



FWC History 1921: Our Founding Year

Have you ever wondered how the FWC got started?

In 1921, Nina Burton, the wife of the new university president, decided to organize a club for what were then commonly called “the Faculty Women,” to promote acquaintance and fellowship among its members. “Faculty Women” were women in the faculty and the wives of male faculty members. On October 26, Mrs. Burton called together some 50 wives of Deans, Administrative Offices and Department Heads to organize the club. They held their meeting in the President’s House, so it would be fair to say the FWC was born there.

The FWC creation was announced on 5 days later in *The Michigan Daily*. With impressive speed, on December 10, a Board of Directors with Mrs. Burton as the first president was elected and a constitution was presented to the new board. The board included a President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Refreshments (these ladies had their priorities right!), Hospitality, Social, Program, and House.

The last position requires a little explanation. In 1922, the University Regents agreed to lend a small red brick building, recently vacated by the University Health System, to the new FWC to serve as a clubhouse: a place for members to meet informally for tea, or just as a place for a member to relax and read or sew. The House Chairman was expected to arrange for refreshments, furnishings, supplies, and cleaning, and to keep a datebook of events scheduled at the clubhouse.

While the club was formed on October 26, 1921, the first regular club meeting, in the form of a reception (hats and gloves, de rigueur) at the President’s house, was held on Saturday, January 7, 1922. The first regular Board meeting, a luncheon, was held later that month. They made plans to form Drama and Day Nursery sections and decided *not* to have weekly teas at the clubhouse, but to provide a hostess on Thursday and Friday afternoons. FWC members were recruited to serve as hostesses for these occasions.

At that time, there was a monthly club-wide event as well as a monthly Board meeting. On February 1, the Board discussed flowers for the next day’s tea/reception and decided that the April club meeting would be a luncheon. They also decided to have a picnic in May for members and their husbands.

At the March Board meeting, the Dramatic and Athletics sections were formed, as well as plans for a Day Nursery, to open the following fall in the clubhouse. They decided that the April club meeting would be a play-reading by the just-formed Dramatic Section, followed by a dance party (starting at 9:00 pm on a school night!). Planned expenditures for the April event totaled \$116-\$26 for music for dancing, \$15 for rights to the play, and \$75 for coffee, cakes, and punch.



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They had originally planned to have the business meeting in April but postponed it because doing business at an evening gathering with a play and dancing didn't seem appropriate.

At the June 2 Board meeting, they scheduled a garden party for June 27th to honor the retiring dean of women.

What happened to the Clubhouse and Day Nursery? Stay tuned for more installments of FWC history.

P.S. Readers with excellent eyesight may notice that [The Michigan Daily notice](#) says the creation date was October 28, but that's a typo.