In the early years of his tenure as dean of agriculture, H. L. Russell created an enormous number of new departments in the college of agriculture. One of these was Poultry Husbandry in 1909. Dean Russell hired, to head this new department, James Halpin of Michigan. Since the department was brand new it had neither facilities nor stock. The stock was provided by donors from the Wisconsin Poultry Association. The regents opened bids for the building on December 30, 1909, and later that winter the foundations were built by university labor, apparently including Halpin's. The building was not finished that winter, and the work of the new department was carried out in the basement of the stock pavilion. In January of 1910 the regents signed a contract for the construction of the superstructure of the frame poultry building with C. B. Fritz of Madison for $3427. The contract specified that the building be finished within ninety days of the contract date. While that might seem like an unreasonably short time for the work, it was not. In the job specifications for the poultry house, architect Peabody says: "The University has already excavated for the foundation walls, piers and other work below the first story level and has placed the concrete foundations and walls, piers and window frames and first story floor which is constructed of concrete in such a manner that the wood superstructure can be erected upon it."¹ The following summer Halpin and his students built the "long houses" for the chickens in the space to the west of the poultry building proper [see Fig. 1.]² In the 1910 regents report dean Russell says: "The buildings for the newly organized poultry department, consisting of a two-story and basement general utility house, costing about $4000, three permanent laying houses, and twelve moveable colony houses, have been built this last year."³ Under
Halpin and his successor Professor Bird, the poultry husbandry department had enormous success, which eventually reduced the utility of the little building on the western edge of campus. By the middle 1950s a few of the department's members still had offices in the "poultry building", but much of the department had moved to Hiram Smith Hall, recently vacated by the dairy department. The poultry department stayed in Smith Hall until the move to animal science building in 1972, at which time the dean of the college of Agriculture Dean Pound was referring to this building as "the shack across the tracks".

Meanwhile the house on University Avenue had an astonishing array of occupants: in 1959 the last of the poultry department left and the building was occupied by the Wisconsin Stock Breeder's Association, in 1960 the Stock Breeders were joined by the UW entomology department; a year later the U. S. D. A. arrived to carry out the study of bee culture; in 1963 the U. S. D. A. Entomology Research was the sole tenant. 1964 saw the arrival of the UW Computing Center, which remained until 1968. The Computing Center moved to the new Computer Science building in 1969, when the poultry building was occupied by the Rehabilitation Counselling Center. The RCC stayed only until 1975 when they moved to the new hospital and clinics complex on Highland Avenue. 3

Their place at the old poultry building was taken in 1975 by the Sea Grant Institute. Sea Grant is a federally and state funded research institute which oversees grants for research in fields relating to the development of maritime resources, this charter was later expanded to cover research in the great lakes as well as the oceans. There are a number of sea grant colleges around the country. Only the administration offices of Sea Grant are at the old poultry house; Sea Grant does no research itself. They fund related facilities on campus such as the hydraulics lab, limnology etc.

Though surely never intended to be a long lived structure, its regular upkeep and fundamentally sound construction have kept it in good enough condition to be an ongoing and useful part of the University physical plant.

3) Report of the regents of the University of Wisconsin, October 1910 p. 155.
3) University and City Directories.