

Johnson Hall Steps, Frame Classroom Buildings Are a Part of Meredith's Architectural Past

By ANN RIVERS

A surprising number of changes have taken place on the Meredith campus since it moved to its present location. Some of the most interesting of these changes have occurred in the physical appearance of the campus.

Undoubtedly, the most familiar building at Meredith is Johnson Hall, which is usually first to be seen as students come up the drive from Hillsboro Street. This sight, the facade of Johnson Hall, is quite different now from its earlier appearance, for it was first constructed with outside steps leading up to the second floor. These steps were the scene of several traditional events.

Students sang there on Commencement Day.

On Class Day each class stood on the steps and sang her class song.

The seniors, who stood on the top rows, moved down the steps for each successive class to move up, symbolizing the rise of each year's class. At the end of Class Day, the daisy chain, forming the numerals of the graduating class, was left on the steps. Stepsinging also took place in the afternoon before Stunt Night and after Palio, which was a day of out door games and merry-making. The old Johnson Hall steps, once an integral part of Meredith tradition, are presently located behind the college, just off the road

to Ridgewood.

The interior of Johnson Hall has also undergone a transformation. Previously it had a rotunda, or enclosed area, in the center, with a recessed floor. This enclosed place was sometimes known as the "fish bowl" or "dry swimming pool" and was used for vespers, meetings, and senior dating.

Before Joyner Hall, the present liberal arts building, was constructed, a long one-story building with classrooms on each side of a single hall was used. This structure was apparently never very satisfactory because the walls were so thin that lessons going on in neighboring rooms could be overheard, and buckets had to be placed in the rooms during rain to catch water from a leaking roof.

Some people may not be aware of the fact that Meredith has a natural amphitheater located in the grove, which is no longer used. In addition to a natural stage, rustic benches were used. Vespers, May Day and Commencement services were held at this site, and on Class Day, the sophomores carried their daisy chain there. Near this area, two rustic, pagoda-style summer houses used to stand — one on each side of the drive. An uproar must have been created one year when a crook was found hiding under one of these.

Hunter Hall, one of the newer additions to the campus, replaces a long, one-story science building, which was removed during the late 1950's.

The old auditorium and music building was abandoned with the construction of Jones Auditorium in 1949. The old auditorium was a large frame building with bare rafters and wooden seats which are still used for outdoor programs. The low rear part of this structure, which had contained music theory classrooms, was allowed to remain and became a part of the present-day Bee Hive. The first student supply store had been located in a small room in one of the dormitories (then known as A, B, C, and D), and was later moved to a farm worker's house which had been on the farm land bought for the site of Meredith College.



Dr. Mary Yarbrough and Frances Rogers, a former chemistry major, move from old science building.



Former graduates of Meredith pose on steps in front of Johnson Hall.



Mary Lou Davis, Jane Lawrence, and Anne Pope investigate steps taken from the front of Johnson Hall during remodeling.



Students make daisy chain in summer house before it was removed.



Former Meredith students enjoy refreshments from the old supply store.



Interior of Meredith chapel before it was replaced.