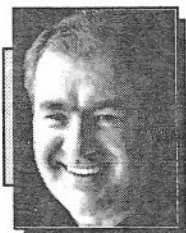


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Post-war UConn saw many changes



Tom
Beardsley

The December 1945 issue of the magazine Connecticut Circle was dedicated to the city of Willimantic, but the magazine's editors also looked seven miles to the north of the city where the University of Connecticut was preparing for peacetime and expansion. This resulted in a UConn feature written by Frank Atwood, which provides us with an interesting glimpse into post-World War II collegiate life at Storrs.

Frank Atwood toured the growing Storrs campus and noted that Army uniforms were giving way to slacks and sweaters, and that discharge buttons glinted in lapels. The war was over, the boys were back and, "co-eds now had a 50-50 chance to dance at the football hop."

Almost 1,800 students had enrolled at the Storrs campus

for the fall 1945 semester, and 212 of them were returning servicemen. Another group of GIs were expected on campus in February 1946, thanks to the GI Bill of Rights. The problem facing UConn's authorities was how to find rooms for all these newcomers. New dorms had been built during the war, but they had been quickly filled.

The Walter C. Wood Hall, a men's dormitory, had opened in 1940. It was named for Dr. Wood of New Canaan, a member of the board of trustees since 1922, a noted agriculturist, surgeon and professor of surgery.

This was one of four dormitories built or completed during 1940-41. The funds for Wood Hall — today the home of the Department of History — were obtained as part of a New Deal-state construction program back in 1935. All the dorms were of red brick construction with a limestone trim. They were laid out with single rooms. The corner rooms were larger and intended for two occupants.

Two women's dormitories were also built, and named for



Charles Hisey

The Walter C. Wood Hall at the University of Connecticut was named after Dr. Walter Wood, a member of the board of trustees. The dormitory, which now houses the history department, opened in 1940.

Edwina Whitney, the librarian emeritus of the college, and for Estella Sprague, the late dean of women who had instituted the college's home economic courses during World War I. Sprague Hall housed 145 women students, Whitney Hall housed 67 and Wood Hall was home to 91 men.

Sprague and Whitney halls

were built alongside Holcomb Hall, built in 1921. Whitney Hall's basement was a cafeteria designed to serve 500 students.

Equipment in the rooms included a desk, chair, rocking chair, bed, dresser, mirror, wardrobe, closet and throw rugs. The lighting was designed for study purposes, and

all the windows were equipped with Venetian blinds and each room had a telephone connected to a house call system. The basements had games, reading and conference rooms, plus a suite of rooms for the house director. The women's dorms had laundry rooms on each floor, and kitchen equipment for serving teas and snacks.