

DAVID SCHREINER HOUSE



Fig. 1. Schreiner House 1994; a 32 by 91 foot rectangle with basement and two floors of cement block and poured concrete. There were no kitchen or eating facilities. The low structure to the right of the picture is part of the Rust House addition of the 1960s. [Author Photo, AP-34]

Schreiner House was built as the men's cooperative dormitory half of the pair of low cost dorms (with Zoe Bayliss House) in 1955. A study of student housing in 1954 had shown a severe need for low cost housing for those students working their way through school. The co-op idea had already been developed by the pioneer co-ops like Anderson house (for women) and Mack and Babcock Houses (for men). During late 1954 plans for co-op dorms for 100 students (50 men and 50 women) were developed by the regents and Madison architects Weiler and Strang. The Orchard Street location for the men's co-op was determined by May 1954. Final plans were approved by the regents on January 8, 1955. In March of 1955 contracts were let, with the general construction contract going to George Nelson for \$157,000. The men's dorm was to cost about \$107,317. Groundbreaking took place in the middle of April 1955. Labor strikes and material shortages delayed construction in the summer of 1955. Further delays resulted when Bayliss House was made a higher priority, and workmen moved to that job. The contractor reported that the men's dorm was occupied as of October 24, about two months late.¹

The building was a 32 by 91 foot rectangle with basement and two floors of cement block and poured concrete. The basement held utilities, a lounge, and a game room. On the first floor were twelve bedrooms and the housemother's suite. The second floor held 17 10 by 12 foot bedrooms. There were no kitchen facilities, since most men's student jobs had meal privileges.

The 55 students who lived in "poverty palace" that first year paid \$20 per month for their rooms, and were responsible for managing, housecleaning, and routine maintenance. The only outside employee was the housemother. Membership in the co-op was determined by scholarship and need. In December of 1955 the regents named the co-op "David Schreiner House" after a University student and football star who was killed at Okinawa.²

After years of success as a co-op, changing economic and social conditions made it impossible to attract enough students to keep the co-op running. In 1989 the University began to use Schreiner for grad student housing.

1) Regent's Minutes, September 25, 1954, March 12, 1955, January 8, 1955, May 8, 1954, September 10, 1955, November 14, 1953, June 16, 1955, May 7, 1955, September 25, 1954;

2) *Daily Cardinal*, Registration issue, 1956, November 16, 1956; Archives biographical file, "David Schreiner". The name Schreiner had also been attached to one of the discontinued houses in the stadium dorms.