

# College administrative house originally built as private home

## Nollen House —

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Park Street home to the college in exchange for two lots in the Moyle and Pooley subdivision northwest of Tenth Avenue and West Street owned by the college, plus tuition for his two sons Mark and Paul Morrison.

Once in the college's hands, the property began to fill a succession of functions.

Plans to make the house a student recreational center were outlined in the Oct. 13, 1937, issue of the college's student newspaper, *The Scarlet and Black*, which reported that at a student leaders' conference it was referred to as a student union and fieldhouse to improve social life on campus with informal recreation. "The White House, first house south of the dean of men's office, should be opened as a means of broadening Grinnell's social life," the editors averred.

### Expand recreation plans

Conference participants also recommended that golfing be encouraged by making arrangements with the country club for general privileges and that tennis facilities for men should be improved. A mixed bridge tournament committee was appointed consisting of Alice Meacham and Marion Wood. The White House would need a responsible hostess, it was noted, and should provide for refreshments to be sold and headquarters for campus organizations.

Furniture for a lounge and sitting room was purchased with funds from the quadrangle social fund and the White House was cleaned from top to toe on "Improvement Days." The project also offered a "chance to do constructive work for the student government association in connection with "Hell Week,"" the *Scarlet and Black* noted, referring to the custom of initiating new students with outrageous and sometimes dangerous activities. The outside of the building was washed, the basement and attic were cleaned, the basement whitewashed and the floors polished. Freshmen women were to sew drapes for the house.

Also installed was a connection to the house from the college's central heating system.

### Opens in 1938

Scheduled to be opened the first week after Thanksgiving vacation in 1937, the house actually opened in January, 1938, with a dedication on Jan. 21. Hazel Bishop of Los Angeles, Calif., was the hostess and headquarters were provided for the Cyclone, the college's yearbook, and the Town Men's Club.

"The White House is a favorite campus hangout for bridge fiends, pingpong enthusiasts, jitterbugs and just plain loungers." The Cyclone reported in its 1940 edition.

In 1941, the Cyclone reported that "Mrs. Brock is a gracious hostess and Mrs. Tyree serves the best hot chocolate on either side of the Mississippi." **Becomes O.C.S. headquarters**

In 1942 the White House became headquarters for an Officers Candidate School established at the college during World War II, an Army Special Training Program (ASTP) unit and a Student Training and Reclassification (STAR) unit. Recreation facilities were moved to the former faculty club at Seventh Avenue and Broad Street, now the home of John and Barbara Kleinschmidt. "The traditional White House spirit prevails." The Cyclone reported in 1943 but "It was an unhappy day for Grinnell students when the White House received a coat of G.I. paint and a sign in front read 'Army Headquarters, O.C.S. No. 2.'"

Furniture for the new White House was delayed in arriving from Chicago, the *Scarlet and Black* reported Nov. 25, 1942, because government regulations forbade transportation on trains unless for vital war needs and trucking companies could not contract to move unless assured of a return load. The recreation center subsequently was housed in a building on central campus, formerly the Officers Club from the Sioux City Air Base, until the construction of the Grinnell College Forum.

The Officers' Candidate School closed in 1944, and from 1946 to 1959 the White House was used for faculty housing. Among its distinguished occupants were Dr. Winston King, dean of the chapel, and his wife Jocelyn King on the main floor and Henry Alden, the college's librarian, on the second floor.

### Administrative offices move

From 1959 to 1961 the White House housed the college's art department as well as faculty housing and from 1961 to 1971 the building was occupied as an off-campus residence by 12 women students who were relocated to the house at 1130 East Street as the college prepared to move its administrative offices to the site, according to the *Scarlet and Black* of Feb. 26, 1972.

The reinvented building was to include the offices of the president of the college, the dean of administration, the dean of the college, the registrar and the business office, according to the article.

"Renovation has taken a full year because it is being done by physical plant employees as they have time," it added. Furnishings essentially were to be those used in the Burling Library offices where those officers previously had been located.

### Renovated for \$40,000

Renovation included improvements to the exterior, new lighting, heating and air conditioning for a total of \$40,000. "The library committee, headed by Donald Irving, English, will submit plans to Dean Walker for use of the space in Burling. The added space hopefully will permit periodicals stored in the downtown office building to be transferred to Burling," the article continued.

The registrar and business manager were to occupy the first floor of the house while the president, dean of the college and dean of administration were to occupy offices on the second floor "where they may enjoy the nice view," the *Scarlet and Black* reported in its issue of Aug. 25, 1972.

The current arrangement has suited the college just fine for the past 23 years, according to Waldo Walker, the college's vice president for college services, and aside from a few changes to be made this summer to improve office space on the third floor, there are no plans to move the present tenants out of Nollen House.

So it appears that the musical chairs existence of one of Grinnell's most distinguished residences may be at an end, and it will continue to rule the scene on Park Street in stately splendor from its vantage point across from the campus.