

The History of Baker Hall
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In 1905, Old North Dorm, located at Eleventh and Neil, the University's only men's residence, was closed. At the time of its closing, High Street, north of Goodale, was a private turnpike with few homes, and the men's housing situation grew critical as there were no university run accommodations for men. In 1935, Oxley (1907) and Mack (1934) Halls were in operation, and Stadium Dorm held a few hundred men on the cooperative plan, as it still does today. All other men had to live in either fraternity or rooming houses.

University officials became concerned about the woeful lack of adequate and decent housing, and alarmed alumni initiated a dormitory system for all students not living in Columbus. Four types of men's dormitories were planned: the cooperative type, such as Stadium Dorm, the low cost unit, the medium cost unit, and the deluxe or fraternity plan. Alumni, in conjunction with the University, carried out research on dormitory construction at Miami, Michigan State University, Harvard, Yale, Dartmouth, and the University of Wisconsin, selecting the best qualities of each construction. In 1938, plans were laid for the first men's dormitory, then simply known as the Men's Dorm (now Baker Hall).

Baker Hall was therefore the result of the information gathered from the above named colleges, and was the University's first attempt at dormitory accommodations for men since the closing of North Dorm in 1905. Baker Hall was to be a medium cost brick dormitory of five stories, holding 480 men in double and single rooms, with furnishings and accommodations carried out on the medium scale established by the University. Baker Hall, at that time, consisted of both East and West Baker, excluding the new wing to West Baker. Baker Hall was built with expansion in mind, and both low cost and deluxe units were planned to be added to the west, east, and the two south wings which would combine in a large wing extending down Eleventh Avenue to High Street.

In January, 1939, ground was broken for the hall by Harry Drackett ('07), Cincinnati industrialist and chairman of the Alumni Board of Visitors. Officials and alumni cheered as he operated "Big Bertha", a bulldozer. Actual construction of the dorm began as concrete was poured into the foundation forms in May of the same year, and the dorm was expected to be ready for occupancy in the fall of 1940. The general contractors were E. Elford & Son.

Cost of the dorm was set at \$675,000, and rose to \$871,000 after furnishings. Of this amount, \$391,000 or 45 per cent was paid by the Public Works Administration, with the remainder by seventeen year bonds purchased by the State Teachers' Retirement System. Average cost per student was figured at \$1213, which compares with an investment per student of \$650 for Stadium Dorm, \$2000 for Mack Hall, and \$3500 at Harvard. Room and board costs were to average \$110 a quarter; \$105-\$125 for a double room and \$125 for a single room.

Howard Dwight Smith ('07) was the University architect who designed Baker Hall and also gave the campus the Ohio Stadium, among other campus landmarks. Baker Hall was built in modified Georgian style architecture of conservative brick and stone with a slate roof. Although small units were found to be very desirable, they were not economically feasible for future hall designs because of per cubic foot cost. Particular attention was given to interior design, and architectural detail was not spared. Baker Hall was a combination of administrative ideals within economic possibilities, and it was possible to increase the set occupancy of 480 to 550, and still be within the budget set up in July, 1939. For beauty, design, and home-like convenience, Baker Hall was believed to be unsurpassed by any other dorm of its size and kind in the country.

In February, 1940, University Trustees officially named the Men's Dorm Baker Hall in honor of Newton Diehl Baker, one-time Secretary of War in the Wilson Cabinet, and a former mayor of Cleveland and university trustee. His portrait, a gift from his wife, now hangs in the east lobby. Simple but impressive dedication ceremonies

were held for Baker Hall on Alumni Day, July, 1940. It is recorded that the eyes of the guests "glistened with delight and surprise" at the size, beauty, and accommodations of the new dorm. Engraved into the marble wall in the lobby of West Baker are the following words:

Commemorating the day when
the spirit of the old dormitories
and the key to new adventure
were bequeathed to this new domicile.
The Patriarchs
Alumni Day
June 8, 1940

The erection of Baker Hall was the first tangible dream of long standing on the part of interested alumni and University officials for a better housing system.

The accommodations and furnishings of the new Baker Hall were described as splendid. There were 225 double, 100 single rooms, and 40 baths, divided into seven major groupings on each floor. The halls and wings were used to form these small "family group" units, thus breaking up the institutional idea of housing, and common rooms or lobbies, each seating 25, were placed between them to be used for study. The walls of the lobbies were panelled with marble, and marble was also used in the construction of the shower stalls and separating partitions in the bathrooms. Woodwork in the rooms is of birch with Salem finish, much like the New England furniture of the Colonial period. Chests and drawers are of maple. Book racks, shelves, individual study tables, lamps, upholstered chairs, and large chests were also part of the accommodations. At that time, everything was supplied the resident except blankets.

Originally, twelve maids and five janitors were on duty, each maid responsible for cleaning twenty-five rooms and making approximately forty-eight beds Monday through Saturday. After a number of years, the maids worked only five days a week, but continued cleaning rooms and making beds for the men until 1968.

The ground floor offered the outstanding promise of the dorm. Two well furnished,

comfortable lobbies were located at each end of the building. Two main features of these lobbies were post offices, in which students were able to bring and call for mail, and public telephones for outside calls. An inter-communications system of small black telephone boxes was placed in each room for inside calls. Most rooms still have these telephones, which will be replaced when individual dial telephones (Centrex) are placed in the rooms, a project scheduled for completion in September, 1969.

In addition to the two lobbies, two offices were also used, but because the west office was closer to the Union (then located in the Student Health Center), it was used as the main office. A long counter extended across the front of each office (as they do today), and students were able to buy such items as candy, cigarettes, and stamps. The switchboard was originally placed in the east office, but was soon moved to the west office because most activities centered around that area. After a few years, the east office was closed due to lack of use, and became primarily a mail sorting station. It was later partitioned, forming the present Link Room and mail room.

Off each lobby was a reception lounge and game room in which students were able to relax and entertain. On the east side of the building, the game room was on the ground floor in the south wing, where the laundry room, photography lab, and director's office are presently located. During the years 1940-1942 this was one large room without partitions, housing several ping-pong and card tables. The game room on the west end of the structure was located in the basement, now known as the Lavender Lounge.

At the extreme ends of the building were two 2-3 room apartments, for the director and superintendent. Lowell A. Wrigley ('32), superintendent of the dorm until 1947, first lived in the apartment on the east side. After having a baby girl, and then twins, he moved over to the west apartment. Because there was so little space for his family, the wall between the ladies' rest room and his bedroom

was removed, with the extra room for the Wrigley children.

The hall off the mail room on the west side (symmetrical with the game room on the east end) contained bedrooms known as the Faculty, as it still does today.

Two beautifully decorated dining rooms, each holding 275, were built off each lobby. Each one had four alcoves for committee meetings. Breakfast and lunch were served buffet style, while dinner was served to the men family style. Men were required to wear coats and ties at dinner. Serving hours, originally from 5-6 PM, were announced by the ringing of the autocall. After a few months, it was decided to have cafeteria style dinners. However, men who desired table service were able to have it if they signed up at the desk. The two well furnished, comfortable lounges combined with the large, attractive dining rooms to provide ideal facilities for dances and parties.

Extending between the dining rooms was a large, modern, central kitchen facility, built to serve 1000. This had in mind ultimate expansion. Although Baker Hall was not a cooperative dorm in itself, students were hired to serve meals. Food was furnished by the University, and meals were planned by a graduate dietician and prepared by twenty-three kitchen employees. In addition, the Home Economics Department used the kitchen as a training center.

Two elevators were located at each end of the long front corridor. The elevator on the west end was designed for passenger use, and went only to the fourth floor. The elevator on the east side was designed for freight only, and went to the attic. Two mezzanine floors, located off each elevator were first used for kitchen storage, then later for the dormitory radio station and the housekeeper's office. Today they are used as locker rooms for the kitchen employees.

Lowell A. Wrigley, the hall's first superintendent, was described as friendly, affable, and the possessor of a good sense of humor. He was responsible for general charge of the dorm, discipline, and supervising social activities. Mr. Wrigley required a personal interview of each applicant. The first student to sign papers

for Baker Hall was Wuilley J. Nemerever from Antwerp, Belgium. He was assigned room 4045 (now room 4081). Mr. Wrigley expected 40 per cent freshmen, and hoped to assign the remaining rooms on a first-come-first-served basis.

During the first quarter, 548 men resided in the new hall (479 from Ohio, 21 from New York, with Pennsylvania in third place). At the end of the quarter, forty-five men left and forty-one new men entered. The hall's point-hour ratio for the first quarter exceeded 2.5. This excellent average, and the fact that the turnover was less than expected was attributed to the opportunity for proctoring and tutoring.

Fifteen proctors, now called resident advisors, were hired and trained to assist residents. In addition to room and board, they were paid \$40 per quarter salary. Along with proctors, Dr. Harvey M. Rice was the first scholarship supervisor for the hall. His duties included directing the work of the fifteen proctors and assisting dorm residents in maintaining scholastic records. One such proctor was Dean Armitage of the OSU Graduate School.

A dorm governmental system was set up consisting of thirty-three council members from all over the hall. One of the hottest issues first debated was the one dollar per man social fee, but it won over opposition. Typical social events consisted of exchange dinners with girls' dorms and sororities, a dance every two weeks, a glee club, and dancing lessons. Baker Hall also boasted a library with built-in book cases, a weekly newspaper called the "Baker-Lite", and its own radio station. The Baker Broadcasting System was on the air from 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM. Dorm residents were charged a 50¢ per month radio charge. This was later reduced to 25¢, and was used to purchase records.

Due to the war's boogey man, Mr. Highcost Living, it was necessary to raise the room and board fee to \$122 per quarter Autumn Quarter, 1942. Room and board now averages \$316 per quarter.

In the fall of 1942, Baker Hall was leased to the government, and the Navy Recognition and Diesel Units, who were studying under Dr. Samuel Renshaw's split second recognition program of ships and planes, began to move in on September 1. By March, 1943, all civilians were out of Baker, and the navy was sharing the dormitory with members of the British Royal Navy. A few months later, the Army A.S.T.P. moved in, and occupied the building with the navy. Because of the intense rivalry between the army and navy, the dorm was divided in half by the study lounges in the long front corridor of West Baker. Windows of the corridor doors on each side of the study lounges were painted black, and the doors were chained and padlocked to prevent the two groups from mixing within the dorm. Navy men were on the east side of the building, and army men were located on the west side. In addition, both groups ate in their respective cafeterias. The only difference was that army men ate from GI trays, while navy men used plates. On December 27, 1944, the navy left, and army men occupied the entire building until September, 1945.

Baker Hall was assigned to the women for the year 1945-1946. However, this fact was not clearly understood, and September, 1945, brought mass confusion as both men and coeds arrived to move into the hall. Police were called to settle the dispute, and it was finally decided that the dorm would be used for the year 1945-1946 by coeds, and the men would have to find other arrangements. The Administration based their decision on the fact that girls needed more protection than men. Returning veterans and parents were quite upset by this decision, because Baker Hall was built as a men's dorm, and it had been promised to them when they returned from the war.

In May, 1946, by action of the Board of Trustees, it was decided that Baker Hall would again be used by women the following year, although men would be able to use it Summer Quarter, 1947. University officials planned to turn Baker Hall over to the coeds only for the year 1945-1946, but the opening of other facilities for men, and a banner enrollment of 5000 women brought a change in plans. As the 1946-1947 school year began, 650 girls were living in Baker, following a series of court suits in

which it was decided that the University Board of Trustees, faced with the controversial decision of housing men or women in Baker Hall, had acted not only in discretionary powers, but as wisely as possible in view of the housing situation.

The Battle of Baker Hall lasted for two years as the Baker Hall Association of Veterans, composed of 338 men, and their angry parents, fought to regain Baker Hall from the women. They claimed that 91% of the men from the hall were veterans, and that the University was not following the policy of "vets first". They also claimed that the bonds used to pay off Baker Hall specifically stated that they were to be used for the construction of a men's dormitory. The University claimed that the women needed more protection than men, and the veterans countered by saying that there were four other dorms available for women, and none for men. Many men, not able to find housing off campus, had to drop out of school.

In protest, between 300 and 600 veterans marched down to the State Capitol on July 4, 1946, and upon return to campus, pitched tents on the Oval, calling it Camp Baker Hall. Governor Lausche and the President of the University received hundreds of telegrams, post cards, and letters from the former residents and their parents in strong protest. One petition circulated on campus contained the names of 3000 men demanding that Baker Hall be given back to them.

In August, 338 men, headed by James R. Lloyd, filed a suit to seek an injunction to prevent Trustees from turning over the dorm to the women, and won a temporary injunction preventing Trustees from evicting the men. A permanent decision was expected September 23. Two of the persons named in the suit were Lowell A. Wrigley, and Christine Conaway, former Dean of Women. Meanwhile, the girls had been notified that they would be able to live in the hall the next year, and the suit was delaying necessary remodeling of the dormitory for women. During the next week, the Trustees met on Gibraltar Island in Lake Erie to reach a final decision. On September 20, an Ohio teacher filed another suit for restraint, but the final decision came on September 21, when a judge dissolved the temporary restraining order, and the girls won the case.

Because of this decision, it was necessary for 200 men to leave school. Within two hours of the decision, Dean Gonaway sent 456 telegrams to girls notifying them that Baker Hall was ready for immediate occupancy, because the decision came just as school was opening. Many newspapers in Ohio carried the latest information on the Baker Hall controversy, as so many people were concerned. In May, 1947, 358 men reopened the previous year's campaign for the return of men to Baker Hall, but again lost, and coeds occupied the dormitory until 1955.

Two notable women to live in the dorm during this period were actress Jean Simmons, and Jean Peters (Mrs. Howard Hughes). Jean Peters was Miss Ohio State in 1946, and was awarded a two year contract with 20th Century Fox. During her two years in Baker Hall, she occupied rooms 1032 (old 1102) and 3017 (old 3117). Returning from a screen test in Hollywood, one of her comments was, "I only hope I still have my room at Baker Hall."

During the war, it was necessary for the navy to have minor clinic space in the dorm, so the south ground floor recreation room on the east side was partitioned into many rooms. The director's office was used as a doctor's office, and the refreshment and laundry rooms were used as an operating room. In the director's apartment, the bedroom was used as an X-ray laboratory, and the bathroom as a developing room. Other rooms in the apartment were used as recovery rooms and offices. Sick bay was located in the south wing of the first floor (East Baker). A door was placed between rooms 1020 (old 1116) and 1018 (old 1118). Critically ill patients were kept in room 1020, while a navy doctor was able to observe the patients from room 1018. A face basin was also placed in the closet of room 1020.

In January, 1946, the University Health Service was moved from Hayes Hall into the two winged unit of Baker Hall. Working with the Naval Medical Corps Staff, they performed 45,000 - 50,000 health services per year. The redone quarters boasted chrome, brick glass, and a restful decorative scheme with offices for a regular staff of six doctors, three nurses, and laboratory technicians. The east ground

floor of East Baker had supplementary waiting rooms, a medical library, offices, and a storeroom. An infirmary was to be added later. A staff of six consulting specialists also augmented the regular staff. Doctors' offices were arranged around a clinical unit which included a modern lab, a physiotherapy room; ear, nose, and throat units, and special minor surgery. While the Health Center was in operation, East Baker's small lounge was used as the main waiting room, and the east desk was the reception desk. The Health Center was located in East Baker until March, 1956, when it moved to its present location in the old Student Union across from West Baker.

After the Health Center moved out, the south-east was used for the director's office, a radio station, the housekeeper's office, a dark room, a refreshment room, and a laundry room. Previously, the housekeeper's office had been located on the east mezzanine floor, where the cafeteria women employee's locker room is now found. Before the new wing was built and laundry room facilities were placed in the south-east wing, there was one washing machine located on each floor in the small janitor's closet across from rooms - 081 (old-057). The corresponding dryer was placed in the bathroom across the hall. Before the refreshment room on the east side was added, all machines were found in the room off the main west desk, where they are presently located in West Baker. This room was also used as a package room for the Railway Express.

In November of 1954, applications for men to live again in Baker were accepted for Winter and Spring Quarters. The huge fortress was turned over to the men in January, after the coeds, who had lived there since 1945, were reassigned to the new Bradley and Patterson Halls. Because of the large number of applicants, a priority method was used to select residents. First priority went to senior men living in Stadium Dorm. Second priority went to senior men in rooming houses. Third and fourth priorities went to juniors who would graduate before Autumn Quarter, 1956. Men graduating after that date would have to apply the following spring. In

this manner, Baker Hall remained an upperclass dorm for many years. To accommodate more men, double rooms were used as triples, and 750 men moved in.

In October, 1955, an \$800,000 wing was approved by the Trustees. This new wing would have 5 floors and a basement. The ground floor through the fourth floor would have twenty-five single, forty-one double and triple, and sixteen quad rooms plus a spacious director's apartment on the ground floor. The basement would contain a self-serve laundry, a hobby and work room, a recreation room, and a meeting room. Because the director's apartment was moved to the new wing, the west lobby was expanded to include all of the ground floor of the west wing. Another passenger elevator was placed in the area between the old and new wings. The new addition was opened in 1957.

In 1955, construction was initiated on a new cafeteria, plus the expansion of the existing kitchen. The old kitchen was located within the walls of the front wing, and storage space was critically short. During construction, the loading dock area was enlarged, and the kitchen was expanded outward from the south wall. A two floor dining room was added to the kitchen, and two new cafeteria lines were added. After the dining room was opened, the dining room on the far east wing was closed, and is now used as East Baker's recreation room.

In 1959, University housing again became short for women, and it was decided to divide Baker Hall into the present East and West Baker Halls. The original estimate for dividing the dorm was \$29,600, but this was finally lowered, and the E. J. Will & Company did it at a cost of \$17,689. This cost included eliminating the elevator change, adapting the east elevator to automatic, the addition of an outside fire escape, bricking up the west attic door, and most important (!), the addition of a "Z" shaped brick partition between the elevator in East Baker, and the bathroom in West Baker, thus permanently sealing off East from West, or the men from the women. At that time, men were on west side, and women were on

the east side, and it took an additional \$3,186 to revise East Baker for the women. East Baker was overcrowded in 1959 with 292 women, and it was necessary to place sixteen women in four study lounges until additional space could be found. This was reversed in 1961, due to the shortage of housing for women students, and East Baker again became a men's residence.

After the coeds deserted East Baker to go West, many of their belongings remained to remind the men that they had been there. Four hairdryers (10¢ for 20 minutes) were abandoned, floor length mirrors were left (so the boys could see if their socks were showing), not to mention automatic washers and dryers, and pastel walls painted to feminine tastes. Many men also found the addresses and phone numbers of the girls who had previously been in the room in their desk drawers.

The set of regulations for Baker Hall is also reminiscent of the building's past. Old pink sheets reveal: "If there is any problem concerning diets, please see the dietician. If you desire to change the arrangement of beds, please consult the housekeeper."

During the summer of 1967, all room numbers in the dorm were changed, and new numbers, starting from East Baker were assigned. The switchboard for house phones was also changed, and room numbers replaced old extension numbers (e.g. 79-R). The new room numbers also made the numbering of the rooms in the new wing consistent with the rest of the dorm.

East Baker now has 47 triple, 40 double, and 39 single rooms with an occupancy of 250. West Baker has 16 quad^s, 169 double^s and triple^s, and 90 single rooms with a full occupancy of 550. The total number of rooms in Baker Hall is approximately 400, and the capacity of both East and West Baker is almost 800. The staff of East Baker includes the director, Robb J. Hauck, and seven resident advisors, and the staff of West Baker includes the director, Sue A Giffen, an assistant director, three student personnel assistants, and five resident advisors.