

# Campus During World War II

With the passing of the Buckman act in 1905, the University you now stand in front of became the “Florida Female College”, a school for women only. The name was changed to the Florida State College for Women in 1909, and the University would remain a female liberal arts college through Depression and War until 1947. That fateful year brought the end of World War II and with it the G.I. Bill, granting free education to scores of veterans who previously could not afford it. Anticipating the overcrowding at the University of Florida (the state’s male college), FSCW was officially changed to The Florida State University on May 15, 1947. The name change would come hand in hand with admitting boys to the school, thus making it coeducational. This tour will take you through the FSCW campus during the last years of its existence; when herds of boys were arriving to train at Dale Mabry Airfield and other places in and around Tallahassee, news of the impending war occupied the latest gossip, and the FSCW campus started

important structurally

It would be your tour entrance to the Westing. It was and office



to see very changes, both and socially.

best to start at the main the campus, cott build-a classroom building, and

also the home of the Campus Post Office and bookstore. On February 17, 1940, first lady Eleanor Roosevelt came to the Auditorium in order to address college and state officials, students, and citizens. President Roosevelt was newly elected to a third term of office, and the war in Europe was well underway. In less than two years, the United States would also be involved in the Second World War.



Walk around Eppes Hall and continue down through the Mina Jo Powell Alumni Green to the road. On your right is the Longmire Alumni Building. Built by funds from the WPA in 1938, Longmire was, essentially, the student union. Inside were offices, headquarters for student organizations, many small club and committee rooms, and a formal lounge. There was also a capability to have dances, show movies, and provide other forms of entertainment in the building's large assembly room. It even had guest rooms that visitors to the college could rent.





Across Ivy Way is the Jennie Murphree, Reynolds, and Bryan dormitory complex. These three dorms were set aside exclusively for freshman occupants during the 1940s. Jennie Murphree is still an all girls dormitory (the only one on FSU's campus), an hearkening back to the days when FSU was an all girls school.



Bryan Hall, the southernmost of the three, is easily identified by the battlements on top which resemble a castle.

The dormitory was arranged suite-style, and was therefore highly sought after by young women. It was also one of the only places where men were allowed indoors, and as such the atrium was a social center. Bryan hall was also the direct center of the FSCW campus. As the oldest dormitory on campus, FSCW students revered Bryan Hall as both the social and architectural centerpiece of the campus, much the same as modern students view the Westcott Building.





Across the street from Bryan Hall is an elaborate Gothic building, Dodd Hall. Dodd hall served as the library for FSCW. The buildings original intent is noted in the inscription above the doorway that reads, “The half of knowledge is to know where to find knowledge.” Looking back up eastward towards Westcott, the Williams building is next, followed by Diffenbaugh. Those particular buildings weren’t constructed until much later, but they stand where the Science and History buildings once stood, respectively.





Walking by the adjacent parking lot, through the green in front of Gilchrist hall, and through the South gate to campus is a small establishment known as the Sweet Shop. Even in the 1940s, this was called the Sweet Shop; it was a soda shop serving sandwiches, homemade pies and cakes, and “little dinners” for \$0.35 a plate. They even had a sundries and toiletries department for convenience of the students. It is still an excellent place to enjoy a sandwich, some ice cream, or even a taco!



Back up to campus, and slightly to the West is the newly renovated Landis Hall. Landis was originally built by a PWA grant of \$438,000 in 1939, as part of the New Deal programs, and to combat overcrowding at the college. At the time it was built, it included a men’s cloak room, and separate

sleeping quarters for guests. In 1941, the Red Cross room was added to Landis Hall as an extension of the infirmary. On the opposite side of the dormitory is Landis Green, take a moment to look at the legacy fountain which commemorates the transformation of FSCW into FSU.





On the southeast corner of Landis Green is the William Johnston Building. Although the building itself was built as a dining hall in 1913, the WPA added the second story in the 1930s. The second story opened in 1939, making four dining rooms total in the building, two on each floor. These more modern dining rooms served hot

meals to FSCW girls, and provided for a transition from the very formal atmosphere of the smaller dining hall. With so many girls now at meals, it was difficult to regulate so strictly, and so a cafeteria-style facility was introduced.

Just outside the main entrance to the building are stone reliefs honoring agriculture, an artistic display of the building's original use. After recent renovations to the Suwannee Room, it looks very much the same today and serves buffet-style meals to students, and anyone else who stops in and pays. If you're interested, the entrance to the Suwannee Room is around the east side of the building, between Bryan and Reynolds Halls.





Tucked away between the William Johnston Building and Cawthon hall is the Regional Rehabilitation Center. During the 1940s, this served as the infirmary. As was already mentioned, the Red Cross room was added to Landis Hall as an extension to this infirmary in 1941.



Directly across Landis Green is Montgomery Hall. Now the building houses the dance department, but if you look closely you can see stone reliefs on the building serving as homage to its service as the gymnasium for FSCW.

Montgomery Gym was complete with a swimming pool, a basketball court, and even a two lane bowling alley. Behind the gymnasium, where the diner and parking garage now stand, were the Tennis courts. Just beyond that, in the space now occupied by a gravel lot, was “the village”, off-campus housing for girls.



Back next to Montgomery Gym stands the Shores building. This was the site of Magnolia Hall, a temporary dorm built in 1943 to relieve overcrowding. Built of concrete block, it was an unsightly building, yet rumored to be the most stable on campus. Despite its roughshod appearance, Magnolia Hall was comfortable inside with many amenities to provide students with a quality living space. Although it was meant to be temporary it remained in place, as built, until the 1960s.



Walk down the hill, towards the police station and Dorman Hall. This area was once the FSCW college defense garden. FSCW was fully self-sufficient, with its own farm (where Bellamy is now), vegetable garden (across Woodward from the Student Union), and even central heating plant (the large brick tower near the

Union, it still serves as the campus utilities plant). The defense garden was a popular American practice during the war years, and the women of FSCW joined the war effort with their very own college defense garden.





Turn Westward, and look towards Doak Campbell Stadium. Doak S. Campbell was president of FSCW during the war, and would remain so until 1957. The stadium was named for him, and so it is only fitting that it ends our tour.



#### Bibliography and Suggested Reading

FSCW annuals from 1939-1947

The Tally-Ho Yearbook, years 1939-1947

Sellers, Robin Jeanne. *Femina Perfecta: The Genesis of Florida State University*. FSU Foundation, (Tallahassee, FL 1995). 340 pp.

All above materials available in Special Collections, Strozier Library, Florida State University

The Florida Flambeau, FSCW newspaper, published by students of Florida State College for Women, volume XXVII: September 22, 1939- December 12, 1944. Available on Microfilm at Strozier Library, FSU.