

# History of Power on Campus

From the Beginning to  
Present Day Energy Use on Campus



Original Seminary Building - circa 1870's  
Heated by Ben Franklin Stoves (wood & coal burning).  
Photo courtesy MHC Archives & Special Collections

Our campus has grown tremendously over the past 167 years. From the original seminary building--housing both students and faculty; to our current campus which includes 60+ academic, resident building, and other buildings. We truly have a unique history of *power* here at Mount Holyoke.

In the beginning.....

## **1836 – 1900**

Ben Franklin Stoves (wood burning) and coal burning. The first of two Springfield Furnace introduced around the Civil War on campus. The second was put into place in 1897. These were gasoline powered and very effective to produce gas for lighting (street lights and residence hall lights), Bunsen burners, chaffing dishes, and hot water production. In some of the old buildings that are 100+ years old, these lines are still evident.

## **1896**

There was a campus power plan on paper.

## **1900**

DC electricity with steam turbine and coal burning produced power on campus.

## **1900-1933**

Central heating plant constructed. There was a coal boiler room where the card office is presently.

## **1923**

Oaks Company installed an electrical distribution system that allowed us to get electricity from the city. At this time, we stopped producing our own electricity.

**1934**

The campus sewer system was tied into the Town of South Hadley's sewer system.

**1934-1938**

Light Oil Boilers (a form of diesel fuel) -120 in number, replaced coal burning in the central heating plant.

**1939-1945**

More boilers added and a new stack was built to keep up with consumption.

**1946-1953**

Removed 120 boilers and replaced with fewer in number that were more efficient to maintain. At this time the type of oil was switched to bunker oil #6 due to the fact that the military needed the light oil. Bunker oil #6 is a heavier type of fuel that we still use today.

**1953-1986**

Updated and maintained electricity units on campus and in all buildings.

**1986**

Started producing electricity again from turbine.

Prior to 1988, only a few buildings were air conditioned. Of these were the library and the art museum. Since 1988, every building on campus has been air conditioned beginning with Dwight. Most recently, in 2000, Pratt, the Art Building, the Science buildings (with the exception of Clapp) and Blanchard have been added to the air conditioning "grid" on campus. Today the buildings are heated and cooled throughout the year. Even in the summer months and over J-term, the buildings are still fully heated or cooled. (With the exception of the dorms in the summer months.)

*Data provided by MHC Facilities Management Department*