

College hangouts come and go but the Shack hangs on. Many alumni remember the Shack as a popular Campus watering hole of the '40s, '50s and '60s. It was often the subject of poems, cartoons and a cover or two for *Shozme*, the Campus humor magazine. The little green and white ramshackle building that still stands across the street from Jesse Hall was even pictured in *Life* in 1949.

Few of today's students, though, have ever been



THE SHACK:

The Hangout That Hangs In

By Sue Hale



inside the Shack and some have never heard of it. Yet the building remains long after such popular hangouts as Deans G.C., Gaebler's and the Outside Inn have vanished from Campus view. Of course, the people who walk through the swinging green door today are mainly University High School students who spend their lunch hour there and alumni who drift in on football weekends for a pre-game beer and to reminisce about days when the initial-carved booths were crowded with college students.

Although the people have changed, the Shack itself is much the same as when it first opened in 1939. Parts of the building date back even further. It was once rumored on Campus that the Shack was originally a trolley car. But, Mrs. Mary Blakemore (she and her late husband Vernon owned and operated the business from 1939 to 1964 before retiring to

**So, come on, Jack,
Down to the Shack,
We'll hang a good one on
For old Mizzou
And drunkards true
And college days now gone**

—Jean Sutfill Walker, BJ '49, AB '51





Jerry Richards, Bob Chester (hidden), Christy Chester, Ruth Faulkenberry, Ron Corn, Elaine Flora and John Raider enjoy a pre-game beer at the Shack.

Sturgeon, Missouri) explains that the Shack began as a Model T Ford truck.

"In the early '20s, a truck drove up on the vacant lot across from Jesse and the owner began selling sandwiches to students out the side. The building just grew around the truck," she says.

First a lattice type framework with a roof was attached to the side of the truck to protect customers from rain and bad weather. The rest of the building was built in the same piecemeal fashion. By 1923, walls and booths had been added and the place became known as the Davis Tea Room. The Tea Room, owned by Chandler Davis, was a popular hangout for "jelly" dates in the '20s and '30s. The business closed in 1933 and the building stood vacant for six years until the Blakemores and Jack Arnil opened it as Jack's Shack. The Blakemores later became sole owners and the name was shortened.

The building is still much the same now as when it was the Davis Tea Room, Mrs. Blakemore says. Part of the old Model T Ford also is present. "The cab of the truck forms the walls of one of the booths in the center. You can recognize it from the openings for the windshield and side windows. We did replace some of the tables and booths over the years. Some of them had been so carved up with initials they just fell apart," she says.

It was under the Blakemores' ownership that the Shack became popular with students at Ol' Mizzou. Rex Steelman, an alumnus now living in Kansas City, stops by the place before each home football game. "When I was in school, it was one of my favorites," he says. "Students would start drifting in for a beer or coke after 8:30 classes and it would be crowded til 12:30 or 1:00 at night.

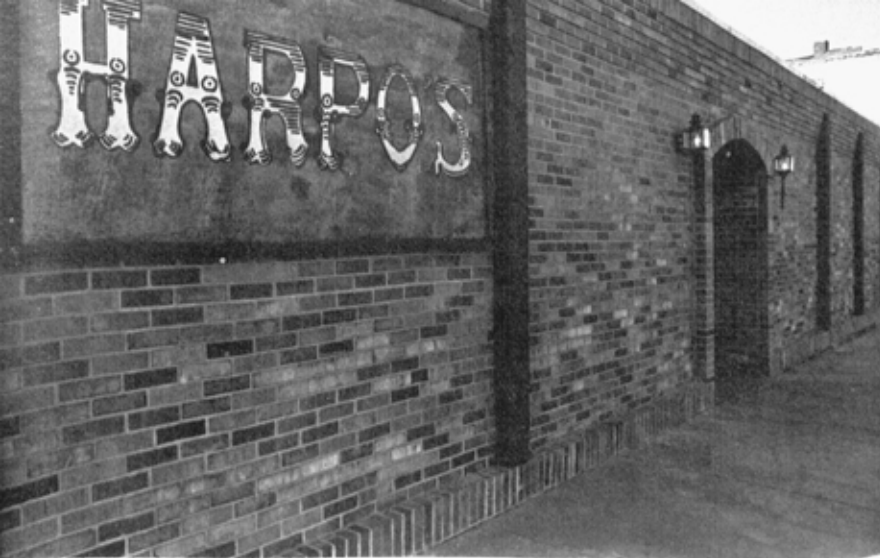
The Shack's reputation was not based on initial-carved atmosphere and beer alone. "I don't know how many students have told me they lived off of our nickel cheese sandwiches while in school," Mrs.



Friday and Saturday nights are busy times at Ford's Theater. Students celebrating the weekend often drink their beers standing up.

Blakemore says. "Not to mention the Shackburgers. Sometimes we would sack as many as 50 at one time.

The popular hangout was a particular favorite with the staff of the Campus humor magazine. Hardly a *Shorcme* came out without containing some reference to the Shack. Mort Walker, a *Shorcme* staffer and now creator of Beetle Bailey, Hi and Lois and Boner's Ark, drew several cartoons featuring the place during his years on Campus. Some of these cartoons as well as *Shorcme* covers and drawings by other artists now hang on the Shack's west wall.



**Bring the Crowd,
The music's loud
At Harpo's or the Zone,
A pitcher of beer,
Some Friendly cheer,
At Ford's you're not alone**

The exterior of Harpo's doesn't give much clue to the 1880's atmosphere and good times to be had inside.

One of these covers was stolen from the building during a recent football weekend.

One legend that has persisted over the years is that a popular song of the '50s, "Green Door," was written about the Columbia hangout. The story was reinforced by the fact that the song was recorded by Jim Lowe, a former student and disc jockey at KFRU in Columbia. Lowe is now a prominent disc jockey at WNBC in New York. "A lot of people think the song was written about the Shack because it has a swinging green door and because I recorded it. I remember the place well," he says, "but in all honesty it wasn't about the Shack. I didn't write the song." In spite of Lowe's disclaimer, "Green Door" continues to be a juke box favorite with alumni.

Now, only on weekends when alumni stop by, does the place resemble the college hangout it once was. Then the booths are crowded, pinball machines are pinging, the juke box plays "Green Door," and people stand two and three deep at the counter waiting to order a beer or two. But, students rarely wander in. One reason perhaps, is that Ray Palmer, who leases the building from the present owner Joe Franke, does not really cater to the college crowd. He doesn't serve beer until after 1 p.m. and closes the place early, usually by 4:30. The students also have been lured away by newer and larger "hangouts."

Ford's Theater and Harpo's are two of the currently popular student gathering places. Ford's, located on Broadway in the old Ford dealership building, is owned by Pete Neenan, a former UMC student. Beer and mixed drinks are served in an atmosphere of red-checked tablecloths and pop art. And, if you are hungry, you can order anything from a small steak to a hot dog. The interior walls are virtually covered with signs ranging from "Veterans For Humphrey" to "Sears Customer service."

and the ceiling is obscured by a hanging assortment of objects, including an old fashioned carriage, a wire shopping cart, an antique baby carriage, a crib, chairs and on and on. There also is a small fireplace in one corner.

Harpo's offers an atmosphere slightly more subdued than Ford's. Located on the corner of 10th and Cherry streets, it is owned by Dennis Harper, a 1971 graduate. The interior is superficial 1890's with an old fashioned bar and glass Tiffany lampshades. Harpo's also has a fireplace, serves beer, mixed drinks and food.

"Harpo's and Ford's are the kind of fun places you like to take a date in the evening or on weekends," Tom Leicht, a civil engineering student says. Doug Ross, a graduate student in journalism, agrees but likes the 18th Amendment for Wednesday night entertainment. The Amendment, on Business Loop 70, offers live music and melodrama and competes for Wednesday night crowds with the Black and Gold, Business 63 South, which also features live music.

Another popular Campus beer joint is the Loading Zone. Owned by Shad Smith, BS Agr '71, and Steve Pickering, BS PA '68, it is located on Conley Avenue. Close to Campus, the Zone attracts a good crowd almost all day long, but mainly draws from students and local members of the counter-culture groups. Students interested in coffee and talk can go to the Chez, a coffeehouse sponsored by the Presbyterian Student Center on Hitt Street.

The Heidelberg (it used to be the Ever-Eat) and Romano's are good places for something to eat or a quick beer between classes. Both are located on Ninth Street and attract a lot of students and faculty from the Red Campus. But, if you will settle for a coke with your lunch, there is the M-Bar, the Memorial Union's Bengal Lair, the Brady Commons and, even, the Shack. □