Mrs. Emma Nesbitt Mayberry was Southern University’s first Director of Home Economics (formerly called Women’s Industries Department). She was a native of Montgomery, Alabama, and the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Nesbitt. She completed the elementary grades in a private school in her neighborhood. Miss Nesbitt then entered State Normal later called State Teachers College (Alabama State University) in Montgomery, Alabama.

Mayberry transferred to Tuskegee Institute (Tuskegee University), in Tuskegee, Alabama. After receiving her diploma from Tuskegee Institute, Miss Nesbitt did special work in Home Economics at Teachers College, Columbia University. After returning to Tuskegee she taught Home Economics. Shortly thereafter she was wooed and wed by Mr. H. C. Mayberry, whom she accompanied to Topeka Industrial Institute of Topeka, Kansas, where she was in charge of female students.

During the summer of 1910, while president of the Baton Rouge College, Dr. Joseph Samuel Clark hired as one of his teachers of the Summer Normal, Mrs. Emma Nesbitt Mayberry, a position she held for three summers. After returning to Tuskegee Institute for the 1910-1911 session, Mrs. Emma Mayberry left Alabama for good in the summer of 1911. After completing the Summer Normal of 1911, in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, she accepted a position in the public-school system of Lafayette, Louisiana for two years.

Dr. Joseph S. Clark, now president of Southern University and A&M College asked Mayberry to take part in the new venture. The Southern University was created to provide the Negroes of the state of Louisiana a practical agricultural and industrial education. The new president of the transplanted institution began his real work at Southern University, September 1913. His first major task facing him was that of selecting a faculty. Dr. Clark was so impressed with the work of Mrs. Mayberry that he invited her to join the staff of Southern University as an Instructor and Head of the Women’s Industries department.
Mayberry’s training and the experience qualified her to assume the position of Instructor of Women’s Industries at Southern University, which she did in March 1914, on a temporary basis. Mrs. Mayberry was on leave from her regular teaching position in Lafayette, Louisiana, and after two weeks involving the period immediately preceding and succeeding March 9, 1914, she returned to complete the school year, which left her free to begin working at Southern University on a permanent basis, which she did in June, 1914.

Emma Mayberry remained at Southern University for thirteen years as a teacher in Home Economics. For an additional thirteen years she had the responsibility of being in charge of the Boarding Department and the female students in Parker Hall and the Old Music Studio (which was the Women’s Dormitory). Her training included studying at Tuskegee University, Teachers College, Columbia University, Chautauqua Institute and the University of Chicago.

From the University’s humble beginning with a few students in 1914, the university experienced outstanding growth under Dr. Joseph S. Clark’s leadership. In 1927-1928 and 1929 he added a degree in Teacher-training curriculum in Agriculture and Home Economics. The Home Economics department, originally headed by Mrs. Emma Mayberry, had been a two-year training program in 1916, and was housed on the basement floor of the Academic Building. With the motto: “Quality Over Quantity” the department grew to the point that a third teacher was needed the second year, and a new building and expanded curriculum were necessary by 1927.

The first graduate from the Home Economics Department with the bachelor’s degree was in 1931, and the next year, the discontinuance of the two-year training program. Later in 1941 and continuing until 1943, a two-year curriculum was included in: (1) Foods and Nutrition and (2) Nursery School Education.

Mrs. Mayberry helped to start the first sorority chapter on Southern University’s campus in 1932. The Chapter is Beta Alpha of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

Mrs. Emma Mayberry was active in civic, professional, and social activities. Mrs. Emma Mayberry retired and established her permanent residence in Los Angeles, California.

Mrs. Emma Nesbitt Mayberry is now deceased.
The **Mayberry Dining Hall** on Southern University’s campus is named in her honor. On January 27, 1981 the students toured Mayberry and were served refreshments. On February 2, 1981 the doors were permanently open to serve the students of Southern University and A&M College of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

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Mayberry, Emma Nesbitt. **Personal Papers.** Archives and Manuscripts Department, John B. Cade Library, Southern University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.


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