

# Renovations lead to reflection on hall history

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Staff Reporter

Thousands of students have called Missouri Hall home for more than 40 years, but next year it will only house construction.

Missouri Hall is scheduled to be the first hall to go offline in a series of hall renovations. This year, Missouri Hall staff, residents and alumni are recounting the great history of the hall with its 40th anniversary celebrations.

Many residents have purchased the T-shirt for this year, "Missouri 1965," but 1965 might be a year the residents who lived in the hall during that time are still trying to forget.

The south half of the all-male hall was still under construction when it opened in fall 1965. In Walter H. Ryle's book, "Centennial History of the Northeast Missouri Teachers College," he wrote that severe winter weather and labor problems delayed and even stopped construction at times.

Missouri Hall Director Zac Burden said he has heard the first year was a barely livable experience for the students residing in the hall.

Burden said residents who were supposed to live in the south half had to live with a roommate until November when the full hall opened.

"When talking to alumni who were part of that first Missouri Hall class, they said they actually had to go out to Campbell and Fair apartments and share beds with men that were living out there, it was so compact," Burden said. "You can imagine coming to college [and] ... having to adjust

to a roommate. Imagine coming to college and having a roommate as well."

On Nov. 16, 1965, the Board of Regents, now known as the Board of Governors, accepted only the completed north half of the building. The entire hall was accepted upon its completion Sept. 25, 1966, according to Ryle's book.

Once the full hall opened, it housed 660 men. Today, Missouri Hall houses 609 students. Burden said the occupancy is smaller today because some of the rooms have gone offline for offices.

Burden said with the renovations, no major room changes will occur, but the renovations will take care of some of the facility needs.

"When you look at this building ... you have to ask yourself what sort of items did the typical student bring to college in 1965, and compare that to what a student brings today," Burden said.

Burden said the hall will have air conditioning and could use an upgrade on the electrical wiring.

Burden said one of his goals for the renovation is to enhance the services in the building and make it a competitive place to live.

"Students already have a really great experience here," Burden said. "We want to be sure we aren't tampering with what makes Missouri Hall a great experience."

Lou Ann Gilchrist, dean of student affairs, said Missouri Hall's design makes it unique.

"I think that there is an intimacy in Missouri Hall ... [the] facility itself kind of leads to that," Gilchrist said.



Missouri Hall in June 1965 in the beginning stages of construction. The hall, originally an all-male residence, officially opened in the fall of 1965, but the south half was still under construction. Missouri Hall Director Zac Burden said students assigned to rooms in the south half had to share beds with men in the north half as well as Fair and Campbell apartments.

submitted by Zac Burden/Index

The smaller wings, community bathrooms and lounges lead to building a better community, Gilchrist said.

Freshman Ashley Winkler, a resident in Missouri Hall, said residents often gather in the lounges.

"I like the community-style," Winkler said. "I just like how everyone on our floor comes and joins and just hangs out together."

Missouri houses about 420 first-year and international students, Burden said. The hall typically isn't one of the more popular buildings for renewal for upperclassmen, Burden said.

"One of the things I find from a lot of my students who go to Centennial or Ryle halls is that, though they have a good time in the other building, they really miss their Missouri Hall

experience, and by then it is sort of too late to come back," Burden said.

Students or alumni who miss their Missouri Hall days have a chance to come back during Homecoming Week.

During Homecoming Week, Burden said Missouri Hall will be open for tours for anyone visiting. He said Missouri Hall has changed quite a bit in the last 40 years, and displays will be set up on the first floor to highlight the changes. Displays showing where the hall is going in the future might also be set up.

Gilchrist said Burden has been successful in recognizing the heritage and history of Truman.

"Part of what is really neat about Missouri Hall right now is they have Zac Burden," Gilchrist said. "I couldn't think of anybody better to be the chief person in

## The Order of Residential Renovations

Each Hall will be offline for one year

- Campbell Apartments (not shut down completely)
- Missouri Hall (planned start date: next year)
- Blanton-Nason-Brewer Halls
- Dobson Hall
- Centennial
- Ryle

Missouri Hall during their 40th anniversary and the last year before it's changed."

"This is a place I came to three years ago and have really fallen in love with it," Burden said. "I can't imagine at least in the short term and perhaps in the long term not being part of it."

Burden said he would like to return to Missouri Hall after its renovations.

## Architecture

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Shotgun houses have no space for a hallway, he said.

"They can be quite quirky," Woodcox said. "You end up walking through the bedroom to get to the kitchen."

Woodcox said when hallways started cropping up, they were

Professor leads a series of tours through KAA to show old architectural spaces still standing in the city of Kirksville

largely used for ventilation purposes.

At the beginning of the 18th century, rooms started to become specialized in their function, Woodcox said.

"Dining rooms are sort of the famous case that most architectural historians will look at," Woodcox

said. "It is a very portable room. All you have to do is eat in it."

Woodcox said it wasn't uncommon to have a dinner party in a bedroom because it might have been the largest room in the house.

People wanting to find out information about their houses should first go to the county courthouse

and find out what their block and lot numbers are, Woodcox said.

There is public access to all the information, and many helpful documents are available in the Special Collections section of Pickler Memorial Library. Woodcox said he has worked with county tax records, fire insurance maps,

local histories on Adair County, the city directory and census records to research information on the various houses.

He said one can access a lot of information in the census records, ranging from the previous owner's religious background and occupation to how many

bathrooms they had.

The tours cost \$5 dollars each. The money goes toward the renovation of the new Kirksville Arts Center at 117 S. Franklin St. Those interested in the tours may call 665-0500 for more information or purchase tickets at the Arts Center.

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