

# ZOE BAYLISS HOUSE



Fig. 1. Zoe Bayliss House 1994: a 32 by 91 foot basement and three floors built of concrete block and poured concrete. Minimal housing for 50 women students. [Author Photo, AP-33]

A 1954 study of students at the University showed that 88% of undergraduate men and 73% of undergraduate women earned all or part of their college expenses, and many were entirely self supporting. The regents decided to build cooperative dormitories after the successful pattern of the Tabard Inn, the Anderson House, and the co-op houses in the Kronshage group. They began by building low cost co-ops for 100 students. Because space was no longer available on the campus proper, the regents decided to build in the area south of University Avenue. By July 1954 the site of the women's dorm had been settled as 915 W. Johnson Street, and planning was begun by architects Weiler and Strang of Madison. The plans for the building were approved by the regents on January 8, 1955. A budget of \$176,778 was set in March 1955, and late that month contracts were awarded. General contractor was George Nelson and Son of Madison, for \$157,000. Funding was arranged through the Wisconsin Building Corporation.<sup>1</sup>

Groundbreaking took place on March 30, 1955. Trucking strikes, bad weather and material shortage delayed construction slightly during the summer of 1955. The fifty members of the new co-op lived for the first three weeks of the fall semester on the fourth floor of old Chadbourne Hall, and completed their move to the new dorm on October 11, 1955. Their room and board in that first year was \$53 per month. The members of the cooperative were responsible for all work except that done by the two paid employees, the housemother and the cook.<sup>2</sup>

Laundry, kitchen and dining rooms were in the basement. The first floor held six bedrooms, and the housemother's suite. On the two top floor were 20 more bedrooms, and a library. All rooms were doubles and were mostly eleven by thirteen feet with built-in closets. The regents named the co-op after Zoe Burrell Bayliss, assistant dean of women from 1928- 1943.<sup>3</sup>

Bayliss is the only one of the original four (Bayliss, Schreiner, Rust and Davis) still operating as a co-op. Costs are now about \$2,500 per year.

1) Low-cost housing for single men and single women: a memorandum for discussion with the state building commission, April 22, 1954; Regent's Minutes, September 25, 1954, March 12, 1955, January 8, 1955, May 8, 1954, October 10, 1955, November 14, 1953, June 16, 1955, May 7, 1955.

2) *Daily Cardinal*, October 11, 1955, November 30, 1956, Registration Issue, 1956.

3) *Regent's Minutes*, December 10, 1955; *Daily Cardinal*, June 11, 1943.