall. The largest residence hall on campus, built at a cost of \$2.8 million, Crosby was completed in 1971 to house 756 residents. Until 1984, it was known as "New Dorm," when it was named for Dorothy Hagert Crosby of Purvis, Mississippi, and New Orleans, Louisiana. Her active participation in philanthropy in Mississippi and her native North Dakota

⁷⁹Tommy Houston, "Big dorm slated," *(University) Daily Mississippian*, 24 April 1967.

brought the naming of Crosby Hall in her honor. She never attended the University of Mississippi herself, but she made a major donation in 1973 that enabled the University to acquire and renovate Rowan Oak, the home of William Faulkner. She was also active in a number of civic organizations in Mississippi and in New Orleans, and one of her two children graduated from the University.⁸⁰

During the years of the building boom on campus, residence life saw significant changes, particularly as the student body grew to include African American students. With the admission of James Meredith to the University in 1962, the residence halls came to house the first black students on campus. On the riotous night of 30 September 1962, James Meredith spent the evening under guard in his room in Baxter Hall. Less than a month later, students protested the presence of Meredith at the University on the evening of 29 October by throwing eggs and bottles at Meredith as he left Baxter Hall and throwing cherry bombs at the building. After the incident, campus officials put

⁸⁰“Dedication of Crosby Hall” [program], 5 May 1984, Office of Special Events and Protocol, University of Mississippi.

in place a stronger disciplinary policy designed to take action against students who participated in such demonstrations, though few students were ever more inclined to accept Meredith.⁸¹

Life in the residence halls was difficult for the University's first African American students. Verna Bailey, the first African American female to attend the University, was ostracized from her peers while housed in Brown Hall in 1965. She was not allowed to room with white girls, and her perception as an "outside agitator" in the University community encouraged her to work toward graduation in three years. During her third and final year on campus, she was allowed to room with a white girl, but she was quoted as saying that the University's conditions for black students would not be normal for at least twenty years.⁸²

⁸¹Sansing, 303, 307; Residents of Powers Hall to L.L. Love, 30 October 1962, L.L. Love Collection, Archives and Special Collections Division, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi.

⁸²"'Memories Are Painful'" Says Ole Miss's First Black Coed," *Jackson (Miss.) Advocate*, 14-20 June 1979; Sansing, 311.

Additional changes in student life came about because of the significant growth of the University's student population in the 1950s and 1960s. Greek housing became increasingly prominent, with the University assisting four fraternities and sororities with the construction of houses on campus by holding the bonds on the facilities. Other changes in policies came regarding students living off campus. In 1963, officials made it more difficult for students to live off campus so that the new residence halls then being constructed would meet the capacity requirements set by their federal bonds. However, within three years, policies had changed with an enrollment boom, bringing new rules that allowed junior and senior men and law and graduate students to live off campus without special permission.⁸³

As the building boom of the 1950s and 1960s came to an end, student housing changed dramatically. The life of students on campus was significantly different from that of

⁸³Interview with Judy Trott; Minutes of the Student Housing Committee, 8 February 1963, University Archives, Archives and Special Collections Division, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi; "Construction Is Underway to the Tune of \$17 Million," *Oxford (Miss.) Eagle*, 6 October 1966.

students just twenty years earlier. Students saw notable changes in the buildings in which they were housed in those same years. However, time continued to bring new challenges to student housing at Ole Miss.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Modern Era? Dilapidation, Visitation, and Renovation: 1971-2001

Challenges seem never to end for student housing at the University of Mississippi. As the University prospers, student housing is often left behind, struggling for resources to provide space for the growing student population. With declining institutional support, a growing physical plant, and increasing demands for student involvement and activities, student housing has often found itself as the dilapidated and ignored institution, much like many of its buildings over the years.

Since the completion of Crosby Hall in 1971, the campus has seen the construction of only one new residence hall, Kinard Hall. A men's residence hall housing 251 students, Kinard served as the preferred residence for male athletes from its construction in 1975 until 2001. It was

one of the most spacious halls on campus and the only residence hall to provide suite-style accommodations for all its residents.

Kinard Hall opened without an official name. Many assumed that it would be named Vaught Hall after longtime football coach Johnny Vaught, and early discussions of the building on campus refer to it as such. However, it was not officially named until 20 September 1986, when the honor went to Frank M. "Bruiser" Kinard, the University's first collegiate All-American football player. A native of Pelahatchie, Mississippi, Kinard played football for Ole Miss from 1934 until 1937 and returned to the University as assistant football coach in 1948 after a career in professional football. He also served the University as Athletic Director and Assistant Dean of Student Personnel, and during his years as athletic director he supervised the

construction of the residence hall that would later come to bear his name.⁸⁴

When Kinard Hall opened in 1975, it housed only male student athletes, who had previously been housed in Miller Hall. The \$3.3 million facility was built without a designated funding source, and for the first few years of its use, the University and the athletic department sought ways to fund its construction, including an unsuccessful appeal to the Legislature. In the end, the entire cost was financed out of budget cuts in the athletic department. Later changes to the rules of the National Collegiate Athletic Association required that the facility be opened to all students regardless of status as student athletes. It continues to house many facilities for academic support of student athletes. In 2001, Kinard Hall was closed to students and became one of many residence halls to be used as support facilities, providing office space for a growing university and its myriad programs.

Kinard Hall is not alone in this fate of being used as a support building. After 1971, all of the residence halls

⁸⁴*Ole Miss Football Program*, 20 September 1986.

built along Dormitory Row (except for Howry and Falkner) were transformed into office buildings for the expanding academic program and associated administrative services of the University. Though these buildings were saved from demolition only through their new status, new residence halls were not built to replace these facilities, and the capacity of student housing on campus is no longer nearly enough to provide for even one half of the University's student body to live on campus.

For many years, student housing has faced difficult challenges related to maintenance and support of housing facilities. Since 1970, numerous buildings have closed for various periods of time due to maintenance concerns.⁸⁵ The director of housing during this period noted that only emergency maintenance concerns could be addressed, and press reports and other sources confirm this general statement regarding the status of most residence halls from the 1970s until the 1990s. Renovations were extremely limited and often only took place when the campus faced

⁸⁵Appendix A contains information on residence hall occupancy rates which help to indicate the status of buildings under construction or unusable.

severe housing shortages that required the use of dilapidated or otherwise unusable residence halls.⁸⁶

The most important developments in the history of student housing since 1971 relate to student life in the residence halls and an associated shift in the philosophy of student housing. Until the early 1980s, student housing was considered a sort of business venture for the University. Housing assignments were coordinated through the business office, and students were treated like tenants with the University responding primarily as a landlord. The director of the business office who supervised student housing even referred to the various facilities as "billets." However, with the appointment of new staff and the receipt of outside recommendations, student housing began to shift in the late 1970s toward including a new programmatic emphasis in their work, moving student housing beyond simply assigning students to rooms and into a broader understanding of community in the residence halls facilitated by activities and events for residents.⁸⁷

⁸⁶Interview with Judy Trott.

⁸⁷Ibid.

This shift toward programming also brought the University to restructure the supervision system for the residence halls. In the earliest days of the campus, the dormitories were patrolled by faculty members, and this practice continued well beyond the Civil War. With the arrival of women on the campus in 1901, the women's residence halls were staffed by matrons who reported to the Dean of Women. Men's dormitories used different staff, often advanced students, to accomplish many of the same ends. By the 1970s, though, this system was very much outdated, and a new system was required to respond effectively to student needs and help to encourage student leadership in housing arrangements. The University called upon Dr. Daniel Hallenbeck of the University of Georgia to examine the facilities, administration, and operations of student housing. His report to Chancellor Porter Fortune contained fifty-one specific recommendations, including plans for a Resident Advisor program, the expansion of residence hall programming, and major changes in the administrative structure of student housing.⁸⁸

⁸⁸Daniel A. Hallenbeck, "A Study of the Ole Miss Housing Program," 20 December 1978, Papers of Chancellor

In the early 1980s, housing director Dr. Judy Trott (later appointed Dean of Students) supervised the creation of the University's first Resident Advisor program. This new program offered interested students a leadership position in the residence halls, working with full-time staff and others on campus to improve the dormitory environment for all residents. It also built a base of student leaders who became active in the affairs of student housing on campus and were instrumental in bringing about change to the department.⁸⁹

The biggest change experienced in student housing during the last thirty years of the twentieth century surrounded visitation policies for visitors of the opposite sex. Students and administrators began discussing issues of visitation publicly in 1970, when the University first allowed students of the opposite sex to visit in residence halls on an extremely limited basis. Initially, to get around Board of Trustees regulations prohibiting visitation, the limited events were known as "open houses"

Porter Fortune, Archives and Special Collections Division, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi.

⁸⁹Interview with Judy Trott.

and were only scheduled once or twice a year. The first attempts at such visits were held in the Twin Towers on Homecoming weekend 1970, primarily to show off the new facility to parents and other guests.⁹⁰

By 1974, the Associated Student Body made specific proposals in response to various calls for extending the limited open houses. Four different policies were proposed that could be voted on by each hall, ranging from no visitation except on special occasions such as football weekends to limited visitation hours two nights a week and Sunday afternoons. In early 1975, Chancellor Porter Fortune rejected this proposal out of concern for the reputation of the University among alumni, the Board of Trustees, and the state legislature. However, he did encourage the expansion of the open house program and offered it as a "step toward visitation." In 1976, open house rules set hours that continued well into the 1980s, with weekly hours ranging from 7 p.m. until midnight on Thursday and Sunday nights

⁹⁰"Moak OK's Dorm Visits," *(University) Daily Mississippian*, 17 November 1970.

and from 7 p.m. until 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights.⁹¹

Changes to the visitation policy were made over time, and by 1997, many students and administrators agreed that the time had come for greatly extended visitation hours on weekends. Previous policies had allowed for visitation from noon until midnight on Sunday through Thursday and from noon until 1 a.m. on Friday and Saturday. In the fall of 1997, several upperclass residence halls approved visitation policies proposed by University administrators, particularly Vice Chancellor for Student Life Richard Mullendore, that would have allowed unlimited visitation from noon on Friday until midnight on Sunday. However, only hours before the new policy was to go into effect, publicity surrounding the change brought an outcry from parents, alumni, and state officials, and Chancellor Robert

⁹¹Stephanie Saul, "Visitation Review Set Within 'Several Weeks,'" (*University Daily Mississippian*, 25 October 1974; "Fortune Rejects Visitation Plan: Administration Suggests Compromise of Open Houses," (*University Daily Mississippian*, 15 January 1975; "Open House Rules," [ca. 1976], Papers of Chancellor Porter Fortune, Archives and Special Collections Division, J.D. Williams Library, University of Mississippi; Advertisement, (*University Daily Mississippian*, 19 September 1985.

Khayat repealed the new rules under pressure from the College Board out of concern that the new policy would have established co-ed dorms, which were explicitly forbidden by the Board.⁹²

Though the College Board became intimately interested in the policies for residence halls on particular issues, they have been considerably less concerned with the conditions found in the buildings over the years. Renovation needs for student housing facilities have long been recognized on campus among University officials. Beginning in the mid-1970s, minutes of the meetings of top-level University administrators indicate ongoing concerns related to the renovation of existing residence halls, particularly during the late summer and early fall as residence halls are filled to their absolute greatest occupancy. On many occasions, residence halls were available for use when facilities were at capacity, but their condition made them unsuitable, if not unsafe, for

⁹²Emily Boling, "Upperclass Dorms to Have 24-Hour Visitation," (*University*) *Daily Mississippian*, 4 September 1997; Jenny Dodson, "UM Repeals 24-Hour Visitation for Upperclassmen," (*University*) *Daily Mississippian*, 15 September 1997.

student occupancy. In these cases, buildings were renovated to bring them into a state where students could live there on an emergency basis, but no major renovation projects could be accomplished due to a lack of funding.

This trend continued until well into the 1990s. Major repairs were put off, and most buildings received only the minimum amount of maintenance necessary to keep them habitable. The only significant upgrade to student housing facilities came in 1996 when all residence halls were wired for Internet access. However, over time the University began to realize that its dilapidated student housing facilities took a toll on recruiting and retention of all students and had an extremely negative effect on the number of students living on campus beyond the freshman year. In response to these long-term concerns, the Department of Student Housing and Residence Life in 1999 embarked on a major attempt to renovate student housing facilities across campus and bring them up to higher standards. Known as the Phoenix Project, this long-term, \$70 million plan calls for major renovations and upgrades to all residence halls on campus to bring the facilities up to modern building codes, upgrade the necessary safety features of each building,

make all buildings compliant with the regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and enhance the interior and exterior appearance of the residence halls to bring them closer to the appearance of the historic and academic areas of the campus. These major upgrades to facilities would be financed through new bonds purchased since retirement of the heavy debt of the 1960s building boom. In fall 2000, Hefley Hall closed for renovations which began in February 2001, marking the first renovations under the Phoenix Project. In summer 2001, Deaton Hall joined Hefley in undergoing similar major renovations. Both are scheduled to return to service in fall 2001.

Over time, student housing has seen significant reductions in institutional focus on its concerns. In the various histories of the University written over the years, student housing figures prominently in the early years of the University. As the University has grown, though, housing has been taken for granted, assumed to be a part of the University but never anything more than a new residence hall constructed here and a building torn down there. This historiography in many ways reflects the actual history of student housing.

As student housing enters the twenty-first century, its challenges are formidable. Physical conditions of the buildings are of the greatest concern, and major steps are needed to bring even the most modern facilities up to current standards. Though on-campus housing requirements continue for all freshmen, upperclass students are offered a wide variety of housing options in Greek housing or in the Oxford community, providing extensive competition for the on-campus residence halls and making funding of needed renovations difficult. Perhaps the most important and most difficult of the challenges faced by student housing is decreasing institutional concern, particularly as demonstrated during the visitation debates of 1997. The highest-level administrators focus their concern less on the conditions of the buildings than on the restrictions upon the students who live there. At the same time of these debates, maintenance continued to decline, and a number of residence halls had recently been removed from service because they were not usable in their existing condition.

As the University moves into the twenty-first century, it must remember its roots. Two of the five original buildings on campus were built to house students. Neither

of them survive today, and the commitment to on-campus student housing that these exhibited is similarly missing. However, the work of the Phoenix Project and the ongoing responsibility for enhancement of student housing exhibited by a few consistent voices brings hope for the future. The challenges are truly endless, but in pursuing the resolutions to these challenges, the University of Mississippi can become a better place for its students to live.

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APPENDIX

Residence Hall Occupancy Rates, 1965-1999

Hall	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977
Barnard	80	136	121	105	61	60	90	58	53	0	0	84	97
Barr	61	53	58	56	50	58	49	closed					
Baxter	94	63	86	107	71	85	closed						
Brown	244	262	332	308	221	244	218	189	223	242	229	228	246
Crosby						new	687	737	721	732	711	722	740
Deaton	98	120	132	127	79	84	closed				78	91	88
Deupree	62	53	59	26	closed								
Falkner	54	49	47	52	52	53	53	43	45	0	50	50	48
Garland	77	66	59	66	61	70	67	58	56	0	0	0	52
George	57	51	45	52	51	56	51	43	closed				
Gerard	70	58	64	81	51	closed							
Guess	224	231	234	215	197	220	180	170	178	180	110	172	192
Hedleston	23	61	61	65	48	61	59	52	43	0	0	0	47
Hefley	148	166	198	188	119	140	92	71	62	131	125	116	131
Hill	59	49	81	60	50	57	54	60	closed				
Howry	62	56	58	57	56	57	58	54	50	0	24	58	50
Isom	53	71	70	70	52	34	58	55	50	0	0	50	52

Kinard											new	243	249
Kincannon	565	545	578	638	406	511	286	377	371	491	451	493	231
LaBauve	46	40	44	40	37	38	37	closed					
Leavell	52	56	56	43	26	52	63	50	53	0	0	14	39
Lester	95	78	92	109	69	closed							
Longstreet	58	48	59	57	51	59	52	52	closed				
Martin				new	432	505	493	479	468	439	450	456	462
Mayes	90	68	80	94	69	83	58	50	56	0	0	0	78
Miller	120	108	120	115	121	117	120	115	115	113	98	69	78
Odom	54	49	54	48	33	closed							
Powers	123	97	119	145	102	117	116	110	103	0	100	101	102
Ricks	32	31	35	36	33	31	0 closed						
Sam	71	56	63	79	20	52	closed						
Somerville	59	88	63	60	44	39	62	65	59	closed			
Stewart	290	296	398	372	272	291	294	156	0	288	267	280	288
Stockard				new	432	504	494	478	467		449	455	461
Vardaman	57	58	59	60	54	59	56	54	56	closed			
Ward	59	66	80	52	34	50	48	closed					

shaded areas indicate unused space

Hall	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Barnard	81	86	105	103	104	64	35	65	76	81	70	73	68

Barr													
Baxter													
Brown	248	249	249	250	252	248	227	221	219	234	240	232	216
Crosby	748	754	755	751	753	747	737	647	669	690	738	726	728
Deaton	84	94	98	99	99	74	52	83	51	80	80	78	69
Deupree													
Falkner	52	48	39	41	32	33	33	23	20	22	19	24	15
Garland	41	41	60	64	64	51	34	63	60	62	65	68	68
George													
Gerard													
Guess	188	202	168	174	161	163	155	136	136	128	126	146	143
Hedleston	41	37	52	59	60	46	31	53	51	53	58	59	57
Hefley	135	144	153	148	148	146	123	129	113	107	133	144	143
Hill													
Howry	58	58	50	46	51	42	37	28	28	21	17	27	26
Isom	48	50	56	56	55	35	18	36	30	32	30	32	32
Kinard	256	233	249	248	248	255	228	232	227	227	197	221	227
Kincannon	565	560	492	516	483	475	450	366	319	294	333	391	400
LaBauve													
Leavell	66	59	54	closed									
Lester													
Longstreet													
Martin	494	459	424	407	412	379	303	436	416	419	431	440	430
Mayes	46	63	66	78	74	58	42	70	70	67	77	78	79

Miller	115	118	116	118	117	107	101	82	72	78	91	106	84
Odom													
Powers	114	116	97	99	closed								
Ricks													
Sam													
Somerville	60	67	70	68	72	58	26	48	54	49	54	49	43
Stewart	286	295	295	297	300	299	272	255	263	280	288	275	277
Stockard	493	458	424	407	411	378	303	436	416	419	430	446	446
Vardaman			35										
Ward													

Hall	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Barnard	72	63	69	64	54	closed			
Barr									
Baxter									
Brown	238	224	208	219	206	225	234	216	236
Crosby	714	660	602	590	522	544	600	601	667
Deaton	63	79	80	73	76	91	94	90	69
Deupree									
Falkner	9	32	26	26	21	23	22	23	23
Garland	65	56	49	53	47	52	58	63	45
George									
Gerard									
Guess	135	128	130	122	113	119	106	117	128
Hedleston	60	48	44	41	42	48	44	57	44
Hefley	123	77	65	90	107	101	110	115	112
Hill									
Howry	21	30	25	20	26	27	17	21	24
Isom	37	27	34	24	21	closed			
Kinard	216	199	189	150	133	198	202	196	198
Kincannon	346	308	274	267	260	353	373	361	382
LaBauve									
Leavell									
Lester									
Longstreet									

Martin	457	419	409	426	426	436	450	451	444
Mayes	79	74	77	75	54	66	58	73	50
Miller	87	69	84	78	70	72	82	79	82
Odom									
Powers									
Ricks									
Sam									
Somerville	46	43	44	38	34	closed			
Stewart	270	244	237	206	183	252	274	250	222
Stockard	444	451	427	423	396	456	462	475	443
Vardaman									
Ward									

Source: University of Mississippi Office of University Planning and Institutional Research data; compiled by author

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