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## Home Economics Has Grown

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## *Home Economics Has Grown*

# *From a Handful to 1,400 Girls*

*by Jackie Andre*

*Technical Journalism Freshman*

**W**HEN MRS. MARY BEAUMONT WELCH organized the Department of Domestic Economy in 1872, only a handful of girls took part in the program. Today 1,400 girls are enrolled in the Division of Home Economics.

Prior to 1912 when the Domestic Technology Building was built (the present west wing), no structure was specifically designated for home economics. Classes were conducted in various buildings around the campus. The present Home Economics Hall was dedicated in 1926.

Classes in home economics have changed also. In the early days labs featured no automatic washers, electric refrigerators or ranges. Early home economics students bent over giant tubs to do their washing. These tubs were later replaced by the predecessor of our modern automatic washing machine, a tub that held a wire basket inside. The girls did not learn about the refrigerator's compression and absorption system during their food preservation unit, for refrigerators then needed only the addition of ice to maintain a freezing temperature. The ranges that the girls worked over would seem archaic next to the streamlined ones in the laboratories today. There were no double ovens, auxiliary lights or automatic controls. In food labs the girls worked at gas burners arranged around the laboratory in a square. Another important part of the home economics program was the re-upholstering of chairs and the re-varnishing of furniture.

In sewing classes the girls worked at treadle machines creating the long, heavy dresses that were so popular during that era. They also made many delicate undergarments in the classes. Today's textiles and clothing classes produce the simple skirts, blouses and dresses so typical of contemporary design.

The early students did not have fluorescent lighting to work by. Instead, they worked by the dim light of bare ceiling lamps. Often light could not penetrate the dark fringed lampshades. The walls were usually white and the woodwork often dark. Sleep was accelerated for many girls in the lecture room of the old building because the ventilation was so poor. When McKay Auditorium was completed, the old lecture room was turned into the present rat laboratory.

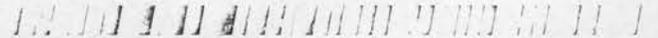
Today the home economics building is getting the "new look" with the construction of a modern three-story limestone finished addition. It will house the household equipment, home economics education and textiles and clothing departments. Household equipment will have new laboratories where girls can practice demonstrations in one laboratory while classes are going on in another. There will be a loading ramp and an elevator so that new equipment can be moved into the labs with ease.

For the first time the education department will have space assigned to it so that the entire department will be housed as a unit. There will be a conference room, two work rooms and added office space.

The Department of Textiles and Clothing is experimenting with sewing machine table combinations for use in the new wing. An additional work room with machines will be available to students in their free hours. At the present time sewing cannot be done after class because there is a lack of space. The department will also have a research room.

The new addition will feature an auditorium and lecture room that will seat 180 students. There will be a room for those girls wishing to study within the building.

By the fall of 1958, the new addition will be in use — another sign of the constant expansion of the Division of Home Economics.



A group of "co-eds" pose in front of Old Main, the basement of which was converted into an experimental kitchen in 1876.

