St. Hilda's Hall Ends As Coed Dormitory

By KEN RAKER

An era, an institution and a career all ended quietly—almost unannounced—at Ohio State University yesterday.

The three started together 38 years ago, struggled through hardships, wars and laughter through gay times, and came to a close when Miss Louise W. Kelton closed and locked the door at 169 W. Eleventh Ave., for the last time.

The career belonged to Miss Kelton; the institution was St. Hilda's Hall for women students, and the era was one of interesting formal training with formal education—a modified post-Victorian concept.

ST. HILDA'S was started by the Episcopal Church out of necessity—it was the first off-campus dormitory for girls. At the time, men and women boarded at the same rooming houses.

Miss Kelton was named superintendent in 1913, and after two years of expansion moved her girls to the large brick building at 169 W. Eleventh Ave.

At one time, St. Hilda's housed three other houses and had 42 girls to house, feed, supervise and instruct. But the normal number was about 22 in the big house. That's how many were there last spring.

"It was an adventurous thing sometimes in those days to send a girl away to college," she recalled yesterday as she locked the door.

She planned their formal dances, teas, checked on their dates and kept the house running smoothly.

"Times have changed," she said. "Not long ago the girls abolished the dinners they gave for faculty members. They said it seemed too much like apple-polishing. Many of the en- scribed social refinements have become obsolete."

Some 2000 girls have gone through St. Hilda's in the 38 years Miss Kelton was there. She recalled some of them yesterday:

"There was Ruth Sprankle who married William White, president of the New York Central Railroad, and Elizabeth Fulton who is the wife of the president of Anchor Hocking Glass Co., and Helen Davison who became the woman's page editor of The New York Herald-Tribune, and Harriet Day, who is Ben. John Recker's wife, and oh, there were many others."

IN THESE DAYS, Miss Kelton said, the girls don't seem to care for supervised homes. They have become more independent, more intent on careers for themselves.

The Episcopal Church has found that, too. There will be no more St. Hilda's; no new house will take its place. The era of graceful living for young ladies at college has drawn to a close. St. Hilda's has been wild and will become an apartment building, and Miss Kelton has retired.
Closes St. Hilda's—Miss Louise W. Kelton, superintendent, locks the door of St. Hilda's Hall which has closed after 38 years of serving as an off-campus dormitory for OSU coeds.
October 17, 1952

Dear St. Hilda’s Alumna:

The enclosed clipping is selfexplanatory.

We know that you will share the feeling of regret that, with the retirement of Miss Kelton, St. Hilda’s has been closed.

As a token of appreciation of her inestimable love, her thirty-eight years of conscientious service, and her sincere interest in the girls who have lived with her at St. Hilda’s Hall, we of the Columbus Alumnae think it would be nice to present Miss Kelton with a gift of money for her to use in her retirement.

We are sure that each and every alumna will want to be a part of this expression of gratitude and we will be glad to accept anything that you care to send—nothing less than $1. and nothing more than $100.

Make your check payable to Helen Hunter McGuire, Treasurer, mail it before November 25th, and your name will be attached to the gift.

We hope that any time you are in Columbus you will contact Miss Kelton, 586 E Town Street (Ad. 6400) or any of the Columbus Alumnae so that our pleasant college friendships may be continued.

Cordially

The Columbus Alumnae of St. Hilda’s Hall

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