

The Unintended Costs of Coeducation  
at Wesleyan University

by

Anne Fraser Ferreira  
Class of 2017

A thesis submitted to the  
faculty of Wesleyan University  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Bachelor of Arts  
with Departmental Honors in History

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	2
Timeline of Events.....	3
Introduction.....	4
The Sixties: The Age of Expansion.....	11
<i>Defining a New Decade</i> .....	12
<i>Demographic Changes</i> .....	23
<i>Looking Toward the Future</i> .....	38
The Seventies: The Days of Reckoning.....	38
<i>Financial Circumstances</i> .....	47
<i>Spatial Implications</i> .....	57
<i>Fraternities at Wesleyan</i> .....	67
The Lingering Costs of Financial Errors.....	68
<i>Financial Recovery and Expansion</i> .....	77
<i>Fraternity Review</i> .....	87
<i>Continued Changes</i> .....	104
Conclusion.....	117
Bibliography.....	121

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, thank you to my advisor, Professor Ronald Schatz, who pushed me to be a better researcher, writer, and thinker.

To my mom, an extra pair of ears and eyes throughout this project; to my dad, for regaling me with all of his Wesleyan stories.

To Suzy Taraba, Leith Johnson, and the whole Special Collections & Archives staff, who offered essential research help and many hours of silent companionship.

To Professor Nathanael Greene, an equally great academic advisor and source of Wesleyan anecdotes.

To Professor Amrys Williams, who first suggested connecting coeducation and space.

To my interview subjects, everyone who suggested people to talk to, offered to help me on this journey, or shared memories of the Wesleyan they knew.

Finally, to the friends who offered kindness, insights, and patience during this process. You will always be my favorite Wesleyan stories.

## TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 1949** Wesleyan purchases American Educational Publications
- 1961** Foss Hill dormitories (West College and Nicolson) open
- 1962** McConaughey Dining Hall opens  
Board adopts the Little University plan
- 1965** Lawn Avenue dormitories open  
American Educational Publications sold to Xerox for 40,000 shares of stock
- 1967** Hall-Atwater opens  
Edwin Etherington becomes Wesleyan's twelfth president
- 1970** Colin Campbell becomes Wesleyan's thirteenth president
- 1971** Hockey Rink opens  
Science Tower and Library open
- 1973** Center for the Arts opens  
High and Low Rise apartment complex opens  
Power Plant opens
- 1979** Fayerweather expansion added
- 1982** Wesleyan launches the Campaign for Liberal Learning
- 1984** Davenport Student Center opens in the old Scott Labs building
- 1985** Chi Psi incident sparks campus debate about fraternities
- 1986** Olin expansion opens
- 1987** Task Force on Residential Life proposes that fraternities admit women
- 1988** William Chace becomes Wesleyan's fourteenth president
- 1990** Freeman Athletic Center opens  
Bombing of South College
- 1995** Douglas Bennet becomes Wesleyan's fifteenth president
- 1998** "Senior Village" idea proposed
- 2004** Bennet mandates that all-male residential fraternities either allow women to live in their houses or move off-campus
- 2005** Fauver Dormitories open
- 2007** Michael Roth becomes Wesleyan's sixteenth president  
Usdan University Center opens

## INTRODUCTION

American colleges and universities have taught men and women together, in some capacity, for more than 150 years. The Morrill Acts in 1862 and 1890 provided public land and government funds for new public universities that served a more rural population. These universities, which included the University of California, Cornell University, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Connecticut, enrolled both men and women as a cost-saving measure. However, student bodies of the older, elite, private colleges and universities in the Northeast, such as Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, Amherst, Williams, Hamilton, and Trinity were exclusively male. Several of those colleges maintained sister institutions—Harvard had Radcliffe, Brown had Pembroke, and Columbia had Barnard—but these coordinate colleges did not receive funding or acquire prestige comparable to their male counterparts.

In the latter 1960s the trustees and presidents of virtually all of these all-male colleges and universities decided to enroll women and begin coeducation.

Coeducation was part of a liberalizing force that pushed for increased diversity in American higher education and included admitting more Jewish, Catholic, and black students. This change in the student body was also influenced by a federal effort, which followed the 1957 Soviet launch of Sputnik, to train more educated professionals. Coeducation came about slightly later than these developments, and had significant financial and scholarly incentives. While minority students often required financial aid, white women were seen as a large, untapped pool of students most of whom could both pay full tuition and all of whom could perform well

academically. The process of admitting women also appeared, at least on the surface, to offer a much smoother transition than the push for racial diversity, which proved tumultuous at many colleges and universities. Although female students had previously been banned from the most prestigious colleges, other universities had been teaching women for a long time, with good results.

In many ways, Wesleyan University resembled these other private colleges, yet coeducation proved more difficult to implement at Wesleyan than most other institutions. This thesis will explain why fiscal, spatial, and social factors at Wesleyan came to have a critical effect on the long-term successes and failures of coeducation.

Wesleyan began admitting women in 1872 as a way to gain funds from Methodist organizations and alumni. It continued to admit women for forty years, until 1912. Although this first wave of Wesleyan women were academically successful, an increasingly hostile male culture meant women were barred from many extracurricular and social activities. During the 1900s, coeducation became increasingly viewed by both alumni and male undergraduates as main factor separating Wesleyan from its more elite, all-male peer schools. Recent metropolitan alumni aimed to elevate Wesleyan's status and emphasized fraternities and athletics, both masculine ventures, as means to this end.<sup>1</sup> To rectify this discrepancy, the Board of Trustees first limited the number of female students on campus and then voted to stop admitting women altogether.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Nicholas Davenport, "Yours for the New Social Order: Student Radicals at Wesleyan University, 1929-1941" (honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 2010), 2-6.

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see: Louise Wilby Knight, "The 'Quails': The History of Wesleyan University's First Period of Coeducation 1872-1912" (honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 1972).

The second wave of coeducation began at Wesleyan in 1968 when female transfer students arrived on campus, while the first fully coeducational class graduated in 1974. Coeducation was part of a much broader transformation taking place within the University. In the late 1950s, members of Wesleyan's faculty conceived of the Little University plan, which aimed to create a hybrid institution that had both comprehensive graduate programs and a liberal arts orientation. The Little University plan initially proved controversial as it was a substantial financial investment and would completely redefine the school's academic mission. But by 1962 it was approved by the Board of Trustees and graduate programs were instituted soon thereafter. In addition, Wesleyan increased faculty salaries to attract more renowned faculty, constructed new dormitories and dining halls, and developed recruiting and scholarship strategies to bring increased diversity to campus.

The school was able to invest in these innovations due to the extraordinary wealth it had acquired throughout the 1950s and 1960s as a result of its investments. Wesleyan bought American Educational Publications (AEP), which printed *My Weekly Reader*, in 1949, and reaped the benefit of its expanding profits throughout the next decade and a half. In 1965, Wesleyan sold AEP to Xerox for 40,000 shares of stock, which gave the school another immediate influx of cash and provided additional funding for many of its expensive initiatives.

However, Wesleyan did not manage its budget well and the new programs and physical expansions proved to be unsustainable in the long run. With their profits, the school had invested in a new science center, arts center, dormitory apartment complex, and hockey rink, along with series of smaller renovations. These

improvements were primarily paid for directly out of the endowment and as a result sharply reduced Wesleyan's wealth. In addition, rising inflation, energy prices, and the stock market decline in 1973/4 all exacerbated Wesleyan's financial problems. Between 1960 and 1975, Wesleyan went from being the richest school (per-student) in the country to severely trimming all expenses.<sup>3</sup>

To cope with its fiscal imbalances, Wesleyan continuously increased enrollment throughout the 1970s. Enrollment at the school nearly doubled in size between 1966 and 1980.<sup>4</sup> However, as Wesleyan expanded and reached gender parity, the University could not afford to invest in additional housing or dining facilities, while the school had never had a student center commensurate with its expanded enrollment. Therefore, there was no place for students to gather besides the residential fraternities, and these proved to be the Achilles' heel in Wesleyan's search for gender equality.

Fraternities started at Wesleyan in the late nineteenth century and had traditionally provided residential and eating facilities to a large percentage of the student body. They had come under some fire during the 1950s due to their discriminatory practices and anti-intellectual culture. As a result, the school constructed new dormitories and a dining hall to provide alternatives to Greek life. In the 1970s, Wesleyan's growth in enrollment—a result of its financial issues—far outpaced these facilities and students increasingly lived off-campus or in independent housing. The fact that there was no student center or dining hall that could serve the

---

<sup>3</sup> Albert E. Van Dusen, *Connecticut* (New York: Random House, 1961), 365.

<sup>4</sup> David Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970: Academic Ambition and Middle-Class America* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2015), 440.

whole student body further augmented the sense of fragmentation within Wesleyan's social life. Only the fraternities could provide places for young people to eat and interact. As a result, they became the *de facto* centers of student life, contributing important physical spaces that the school lacked.

Although a few of the residential fraternities were co-ed, most were exclusively male. Fraternities had fallen in popularity both nationally and at Wesleyan during the 1970s, and frequently it was the chapters that struggled to recruit members or had disaffiliated from their national organizations that admitted women. This dynamic meant the fraternities who maintained their all-male status received the greatest alumni, financial, and institutional support. This further magnified the gendered power dynamic on campus. Although some female students found fault with Greek life, many others accepted it as a hangover from Wesleyan's all-male days. Most importantly, many students felt the positive contributions of fraternities, especially to social life, outweighed their inherently discriminatory nature.

However, fraternities came under increased scrutiny during the 1980s when Wesleyan regained some of its financial strength and renovated several buildings that enhanced student life. The most notable of these projects was the Davenport Student Center, which largely failed as a student union, but demonstrated the possibilities of school-sponsored social spaces. Many of Wesleyan's peer institutions also began looking into Greek life on their campuses during this time. Unruly fraternity behavior, growing claims about the misogynistic nature of Greek life, and changing expectations about the role of the administration in student life all contributed to this upsurge of fraternity reviews. But, while many small, liberal arts schools reformed

and eventually removed Greek life from campus, Wesleyan—which prided itself on its liberal nature—did not modify its fraternities. The school was too dependent on the spaces that fraternities provided to consider looking at them critically.

Wesleyan did not generate enough capital to adequately address its reliance on fraternity spaces until the early twenty-first century when a new president and fundraising campaign made campus expansion possible again. The school invested in centralized residential spaces and a student center and dining complex that, together, worked to reduce the power fraternities had on campus social life. Although these additions did not replace Greek life, they allowed for student life to exist in school-sponsored rather than all-male spaces. The Wesleyan administration seized this opportunity to rein in fraternities, using strategies similar to those other schools had twenty years earlier. Whether these reforms will be successful in positively altering Wesleyan's gender dynamics still remains to be seen.

In retrospect, it is clear that Wesleyan's administration in the late 1960s and early 1970s did not understand the key connections between physical space and the demands of coeducation. Wesleyan unwisely invested in multiple non-residential building projects while failing to provide proper student centers or dormitories. This decision illustrates how administrators and faculty assumed coeducation would be achieved without the requisite investment in non-gendered residential spaces. As a result Wesleyan relied on fraternity spaces far longer than its peer institutions.

This thesis explores the relationship between the physical layout of institutions and the realization of goals for gender equality and, by extension, inclusion in general. The first chapter lays out the context for Wesleyan's financial

issues and decision to coeducate, largely focusing on the 1950s and 1960s. The second chapter chronicles Wesleyan's growing economic issues and their effects on the physical campus and student life. The third chapter takes a comparative look, tracing fraternities and the fight for coeducation at Wesleyan to the events at other schools. The conclusion takes these themes up to the present day and examine how they continue to affect the school.

## CHAPTER ONE

### The Sixties: The Age of Expansion

For Wesleyan, 1960 not only meant a new decade but a chance to look toward the future. Previously, Wesleyan was not seen as a particularly rich or innovative school. But a series of fortuitous financial decisions meant that Wesleyan finally had money to spend, while an ambitious faculty, primarily recruited by President Victor Butterfield, had big dreams for the future of the school. This wealth of resources led to a rapid expansion of the school in all possible facets. It expanded its physical layout, developed graduate school programs, and grew the faculty and student body. The illusion of endless wealth, along with the ballooning price tags for many of these decisions, meant that when the school began to run out of money, it was not prepared for the cutbacks and sacrifices it would have to make. These ramifications largely played out in the 1970s, but it is important to first understand how Wesleyan could get itself into such an overextended financial situation during the previous decade.

In addition to a huge influx of funding, the 1960s also brought demographic changes to Wesleyan. Excluding a brief bout of coeducation between 1872 and 1912, Wesleyan had been a school that predominantly catered to white, rich males. In the 1960s, Wesleyan began admitting black, Jewish, and female students in large numbers. The school's rocky integration of black and Jewish students in the mid-1960s helped pave the way for female students who began attending Wesleyan in 1970. The University's decision to admit women was largely on par with the national coeducation movement, which was driven by a combination of cultural, economic,

and legal forces. Though Wesleyan made some accommodations for its new female students, the integration of women was largely overshadowed by racial tension and emerging financial issues on campus. As the school grew during the 1970s, the ramifications of Wesleyan's large financial investments would become clearer.

The ambition that Wesleyan had cultivated in the 1960s continued as the school contemplated how to grow in the 1970s. Enthusiastic plans for how to improve the campus, build relationships with Middletown, and further the school's academic reputation pervaded. These plans would ultimately not come to fruition, though, as the University drastically overestimated its reach. The end of this era of growth came as a shock to many in the Wesleyan community, including Edwin Etherington, who by then had replaced Butterfield as President. Wesleyan would go into the 1970s grappling with a new identity: a school, once the richest in the nation, was now buckling under economic pressures.

### *Defining a New Decade*

In 1949, Wesleyan purchased the American Educational Press for \$8 million (\$81 million in 2017 dollars), to be paid in ten annual installments.<sup>5</sup> Though a huge investment at the time, The Press, as it came to be known, would come to shape Wesleyan in countless ways. Most notably, the Press published *My Weekly Reader*, an educational weekly sold to thousands of elementary schools. Press profits during the 1950s and early 1960s increased dramatically as the baby-boom generation entered elementary school. By 1956, Wesleyan was one of the three most endowed

---

<sup>5</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 302-3.

institutions in America, and by the 1959 school year the Press was generating around \$4 million in annual income for Wesleyan.<sup>6</sup> With this new money, Wesleyan invested in its physical plant, recruited more academically accomplished students, and pledged to increase enrollment from 800 to around 1,000 by the early 1960s. As Wesleyan considered the future it was riding a wave of increasing endowment, rising prestige, and institutional ambition, which would eventually coalesce in both a new identity and a redefined campus.

### College Plan vs. Little University

Victor Butterfield had been President of Wesleyan since 1943 and led the University into this new era. He had successfully guided the school through World War II and student demographic changes brought on by the G.I. Bill. He was primarily known for his personal style of leadership and devotion to Wesleyan. The son of a college president, Butterfield had always wanted to be a teacher. Arriving at Wesleyan in 1935 when he was 31, Butterfield served as the Director of Admissions and taught philosophy before working his way up to President.<sup>7</sup> Intensely focused on academics, he had a doctorate from Harvard. Butterfield used Wesleyan's newfound wealth to reconsider the place of the liberal arts college in the wider world, and encouraged the faculty to do the same. As Professor Emeritus Robert Rosenbaum put it, "He would not think of his presidency as requiring him to raise money...And he

---

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 310, 321.

<sup>7</sup> "Office of the President: Wesleyan's Eleventh President," Wesleyan University, <http://www.wesleyan.edu/president/pastpresidents/butterfield.html>; "Victor L. Butterfield Dies at 71; President Emeritus of Wesleyan," *New York Times*, November 20, 1975, [http://www.nytimes.com/1975/11/20/archives/victor-l-butterfield-dies-at-71-president-emeritus-of-wesleyan.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/1975/11/20/archives/victor-l-butterfield-dies-at-71-president-emeritus-of-wesleyan.html?_r=0).

was also not very much interested in big new buildings. Building a great faculty is what he really went after, and he had an unusual talent for searching out excellent prospects.”<sup>8</sup> In addition to improving Wesleyan’s faculty, Butterfield aimed to strengthen Wesleyan’s academics by emphasizing breadth of learning and the liberal arts more generally. Influenced by Alfred Whitehead’s *The Aims of Education* (1929), Butterfield envisioned the school as “stretch[ing] beyond its foreseen resources and take[ing] reasonable risks against them.”<sup>9</sup> His initiatives included a potential coordinate college for women, a Center for Advanced Studies, and most notably a College Plan that would organize the school into interdisciplinary areas of study.

For Butterfield, the College Plan exemplified the best parts of a liberal arts education. He first conceived of the College Plan, which can be seen as an attempt to replicate parts of the Oxford-Cambridge tutorial system, in the early 1950s.<sup>10</sup> He envisioned individual, interdisciplinary majors, like the College of History, Philosophy and Comparative Language, the College of Social Studies and Philosophy, and the College of Behavioral Sciences, that students would apply to at the end of their freshmen years.<sup>11</sup> For Butterfield, the College Plan had several key advantages. First, it created a residential college system where students could live, eat, and learn together. Secondly, it emphasized reading and synthesis, instead of grades, and therefore fostered an intellectual rigor that Butterfield saw as essential.

---

<sup>8</sup> Rosenbaum was hired by Butterfield in 1953 as a Professor of Science and Mathematics. He went on to spend many years during the 1960s and 1970s working in the administration; Robert Rosenbaum, interview by Maddie Neufeld, Wesleyan University Oral History Project, April 17, 2012.

<sup>9</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 367.

<sup>10</sup> William Barber, interview by Nancy Smith, Wesleyan University Oral History Project, January 15, 2014.

<sup>11</sup> “College Plan Folder,” (Victor L. Butterfield Papers, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1958). Hereafter referred to as the VLB Papers.

Within the College Plan, students would learn in group tutorials and work toward more independent study over four years. Butterfield acquired a \$25,000 Ford Foundation grant for self-study in 1952, and through this grant the school created the Educational Policy Committee (EPC). Consisting of faculty members who were tasked with considering various administrative questions, the EPC explored both the College Plan and the direction of the University more generally.

Despite Butterfield's enthusiasm, the faculty largely opposed his College Plan because they interpreted it as segregating different departments. In particular, the Science Department faculty saw the College Plan as biased toward the humanities. The USSR's successful launch of Sputnik in 1957 meant that the sciences were receiving newfound national funding and attention, which further emphasized their exclusion from the College Plan. Additionally, in an academic culture where specialization was becoming increasingly important, the College Plan threatened the younger faculty members' career prospects by limiting their ability to publish within existing department structures. Butterfield's drive for the best faculty, combined with the school's increasing wealth, had resulted in Wesleyan having one of the most competitive compensation, benefits, and sabbatical programs within higher education. Therefore, Wesleyan had an especially driven group of academics. Instead of adopting Butterfield's vision for the future, many had their own ideas. Most prominently they envisioned Wesleyan as a "Little University."

The concept of the Little University had been floating around Wesleyan since 1953, most likely originating with Professor Sigmund Neumann. Neumann, a German Jew, had received his doctorate in Germany before leaving in 1933. He first went to

the London School of Economics for a year, before joining Wesleyan in 1934.<sup>12</sup> His European educational background might have provided the inspiration for the Little University, which encouraged the development of graduate programs at Wesleyan. Neumann chaired the educational structures subcommittee of the EPC, and its 1955 report highlighted how graduate programs would help the University maintain a strong faculty produce more substantial research. The Little University idea slowly gained prominence throughout the 1950s, directly competing with Butterfield's College Plan. This led to a growing tension between the President and a growing proportion of the faculty.<sup>13</sup>

In contrast Butterfield felt that pursuing the Little University idea would jeopardize Wesleyan's status as an outstanding liberal arts college at the service of creating a third-rate graduate school. Though the EPC favored turning Wesleyan into a Little University, their report did not explicitly condemn Butterfield's ideas. After releasing their report in 1955, the EPC was reconstituted with a fresh group of faculty and Butterfield took this opportunity to draft a detailed proposal for the College Plan. Together the EPC and Butterfield completed a 38-page proposal in 1958. Stressing an experimental trial, it put forward a three-year test period for the College of Social Studies (CSS) and the College of Letters (COL). In 1959, the school launched these two colleges, with the College of Quantitative Studies established in 1960.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> "Biography of Sigmund Neumann," *The Sigmund Neumann Institute for the Research on Freedom and Democracy*, accessed April 2017, <http://sigmund-neumann-institut.eu/index.php/en/informations/66-en/informations/103-biographie-sigmund-neumanns>.

<sup>13</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 334.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 335, 341.

Nevertheless the Little University idea continued to develop on a parallel track to the College Plan. In 1961 a group of faculty, nicknamed the Mystic Nine, released a report entitled “Long Range Plans for Wesleyan University” that laid out a specific strategy for the Little University idea. Their proposal was referred to the EPC, whose subcommittee on graduate study responded with “The New University.” This report reinforced the Little University idea, calling for a “vastly increased emphasis on advanced scholarship and research”<sup>15</sup> In November of 1962, the faculty approved the idea of graduate classes and the indefinite continuation of CSS and COL.

Initially, Butterfield read these two reports but did not endorse them as he was afraid that they would eclipse his College Plan. Nevertheless, he realized that he had to give something to compromise. Professor Emeritus William Barber highlighted Butterfield’s attitude in a 2014 interview: “Butterfield was never enthusiastic, and in fact was fairly hostile, to the PhD programs in the sciences. But to get enough votes from the sciences in the faculty meetings to approve permanence for the other colleges, that was the price he paid.”<sup>16</sup> Therefore, with Butterfield’s tacit approval, a toned-down New University manifesto was approved by the Board of Trustees in 1962. This new manifesto included an increase in both undergraduate and faculty numbers to 1,500 and 200 and approximately \$38 million to fund the proposals laid out in the plan.<sup>17</sup> In this way, Butterfield’s larger vision for the school was vetoed, but the future of a smaller portion was guaranteed.

---

<sup>15</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 366-68.

<sup>16</sup> Barber, interview by Smith, January 15, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 379-81.

After approval, the school moved quickly to implement many of these new ideas. In 1963, Wesleyan approved its first graduate program, a PhD in Mathematics, followed by World Music (1963), Biology (1966), Physics (1966), and Chemistry (1968).<sup>18</sup> Butterfield largely disapproved of this direction and he continued to encourage broad, liberal learning. Yet, his concerns did little to slow Wesleyan's momentum, which also included significant administrative and enrollment growth.

Though Wesleyan could afford it at the time, the resources and facilities needed to launch graduate programs would prove to be a huge drain on the school's finances. Nevertheless "This was a time when Wesleyan thought of itself as being rich. And rich for the first time," as Barber explains, and therefore ambition outpaced everything else.<sup>19</sup> In addition, Wesleyan's new wealth came in the middle of higher education's golden age. For the 25 years following World War II, enrollment in higher education increased dramatically, giving schools the means and impetus to expand physically.<sup>20</sup> Many schools grew their graduate offerings, which were receiving increased funding from the federal government. In particular, the space race had prompted many new federal grants focused on scientific achievement. This period of growth magnified Wesleyan's sense that its resources were unlimited. In different national circumstances, Wesleyan may have been encouraged to act more frugally regarding their finances. Yet, both Wesleyan and higher education more generally appeared to be able to grow indefinitely.

---

<sup>18</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 384.

<sup>19</sup> Barber, interview by Smith, January 15, 2014.

<sup>20</sup> John R. Thelin, *Essential Documents in the History of Higher Education*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 229.

### Facility and Financial Growth

Although it had opportunistically acquired buildings around the campus, Wesleyan had not made any large-scale investments in its physical plant since squash courts were constructed in 1935. Therefore, Wesleyan's physical campus in the 1950s was in dire need of some attention, and Press income allowed for updates. Many investments involved renovating existing buildings—the Faculty Club was turned into the John Wesley Club, the first two floors of Harriman Hall were converted into the Public Affairs Center (PAC)—and larger scale projects were also planned. In 1955, Mount Vernon Street, which ran along the base of Foss Hill, was moved and Vine Street expanded to provide an alternate route. In addition, converting Harriman to PAC meant the school needed additional dorm space, and the first Foss Hill residence halls, today West College and Nicholson, opened in 1957. These campus improvements helped lay the groundwork for the 1960s, when Wesleyan would move from renovations to new construction.

Much of this new construction came out of two primary motivations: enrollment increases and academic improvement. Part of Butterfield's mission was to expand Wesleyan's opportunities to as many men as possible. Therefore, the school steadily increased its enrollment during the 1950s and 1960s, going from 760 in 1955 to 1223 in 1965.<sup>21</sup> Previously, Wesleyan had a robust Greek system that was responsible for housing and feeding a significant portion of the student body. In the late 1950s, 85 percent of undergrads belonged to fraternities, 40 percent resided in these buildings, and 90 percent ate in the eating clubs.<sup>22</sup> This setup was not unusual,

---

<sup>21</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 423.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

and many of Wesleyan's peer institutions also relied on Greek life to house and feed their students. Logistically, this setup was financially beneficial because the colleges did not have to finance the living or dining spaces for most of its students. But increasing Wesleyan's enrollment posed a problem to the existing system. Because greek life could not be counted on to expand, Wesleyan would need to invest in new residential facilities if it wanted to increase the student body. These new buildings were important in allowing the campus to extend beyond greek life, which had been the dominant mode of socialization at Wesleyan since their inception. In addition, these physical changes coincided with a decrease in the popularity of fraternities, which will be discussed more in the next section. The faculty largely endorsed this move away from fraternities, which they viewed as bastions of an anti-academic culture. Therefore, in 1962 both a third Foss Hill Unit and a new dining hall, named McConaughey, opened.

Secondly, many new buildings were constructed under the umbrella of academic improvements. In 1964, the school released *Wesleyan University: The Next Decade*, which predominantly laid out the buildings to be constructed before 1974. These included the completion of the Lawn Avenue Residence Halls, which were already under construction and expected to hold CSS and COL, a hockey rink, a Creative Arts Center, a Science Library and Tower, an expanded Physical Education Facility, an additional three residence halls each holding 90 people, and a library expansion. Construction and land acquisition alone was expected to cost \$29 million (\$227 million in 2017 dollars), not including maintenance or utility fees.<sup>23</sup> With the

---

<sup>23</sup> "Wesleyan University: The Next Decade," (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1964).

significant Press revenue of the 1950s, the school had spent a considerable amount of money developing attractive faculty compensation packages, instituting graduate programs, and growing the financial aid budget. These costly investments meant that, despite its increased endowment, Wesleyan didn't have an excess of savings.

Wesleyan had been counting on alumni donations and potential grants to help fund this spending, but both of those revenue sources had been overestimated. Most notably, in 1952 Butterfield attempted to run a Development Fund Campaign, with the goal of raising \$2.5 million to help fund the Foss Hill dormitories. Having only raised \$1 million by 1954, Butterfield let the campaign fade away and relied on the Press income to cover 86 percent of the Foss Hill building costs.<sup>24</sup> Wesleyan did not have an established system of alumni giving, and did not put any effort into establishing one during this time, a fact that would continue to haunt it for the next two decades.

In addition by the early 1960s the Baby Boom generation had mainly passed through elementary school, meaning that *My Weekly Reader*, the Press's cash cow, became less profitable. Gilbert Clee, the President of the Board of Trustees, was aware of Wesleyan's financial situation as well as the decreasing income brought in from the Press. Therefore, when Clee saw an opportunity in the spring of 1965 to sell the American Educational Press to Xerox for 400,000 shares of its stock, he took it. This resulted in an immediate gain of \$56 million (\$433 million in 2017 dollars) for Wesleyan's endowment, providing the means for the school to not only follow through but also expand on its The Next Decade Plans.<sup>25</sup> A 1966/7 ten-year projection

---

<sup>24</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 314.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 390-92.

added conversion of the Scott Labs building and renovations to '92 Theater, Field House, and PAC to its list of facilities upgrades. Out of the \$32.6 estimated to fund these as well as the older building projects, \$24.4 million was expected to come from gifts, while the other \$8.2 million would be taken from the surplus operating budget.<sup>26</sup>

After 25 years in office, Butterfield retired in 1967. The school had changed dramatically under his tenure, especially in his last decade. The days of faculty meetings held in the President's office were gone, and Wesleyan had grown into a much more bureaucratic institution. Butterfield had seen his beloved College Plan not receive the support he wanted and he began to struggle with some health issues toward the end of his tenure. Therefore, as Barber remembers it, "The last year or two, so far as Vic Butterfield was concerned personally, I don't think were very happy ones. He was being pressured to do some things he didn't want to do—and didn't do."<sup>27</sup> Butterfield was succeeded by Edwin Etherington '48 who had previously the Chief Executive of the American Stock Exchange before being tapped by Clee to become Wesleyan's twelfth president. Before becoming President, Etherington had commissioned a series of educational studies, and he came into Wesleyan ready to institute various changes. Still, in many ways he never quite managed to get a grasp on the school's needs. In addition his tenure overlapped with key changes in the makeup of the student body, and he spent much of his tenure navigating race and gender issues present on campus in the late 1960s.

---

<sup>26</sup> "10-Year Projection," (VLB Papers, 1966), Table 7.

<sup>27</sup> Barber, interview by Smith, January 15, 2014.

### *Demographic Changes*

For Wesleyan, as well as many other schools, the 1960s brought on a reconsideration of who higher education was meant for. Changes in admissions policies meant that, for the first time, black and Jewish students began to come to Wesleyan in large numbers. Wesleyan was one of the first schools to recruit minority students extensively, but other schools caught up within a year or two. In addition the student body became increasingly political as protests of the Vietnam War and student strikes took over campus. Unprepared for that type of activism, Wesleyan had a difficult time grappling with the social unrest on campus.

In many ways, this experience prepared the University for women, who arrived in large numbers in the fall of 1970. On the surface, Wesleyan's transition from a single-sex to a coed institution was relatively smooth and by 1968 the administration was eager to have women on campus for economic, academic, and cultural reasons. But on the flip side, the lack of controversy meant that in some areas change came slowly. Specifically there were hardly any spatial accommodations made for the female students and the physical plant still reflected Wesleyan's identity as an all-male school.

### Vanguard Choices

While most faculty were beginning to implement their Little University vision, some were concerned with a different issue: the diversity of the school. Historically Wesleyan had few of minority students. In the early 20th century when Wesleyan still had ties to Methodism, there would be several black students on

campus at a time. Similarly, Wesleyan's Methodist ties in China, and in particular with West China University, meant that Wesleyan attracted and enrolled a few Chinese students.<sup>28</sup> Catholic and Jewish students also attended Wesleyan throughout the 20th century, but faced religious prejudice through fraternity discrimination and compulsory chapel service. In particular, Jewish students were held to an unofficial quota of below 10 percent. In the 1950s, though, this attitude began to change as Wesleyan's faculty pushed for a more academically ambitious—often code for Jewish—student body.

Under Director of Admissions Robert J. Norwine, Wesleyan invested in its admissions department by making a concentrated effort to get students of a higher academic quality. Press revenue enabled the Admissions Office to add more staff, travel to more cities, and increase the scholarship budget. Through a process called “selective recruitment,” the staff toured smaller Western and Southern cities, expanding Wesleyan's reputation and attracting academically stronger students.<sup>29</sup> Although this increased geographical diversity, it was mainly limited to white and Jewish students from suburban public schools. Nevertheless the school gained experience in recruiting specific groups of students and made financial aid a priority within the admissions department. The expanded resources and methods of the admissions department laid the groundwork for racial and gender diversification in subsequent years.

---

<sup>28</sup> Stuart G. Svonkin, “The Pluralistic Ideal at Wesleyan University,” (honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 1989), 82-87.

<sup>29</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 326.

These recruiting efforts largely stagnated by the early 1960s, though, as other schools also began offering competitive scholarships to middle-class students. Wesleyan's high percentage of younger faculty members, many of whom were involved with the Civil Rights movement, saw an opportunity to both increase the diversity of and academic prestige of the University. These professors pushed for the continued admission of Jewish students and a concentrated recruitment of black students. When Norwine decided to leave Wesleyan in 1964 in order to run the admissions department at a new college in Florida, Butterfield took the opportunity to reconstitute the school's admissions policies. As a replacement, he hired John C. Hoy '55, who had previously worked at Swarthmore and had a reputation for creating racial and religious diversity, with the implicit understanding that Hoy would bring his tactics to Wesleyan.

Whereas previous admissions efforts had focused on suburban, public schools, Hoy worked to build a network of urban schools from which Wesleyan could recruit a more heterogenous student body. In the October 6, 1964 issue of the *Argus*, Hoy highlighted how he would be focusing on "prior academic achievement, intellectual and career commitment, and proven ability," and would be instituting "radical changes in recruitment methods." In addition, he emphasized "a revision in scholarship policy," with financial aid shifting from suburban families to low-income rural or urban students.<sup>30</sup> Hoy's efforts were immediately noticeable, and the "vanguard class" of 1965 included 13 black and one Hispanic student. In order to allow for this diversity, Wesleyan increased its scholarship budget by 55 percent

---

<sup>30</sup> Svonkin, "The Pluralistic Ideal at Wesleyan," 141.

between 1963 and 1969, while the percentage of non-white students went from 0.7 percent in the class of 1968 to 20 percent in the class of 1974.<sup>31</sup> Wesleyan aimed to have ten percent of each incoming class be students of color, a high proportion that set Wesleyan apart from many of its peer institutions.<sup>32</sup> During the 1969/70 school year, 12 percent of Wesleyan's student body was non-white, while Yale and Harvard had fewer than 5 percent students of color.<sup>33</sup> Although Amherst and Williams began recruiting students of color around the same time Wesleyan did, their matriculation rates similarly lagged behind Wesleyan until the early seventies.<sup>34</sup>

Like the school more broadly, fraternities were faced with questions of diversity during the 1950s and 1960s. Prior to the late 1950s, many fraternities at Wesleyan and nationwide either had clauses in their national charters dictating type of students they could rush or, instead, had "gentlemen's agreements" which in essence did the same thing.<sup>35</sup> At Williams, these types of practices led the school to eliminate fraternities in the early 1960s in favor of a residential housing system. At Wesleyan the administration did not take as hard of a line; President Butterfield, the Board of Trustees, and the College Body Senate all condemned fraternities's prohibitive clauses, but did not issue any school-wide anti-discrimination guidelines. By 1961, the administration got the result it had hoped for: all fraternities independently eliminated their discriminatory clauses. For some fraternities this meant separating

---

<sup>31</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 389; Svonkin, "The Pluralistic Ideal at Wesleyan," 141.

<sup>32</sup> Alford A. Young, Jr., *Revolt of the Privileged: The Coming Together of the Black Community at Wesleyan University, 1865-1976* (New York: U.T.A.C.P.T., Inc., 1988), 20-1.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Margolis, "The Two Nations at Wesleyan University," *New York Times*, January 18, 1970, [http://www.nytimes.com/1970/01/18/archives/the-two-nations-at-wesleyan-university-the-two-nations-at-wesleyan.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/1970/01/18/archives/the-two-nations-at-wesleyan-university-the-two-nations-at-wesleyan.html?_r=0).

<sup>34</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 395.

<sup>35</sup> Svonkin, "The Pluralistic Ideal at Wesleyan," 127.

from their national chapter. In 1958, Alpha Chi Ro became the Black Walnut Club after refusing to require pledges to “look up to Jesus of Nazareth as their moral exemplar.”<sup>36</sup> Sigma Chi and Sigma Nu both revoked their national charters in 1959 due to discriminatory language; both lived on as the Commons Club and Alpha Sigma Delta, respectively.

The administration’s passive handling of fraternity discrimination can be seen as an indicator of their general relationship to fraternities. Though the school consistently recognized the importance of fraternities on campus, it also fostered a relationship with the fraternities where they were treated as independent entities. Though this type of attitude wasn’t wholly unusual at the time, Wesleyan was more hands-off than some of its peers. Williams took a very active approach to greek life, deciding that housing, dining, and social life should be responsibilities of the school and not the fraternities.<sup>37</sup> Similarly, Amherst mandated 100 percent rushing for its fraternities in 1951, and in 1963 took control of the charters for 11 of its 13 fraternity houses.<sup>38</sup> In contrast, Wesleyan made very few demands of its fraternities and, in return, fraternities largely functioned autonomously. Though this relationship wasn’t hugely consequential in the 1960s, it set a precedent of fraternal independence that, as we will see, made regulation and reform more difficult in the future.

Wesleyan’s push for diversity succeeded in creating a powerful black community, which helped galvanize much of the campus activism in the late 1960s.

---

<sup>36</sup> Svonkin, “The Pluralistic Ideal at Wesleyan,” 133.

<sup>37</sup> John W. Chandler, *The Rise and Fall of Fraternities at Williams College: Clashing Cultures and the Transformation of a Liberal Arts College* (Williamstown: Williams College Museum of Art, 2014), 101.

<sup>38</sup> “Amherst College: A Chronology,” Amherst College, accessed April 2017, <https://www.amherst.edu/library/archives/historyAC>.

Most famously, a group of black students, staff, and faculty occupied Fish Hall for twelve hours on February 21, 1969.<sup>39</sup> The occupiers released a list of demands which included both housing and a cultural center for black students, the establishment of African American Studies classes, and an increase in the number of students and faculty of color. The Fisk Hall takeover, in addition to many other, smaller protests, lead to a profile in the *New York Times* detailing much of Wesleyan's racial strife. This article, "The Two Nations at Wesleyan University" brought national attention to Wesleyan's activist culture and by the late 1960s, the school's public image started to be defined by this radicalization, with many journalists reporting on the racial issues, protests, and violence in Middletown.<sup>40</sup>

Etherington, who had assumed office in 1968, was forced to deal with many of these issues immediately upon his arrival. He helped convert the John Wesley House into the Malcolm X House, and he worked with Ujamaa, the black student group, to begin the African-American Institute (AAI) in 1969.<sup>41</sup> To get the AAI off the ground, Etherington agreed to pay four scholars from the Tuskegee Institute to fly from Atlanta to Middletown each week to teach one course. Wesleyan paid each scholar \$20,000 and covered the cost of their flights. This expense was in addition to the \$30,000 renovation of the Malcolm X house the AAI's \$300,000 first-year budget.<sup>42</sup> Etherington's extravagant spending characterized his attitude as President:

---

<sup>39</sup> Jake Lahut, "Remembering the Fisk Hall Takeover, 48 Years Later," *Wesleyan Argus*, February 20, 2017. <http://wesleyanargus.com/2017/02/20/fisk-takeover-48-years-later/>.

<sup>40</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 410.

<sup>41</sup> In 1974, this would later turn into the Center for African-American Studies and an official African American Studies major would not be established until 1983; Svonkin, "The Pluralistic Ideal at Wesleyan," 160-66.

<sup>42</sup> In 2017 dollars, this investment nears \$3 million; Young, *Revolt of the Privileged*, 55-6.

every problem could be solved with enough money, and Wesleyan had enough money to solve every problem.

Etherington was in a difficult position, inheriting Wesleyan in an immense time of institutional change and broader social upheaval. In addition to the racial issues on campus, Vietnam protests had taken over college campuses across the country, including Wesleyan. Etherington had issued a series of reports upon assuming Wesleyan's presidency, and was eager to come in and make his own mark on the school. Instead, he spent much of his time putting out immediate fires rather than shaping the long term legacy of Wesleyan. It was in this intense social climate that women first began attending Wesleyan.

### The Culture of Coeducation

Though many elite, eastern establishments were single-sex, coeducation had existed in the west for a long period of time. In addition, many state schools admitted both men and women. Within the broader universe of higher education, few schools were single sex. Yet, those schools were the oldest and most elite institutions, and therefore their decisions to not admit women, or, in Wesleyan's case, eliminate women from campus, is important. Though women had access to collegiate education, they didn't have access to the most prestigious education in the country, and it took economic motives to propel this change to happen.

Though World War II was a temporary exemption to gender norms on campus, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, better known as the G.I. Bill, reversed any progress toward gender parity made during the war. This bill gave veterans access to

higher education, and this influx of soldiers increased the masculine culture at many of these schools. During this time period, the number of women receiving college degrees, relative to the number of men, fell for the first time.<sup>43</sup> This increase in college enrollment, which continued for the next twenty years due to the size of the Baby Boom generation and increased Pell grant access, grew drastically and propelled higher education into its golden age. Seven hundred universities were created between 1960 and 1969, and the number of college students increased from 3 million in the early 1950s to 7 million by 1968.<sup>44</sup> Due to increases in enrollment and funding post-war, many institutions, including Wesleyan, invested in new buildings and educational programs.

It was at this time that many northern, elite, all-male schools began to consider admitting women, in Wesleyan's case for the second time. This change can be linked primarily to economic pressures within higher education but also cultural and, more specifically, civil rights shifts. Demographic data made it clear that post-war enrollment numbers could not be sustained. Women were seen as an untapped source of tuition money, and many schools started to look to women as a solution to potential financial issues. Whereas admissions offices had continually grown their financial aid budget during the 1950s and 1960s to bring academically qualified students to campus, admitting women wouldn't require this type of investment. In fact, many of these women could be expected to pay full tuition and, therefore, add to the financial health of the school. In addition, admitting women would open up a new,

---

<sup>43</sup> Leslie Miller-Bernal, introduction to *Going Coed: Women's Experience in Formerly Men's Colleges and Universities, 1950-2000*, ed. Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004), 8-9.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 9, 12.

academically qualified pool of candidates and could help stabilize the quality of the student body.<sup>45</sup>

In addition, changes in admissions policies and the liberalization of culture in the 1960s made it so that students increasingly wanted to attend coeducational schools. The G.I. Bill, Pell Grants, and admissions policies in the 1950s brought an increasing number of middle-class students to campus. These men had attended coeducational secondary schools and, to them, single-sex colleges seemed outdated. Many male students began choosing schools with an accessible female population—often represented by a coordinate college—over single-sex institutions. In essence this created a cultural tipping point where schools without female students quickly began to appear to be outdated. This dynamic is exemplified by Harvard, Yale, and Princeton as the latter two considered coeducation in the late 1960s. Though Harvard and Radcliffe had separate campuses, the students of both colleges had taken classes together since World War II and shared many extracurricular activities. As a result, Yale was losing 86 percent of students admitted to both schools due to Harvard's relationship to Radcliffe. Princeton lost about three quarters of students admitted to both schools.<sup>46</sup> Similarly one of Wesleyan's earliest rationales for coeducation was that it would help the school attract more qualified men.<sup>47</sup> In the increasingly competitive arena of higher education, coeducation seemed like a way to ensure both financial and academic quality.

---

<sup>45</sup> Nancy Weiss Malkiel, *Keep the Damned Women Out: The Struggle for Coeducation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 598.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 61, 93, 73.

<sup>47</sup> "Provisional Working Paper on Women's Education at Wesleyan" (VLB Papers, 1966).

### Women at Wesleyan

When Wesleyan's Board of Trustees decided to admit women in May 1968, they were making this decision for second time. Women first attended Wesleyan from 1872 to 1912 when they made up 15 to 25 percent of the student body. At that time, the board did not address the decision to admit women explicitly, but as the school reworked its charter in 1869-70, it dropped the clause that stipulated only men could be admitted.<sup>48</sup> During this time, Wesleyan was also accentuating its Methodist roots, as this aided the school's efforts to raise money from both religious groups and prominent alumni. Because Methodism supported coeducation, admitting women was likely an attempt to demonstrate the school's religiosity.

Women first arrived on Wesleyan's campus in the fall of 1872. It is tempting to think that the inclusion of women over a forty year period would alter the school's masculine culture, but coeducation proved to be consistently controversial. At the beginning of their time at Wesleyan, female students were somewhat accepted into the school's social life. Although the women were looked down upon by many of their peers, they were still included in the yearbook, able to be class officers and allowed to participate in class activities.<sup>49</sup> As alumni grew more resistant to the idea of coeducation, the school increasingly banned women from many of these opportunities. Much of the resentment toward female students came from their academic success. Women were integrated with the men academically and they therefore competed for, and constituted a significant portion of, the same Phi Beta

---

<sup>48</sup> David Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1831-1910: Collegiate Enterprise in New England* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1999), 100.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

Kappa spots. In addition, women students began to establish their own campus culture, creating sororities, literary societies, and hosting alumnae events.<sup>50</sup> This solidified female culture was seen as threatening to the male hegemony and, therefore, another reason to eliminate coeducation.

The main motivation for eliminating coeducation, though, seems to be the threat of an increasingly feminized Wesleyan. Wesleyan was closely aligned with Methodism from 1870 to 1890, but toward the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century started migrating toward a more urban, masculine demographic. This change coincided with an influx of less-serious but wealthy students, and led to an increase in Greek organizations and a renewed emphasis on sports. This shifting identity manifested itself physically, with Wesleyan constructing a new gym in 1893, which women were denied access to, and joining the all-male Amherst and Williams to form the Little Three in 1899.<sup>51</sup> Partially due to sports and partially due to increased media coverage of college activities, Wesleyan was beginning to see itself as part of a larger conglomerate of elite schools. The primary difference between Wesleyan and these perceived peer institutions was coeducation.

As both local and national press began to pick up the coeducation debate at Wesleyan, the school considered establishing a coordinate college for women. The cost of establishing a new coordinate institution was largely prohibitive, so instead President Bradford P. Raymond introduced a 20 percent quota on female students and created a separate category for women within publications, academic honors, and at

---

<sup>50</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1831-1910*. 214.

<sup>51</sup> Knight, “‘The ‘Quails’: The History of Wesleyan University’s First Period of Coeducation 1872-1912,” 54; Potts, *Wesleyan University 1831-1910*, 213.

graduation. These restrictions understandably led to a drop in female enrollment and effectively created a coeducational limbo: women did not want to enroll due to their limited role on campus and men did not want to enroll because of the presence of women. After years of debate, the board voted to stop admitting women in February of 1909 and, instead, to open a coordinate college as soon as the funds were available. This was never a priority for the school, though, and instead, the Connecticut College for Women was established in 1915, thereby providing a private institution of higher education for women in Connecticut.<sup>52</sup>

Despite Wesleyan's coeducational history it approached admitting women in the 1960s the same way many historically all-male institutions did. Colin Campbell, President of the University, theorized that "One of the things that was helpful for us [in the decision to coeducation] is that we could say that we had been co-educational before and had just taken a hiatus."<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, Wesleyan's first period of coeducation differed dramatically from its second. On the surface, Wesleyan's decision to re-coeducate mirrors that of many of its peer institutions. Frequently Wesleyan had the same concerns and conclusions as other schools investigating the possibility of women's education at this time. Yet, in some respects Wesleyan was unusual in that its decision to coeducate intersected with its evolution into the Little University and the financial problems that arise from that decision. Therefore though coeducation might have appeared to be a relatively straightforward process, it in fact took much longer than the school anticipated to develop an equal campus.

---

<sup>52</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1831-1910*, 216-19.

<sup>53</sup> Campbell, interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016.

At many all-male schools, plans for coordinate colleges preceded the decision to admit women. At Wesleyan, Butterfield advocated for converting the Long Lane School into a women's college. Located a ten to fifteen minute walk from what was then the center of campus, the Long Lane School was a juvenile correctional facility owned by the state. In 1956 and again in 1960, the state considered selling the property and both times Wesleyan showed considerable interest. Yet the plans never made it further than inquiries and price negotiations.<sup>54</sup> Considering the possibility of a coordinate college, though, began a conversation within the administration and Board of Trustees about what educating women at Wesleyan would look like, the groundwork for future debates.

The school revisited coeducation in 1965 when Butterfield and the Board tasked the EPC with considering coeducation. The EPC set up a subcommittee of nine male faculty members led by T. Chadbourne Dunham to take on this task. The EPC's report came in April of 1966 and demonstrated tentative support of coeducation. It highlighted the perceived advantages of admitting women: the compelling nature of mixed classes, the additional value for performing arts, the strengthened Masters in Teaching program, and the improvements in specific academic areas. The concluding remark, "[t]here would, we think, be less tendency to regard women merely as sexual objects if they were a permanent part of the academic and social community," demonstrates how the admission of women was still coated in sexist assumptions.<sup>55</sup> Additionally, due to the ongoing building projects, the EPC would subsequently advocate for a speedy conclusion on coeducation as "increasing the enrollment for

---

<sup>54</sup> Wesleyan eventually purchased the Long Lane School in 2000 once it was shut down by the state.

<sup>55</sup> "EPC Report to Butterfield and the Board of Trustees" (VLB Papers, April 4, 1966).

men further and by designing the gym and Art-Theater-Music Building for men only, we will preclude a favorable decision for women in the foreseeable future.”<sup>56</sup>

Despite initial EPC support for coeducation, it took Wesleyan almost two years to vote in favor of admitting women. This appears to be for two main reasons: reluctance on Butterfield’s part and a need for action by the school’s peer institutions. The young, eager faculty who had pushed Butterfield for minority admittance were also eager to have women on campus, but, according to Barber, “This was something that Butterfield didn’t want to take on. He wanted to do more experimenting, and enriching the undergraduate experience.”<sup>57</sup> Other faculty, particularly those in the sciences who were focused on graduate courses, also worried about resources going to coeducation, rather than their initiatives. In addition Butterfield felt that the decision to coeducate should be left up to his successor as he would not be able to implement the decision. Essentially, Butterfield’s reluctance pushed coeducation onto the back-burner: even though the faculty endorsed admitting women in 1966 there was no vote by the Board of Trustees until 1968.<sup>58</sup>

Wesleyan also relied on the actions of other schools to guide its decision to coeducate. The Patterson Report, released by Princeton in September of 1968, proved to be this catalyst. The report, a thorough economic study of what coeducation would mean for Princeton, concluded that “Princeton would be a better university if women were admitted to the undergraduate college.”<sup>59</sup> The report was instrumental in driving Yale’s decision to go coed, as they were afraid to be “left out of the parade” if both

---

<sup>56</sup> “Memo from Victor Butterfield to Burton C. Hallowell” (VLB Papers, April 19, 1966).

<sup>57</sup> Barber, interview by Smith, January 15, 2014.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Malkiel, *Keep the Damned Women Out*, 121.

Princeton and Harvard were admitting women.<sup>60</sup> Once Yale and Princeton decided to go coed, many schools followed. In May of 1968, one year into Etherington's tenure, the Board of Trustees voted to admit women for the fall of 1970 and female transfer students in the intervening years. Yale, Princeton, Trinity, Georgetown, and Connecticut College all went coed in 1969; Williams, UVA, Johns Hopkins, and Colgate made the change in 1970; and Bowdoin, Brown, and Rutgers coeducated in 1971. Amherst notably lagged behind its peer institutions, not going coed until 1975, as did Haverford (1980), and Washington and Lee (1985).

One hundred and eleven women entered in the class of 1970, making up about one third of the 382 person class. Wesleyan made very few changes to campus in preparation for their arrival, and in 1970 there were no female sports team, few female faculty members, and little room in the already overcrowded gym for women. The Hewitt block of the Foss Hill dorms became the first female dorm, but no large-scale physical changes were made. By 1974, women were 40 percent of the school, and their numbers continued to grow throughout the decade. Yet primarily due to financial reasons, the school remained unable to fully accommodate women on the physical campus.<sup>61</sup> When the Board's members decided to admit women in 1968, they did not imagine—indeed, could not have imagined—that money would soon be in short supply, making it hard for the university to accommodate the increased study body.

---

<sup>60</sup> Malkiel, *Keep the Damned Women Out*, 73.

<sup>61</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 401.

### *Looking Toward the Future*

Etherington began his tenure in 1968 with a big question in his mind: what is Wesleyan going to do with its tremendous wealth?<sup>62</sup> He saw Wesleyan as having no financial limitations, and not only carried out the building plans hatched under Butterfield but also continued stretching the ambitions of the school. At this point in time Wesleyan still was a tremendously rich school, but the projects it took on were increasingly becoming drains on those extensive resources. During Etherington's tenure the school went from financially stable to financially strapped, primarily because the funds for the new buildings came directly out of the school's endowment. Yet, in many ways, the school did not anticipate this drastic turnaround in fortune as evidenced by their building reports and plans for the future. By the time economic strife hit the school, it was not only unprepared but also stunned at the change of fortune.

Wesleyan's The Next Decade plan, which included the plans for new science and arts centers, had begun before Etherington assumed office. The first part of the science complex, the Hall-Atwater building, opened in 1968, while the Science Library and Tower would continue to be constructed into the early 1970s. Similarly, planning for the Center for the Arts began in 1965, during Butterfield's era, but construction did not start until 1970.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, when Etherington became President, he had two big construction projects already on his hands. Nevertheless, he had ambitious plans to continue expanding the physical layout of the school. In a July 1968 letter to the mayor of Middletown, Kenneth J. Dooley, Etherington specifies the

---

<sup>62</sup> Barber, Interview by Smith, January 15, 2014.

<sup>63</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970*, 394.

need for “additional undergraduate dormitories, graduate student housing, a dining hall, a gymnasium and swimming pool, more playing fields, library expansion, a student center, a maintenance plant and a faculty office/classroom building...”<sup>64</sup> These plans were formalized in two different reports, the Pilot Plan and the Development Plan, both released in 1968. The Pilot Plan, which came out of the Facilities Planning Office, identifies key physical gaps in campus and potential sites for new buildings. It highlights the significant academic investments the school had already made—the admission of women, a reconstituted teacher education program, new graduate programs, and a revamped Public Affairs Center and Center for the Humanities—as primary reasons to physically expand. The report points out how “these programs require (1) dormitories, (2) dining facilities, (3) expanded physical education plant, and intensify the long felt needs for a student center and for housing for graduate and married students.”<sup>65</sup> Because of its scope the Pilot Plan continued to form the cornerstone of Wesleyan’s expansion policies for the next few years. In relation to Wesleyan’s history, where no new buildings were constructed between 1935 and 1961, these construction plans were especially bold.

The Development Plan, the more specific of the two, is a collection of materials submitted by Wesleyan to the State of Connecticut. Largely a compilation of government forms, the Development Plan is most notable for the land acquisitions it proposes. Maps of the campus demonstrate that the school had begun buying parcels of land along Pine Street, Warren Street, Fountain Avenue, and Knowles

---

<sup>64</sup> Edwin T. Etherington to Kenneth J. Dooley (Development Plan for Wesleyan University, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1968).

<sup>65</sup> “A Pilot Plan” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., November 1968), 1.

Avenue in hopes of constructing new physical education facilities around the existing hockey rink. It also urged the school to purchase properties to Home, Brainerd, and Miles Avenues to be used as faculty housing.<sup>66</sup> Wesleyan had been in the business of owning wood frame houses for some time, originally with the goal of providing faculty affordable housing close to campus. But the Development Plan represents a renewed effort by the school to acquire smaller portions of land that, due to enrollment number in the next decade, would begin to form the backbone of Wesleyan's housing system.

Out of the Pilot Plan came three more detailed reports, all released in 1969. Guidelines and Recommendations for Campus Planning, a Student Housing Report, and a Student Center Report. Each proposed more specific building projects and construction timelines. Guidelines and Recommendations for Campus Planning, the most general report, was compiled by the three-man task force of Joseph McMahon, a dean, Nils Frederiksen, the campus planner, and David Bishoff, a visiting professor of Physical Education. The report took on four larger aspects of the physical campus: housing, dining, physical education, and social life. This report highlighted Wesleyan's lack of infrastructure for these three activities, a problem that would continue to affect the campus for the next thirty years. Both this report and its more detailed counterpart, the Student Housing Report, emphasized the scattered nature of Wesleyan's undergraduate residential life. Students could choose between interest houses, traditional dorms, residential colleges, off-campus housing, and fraternities, all located in different parts of campus. Broadly speaking, Guidelines and

---

<sup>66</sup> "Development Plan for Wesleyan University" (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1968), Exhibit 112-2 & Exhibit 112-3.

Recommendations' main suggestion was to reform residential life in order to strengthen community.

The Student Housing Reported looked at centering community around a series of new dining and residential halls while phasing out smaller housing units. This made sense given that, looking toward the new decade, the school predicted it would “need 600 new housing units and two accessory dining halls to meet the needs of the undergraduate student population and 130 housing units for the graduate and married student population.”<sup>67</sup> The report proposed a new residential construction project including three new dorms, two on Court Street and one between Lawn, Church and High, that would each hold 150 students. Accompanying these new dorms would be two new dining halls. McConaughey, the main dining hall on campus, could only hold 550 students; the two proposed dining halls would almost double this capacity by adding 875 dining seats. At the time of the report, many student dining needs were filled by a series of satellite facilities, including 11 eating clubs, the Downey House Grill, the Foss Hill Snack Bar, and the East and West College dining halls. The proposed new dining halls aimed to consolidate these various eateries.

The proposed new student center was seen as another initiative aimed against the disjointed nature of residential life and dining at Wesleyan, and was bookmarked as a top priority. The Student Center Report proposed a new building on the corner of High and William Streets that could hold the bookstore, post office, a series of game rooms, a snack bar, and a short-order cook. The Center would consolidate many scattered and inadequate facilities and was imagined as 40,000 to 65,000 square feet.

---

<sup>67</sup> “Student Housing Report” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1969), iv.

The report proposed a potential layout for the building and the size and technical equipment required for each room. The Board of Trustees even “authorized immediate programming and planning of the Student Center, and allocated a one million dollar gift from the Surdna Foundation to the project” due to the increased importance of a student center in bringing a growing, already fractured student body together.<sup>68</sup>

In addition to a student center, fraternities were seen as key to maintaining Wesleyan’s social cohesion. The Student Housing Report listed 10 residential fraternities, mainly centered around High Street, holding around 260 students.<sup>69</sup> Along with with East and West College, Interest Houses, and the residential colleges in the Lawn Avenue A and B units, fraternities were seen as another type of social housing, an extension of values the school already embraced. Guidelines and Recommendations specified that eliminating fraternities “would represent an abandonment of a ‘sense of community’ at a time when our central objective is to recapture that ‘sense.’”<sup>70</sup> In addition, fraternity autonomy was seen as critical: even fraternities who chose to sell their house to the school would be able to maintain their “traditional and legitimate rights of programmatic self-determination.”<sup>71</sup> Though the report acknowledged the declining social role of fraternities on campus, it still categorized them as essential to campus life.

---

<sup>68</sup> “Student Center Report,” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1969), 3.

<sup>69</sup> “Student Housing Report,” (1969), 9.

<sup>70</sup> “Guidelines and Recommendations for Campus Planning,” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1969).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

Buildings and Grounds reports are inherently optimistic, as their goal is to assess the school's current physical landscape and think of all the ways in which it could be improved. Yet these reports are unique in their specificity. The decision to build on the 1968 Pilot Plan with three additional reports demonstrates that the school felt it had both the means and the need to continue its physical expansion. In addition, all of these building plans were vital in emphasizing that, as early as 1968, Wesleyan recognized it had a problem with its residential, dining, and social spaces. Yet the problems highlighted in these reports continued to plague the campus and were even exacerbated by rapid enrollment growth during the 1970s. In addition, many of these changes were conceived to help integrate women into Wesleyan's campus better. Each of these reports references the Board's decision to admit women as one of the driving factors in reforming student life. Though it would change with the presence of women, the physical campus took a long time to adapt to the needs of the female students on campus and the fractured residential and dining systems as well as the lack of a proper student center would come to drastically shape experiences of women during their time at Wesleyan.

Wesleyan spent more money on physical infrastructure in the 1969/70 school year than it had any year before that, with \$14 million going to the science center, arts center, and hockey rink.<sup>72</sup> Eventually, the science complex would cost double its initial estimate, going from \$9 million to \$18 million, the CFA would swell from \$5 million to \$13 million, the power plant would cost \$4.2 million, and the hockey rink would be \$1.8 million.<sup>73</sup> The High and Low Rise, dorms, the last major building

---

<sup>72</sup> "Wesleyan Sets Record Amount in Building Boom," *Hartford Courant*, January 24, 1970.

<sup>73</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 393-4.

project to come out of the school's earlier wealth, would eventually cost around \$3.6 million, although some of these costs were defrayed by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Wesleyan's total expenditures on the physical plant to \$39 million. In today's dollars, that would be around \$280 million of new construction between 1967, when Phase I of the science center opened, to 1973, when the High and Low Rise dorms debuted.

Originally, the school had hoped more of its building costs would be covered either by alumni donations or foundation grants, which Butterfield had previously been very successful in obtaining. Yet, because of Wesleyan's spending, foundations, including Surdna, became more reluctant to award them large sums of money. Additionally Wesleyan did not have a culture of alumni donations, and struggled to raise any significant amount of funding from its graduates. The school got a modicum of outside support, a few grants to help with costs, and they took out some bonds, but by and large the funding for these construction projects came directly out of the school's endowment.<sup>74</sup> In addition to these building projects, the growth in operating expenditures, launch of doctoral programs, increased admission of minorities, women, faculty size, and administrators, all proved to be a huge financial drain on the school. By launching all of these projects, Wesleyan was quickly going through the wealth it had acquired during the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> Campbell, Interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016.

<sup>75</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 416-18.

## *Conclusion*

Professor Emeritus Tony Connor arrived at Wesleyan in the fall of 1968. “In some ways, Wesleyan was ridiculous,” he remembers, “it was liberal to the point of lunacy. And people were putting up buildings, all sorts of things going on. It was very exciting, a ferment of ideas and ideals, like the 1960s themselves.”<sup>76</sup> In addition to a growing student body, represented by the decision to admit women, academic improvements made during the 1950s and 1960s were a driving force behind many new building projects. This helps to highlight why this era was such a departure for Wesleyan. Whereas gradual change had been Wesleyan’s *modus operandi* for the previous 40 years, suddenly the entire campus was in flux. Before 1961 the newest building had opened in 1935 and since 1961 four new buildings had opened and three more were in the works.<sup>77</sup> New academic centers, disciplines, and graduate programs were redefining what scholarship looked like at Wesleyan. In addition, Wesleyan had a new president for the first time in 25 years and had minority and female students on campus. Though money had given Wesleyan unprecedented opportunities, it also created a kind of instability that allowed the University to make some choices that in retrospect seem to have been ill advised.

---

<sup>76</sup> John Anthony “Tony” Connor, Interview by Nancy Smith, Wesleyan University Oral History Project, April 17, 2015.

<sup>77</sup> These buildings include: the Foss Hill Dorms (1961), McConaughey Dining Hall (1962), Lawn Avenue Dorms (1965), and Hall-Atwater (1967), the hockey rink (1971), the Science Tower and Library (1971), and the Center for the Arts (1973).

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Seventies: The Days of Reckoning

“How could Wesleyan, which had found itself rich in the early ’60s, now find itself so desperately overextended in the early ’70s?” asked President Colin Campbell in an address to the school on September 24, 1979.<sup>78</sup> Wesleyan’s financial issues stemmed from both overextension in the 1960s and national economic factors in the 1970s that combined to severely limit the school’s economic capabilities. Wesleyan, which had once been the richest school in the country, spent its wealth on an extensive series of building projects, ambitious academic programs, significant scholarship funding, and one of the most competitive faculty compensation packages. These investments “had a large and often elusive price tag,” Campbell said in the same speech, “and when the day of reckoning came the cumulative cost was staggering.”

In order to grow its revenue, the administration continuously raised enrollment throughout the 1970s. As the school grew it couldn’t afford to extend its facilities to accommodate the swelling student body. Therefore, residential life became more fractured as the student body increasingly began moving off-campus and into independent wood frame houses. With no student center, and a dining hall that could only fit the freshman class, Wesleyan had to rely on fraternities to provide the sole centralized spaces on campus. While many independent housing contained small common areas, fraternities had exclusive control over the only social centers at

---

<sup>78</sup> Colin Campbell, “Current Issues Facing the University,” (speech, Crowell Concert Hall, Middletown, CT, September 24, 1979).

Wesleyan. As a result, fraternities would hold the all-campus parties and feed a significant portion of students through their eating clubs.

Historically, Wesleyan had many residential, all-male fraternities on campus, but beginning in 1970s the University also had a sizable female population. While several fraternities decided to admit women, many remained all-male. For many women, relying on these all-male fraternities was seen as a reality of college life at Wesleyan and, therefore, not a huge concern. Female students may have recognized fraternities as inherently sexist but, at the same time, many felt that so were many other things in the world. But the dynamics of this situation would come under closer scrutiny, as explored in Chapter Three, as Wesleyan began to view these all-male spaces more critically.

### *Financial Circumstances*

When Edwin Etherington assumed the presidency in 1967, Wesleyan's endowment had reached \$162 million, making it approximately twice as big as the endowments at Amherst and Williams.<sup>79</sup> This money meant that Etherington came into his tenure ready to continue the expansion that had begun in 1962, with the Board's approval of the Little University plan. Construction for the Science Center and Center for the Arts was already underway, and, as discussed in Chapter One, Etherington had additional construction projects planned. Nevertheless, some signs of trouble were beginning to appear. Most notably, the endowment to student ratio,

---

<sup>79</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970*, 425

which many economists consider to be the best measure of institutional wealth, was beginning to decline from its 1965 peak of \$95,000/student.<sup>80</sup>

### Transition to Campbell

Despite his institutional ambition, Etherington served as President for fewer than three years. He resigned in February of 1970 to run for the U.S. Senate, but did not manage to make it past the Republican primaries.<sup>81</sup> Signs of Etherington's pending departure predated his announcement. Most notably he moved his family to their country home in Old Lyme after the 1969 Fisk Hall takeover, and so his resignation was not a huge surprise to the Wesleyan community.<sup>82</sup> Etherington had inherited the school at a time of immense change: Wesleyan had recently begun recruiting minority students, coeducation was reestablished, and the Little University initiative had redefined the academic landscape. Because Etherington inherited many of these initiatives, his main accomplishment was steering the school through these transformations.

Etherington's true legacy, though, was overlooking Wesleyan's burgeoning financial issues. In early 1968, Etherington commissioned a Study for Educational Policies and Programs (SEPP), which outlined the current state of the school. Campbell, who partially worked on the financial plan, remembers how "you couldn't make the numbers come out. They just couldn't come out—no matter how you

---

<sup>80</sup> Alexandra Ricks, "When Workers Organized at Wesleyan University" (honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 2016), 31; Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 425.

<sup>81</sup> "Office of the President: Wesleyan's Twelfth President," Wesleyan University, accessed April 2016, <http://www.wesleyan.edu/president/pastpresidents/etherington.html>.

<sup>82</sup> Campbell, interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016.

viewed the current situation, no matter what you talked about in terms of carving out some things, it still couldn't come out.” Instead of addressing this deficit, though, Etherington reframed the situation to emphasize the potential of wildly ambitious 15 percent investment return. Today Wesleyan aims for about a five percent return.<sup>83</sup> Etherington’s investment hopes demonstrate a shortsighted view of Wesleyan’s financial situation that would result in damage the school for decades. Entering Wesleyan with a growth mentality, Etherington did not adjust to the evidence presented to him. Right before his departure, Etherington dipped into the endowment, taking \$14 million, \$10 million from the principal, to cover Wesleyan’s deficit.<sup>84</sup>

Etherington was succeeded by Colin Campbell, who came to Wesleyan in 1967 after serving as Vice President of the American Stock Exchange. Campbell, who was recruited by Etherington and was, in some respects, his protégé, began as Administrative Vice President, was promoted to Executive Vice President, and, in October of 1970, became President of the University.<sup>85</sup> Assuming office at age 35, Campbell was the youngest president in Wesleyan’s history.<sup>86</sup> He brought energy and a fresh perspective to the office, both traits that came to benefit the school. Most importantly, though, Campbell brought administrative know-how and a willingness to

---

<sup>83</sup> Campbell, interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016; “FY 2016 Year End Letter.” Wesleyan University, June 2016. <http://www.wesleyan.edu/investments/endowment/YearEndLetter2016.pdf>.

<sup>84</sup> George Keller, *Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 45.

<sup>85</sup> Robert Rosenbaum served as interim president between February and October of 1970. Earl Rhodes, “Campbell-Butterfield Ceremony Planned for September 18th,” *Wesleyan Argus*, September 5, 1971; Campbell, interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016.

<sup>86</sup> “Office of the President: Wesleyan’s Thirteenth President,” Wesleyan University, accessed February 27, 2016, <http://www.wesleyan.edu/president/pastpresidents/campbell.html>.

make tough decisions for the benefit of the school, a necessity given Wesleyan's economic outlook.

The Singleton Report, which was prepared by Mathematics professor Bob Singleton and released in the spring of 1970, illustrated Wesleyan's growing financial problems. The report showed that with no changes to the present system, Wesleyan's endowment would vanish by 1981.<sup>87</sup> More specifically, the school's operating revenues were only funding 46 percent of its expenditures, meaning that the remaining money was coming directly out of the endowment.<sup>88</sup> This unsustainable ratio primarily stemmed from precedents set or programs established in the 1960s. But, the report asserted, addressing those issues could both take a long time and cause a rift with the faculty. Therefore, Campbell decided to take the less controversial route and reduce indirect expenditures within the administrative, physical plant, and auxiliary operations budgets. Campbell was awarded a planning grant from the Exxon Foundation and, using that money, hired Richard Greene and Burton Sonenstein as financial advisors for the University.<sup>89</sup> Together, the three aimed to rein in Wesleyan's spending.

The first evidence of Wesleyan's new policies can be seen in the 1971 Campus Plan for Wesleyan University. An expansion of the Pilot Plan, the Campus Plan is explicit that "although Wesleyan cannot be classified as being 'in financial trouble,' it has become increasingly clear that prudent management of Wesleyan's resources is

---

<sup>87</sup> Jeff Kulp and Charlie Blaine, "An Interview with Colin Campbell," *Wesleyan Argus*, December 1, 1971.

<sup>88</sup> Keller, *Academic Strategy*, 46.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

essential more than ever before...”<sup>90</sup> Some initial cost-cutting measures include raising the student/instructor ratio from 8:1 to 10:1 and phasing out the Masters in Teaching program. The report outlines the ongoing projects that would be completed—the Center for the Arts, William Street housing project, and the Power Plant—but states that all new facilities will have to “rely very heavily upon gifts and Federal grants and subsidies.”<sup>91</sup> Gone were the plans for 600 new residential units, two new dining halls, and a student center. Instead the report insisted that a further 200-person enrollment increase could be sustained with existing housing, and that the school planned to reorganize existing buildings to potentially create more space for a student center.<sup>92</sup> This outlook, that Wesleyan could continue to add students without constructing any new facilities, would continue throughout the 1970s and would lead to the campus diffusion that came to characterize student life. With no new dorms, student moved off campus; with no proper dining hall, students ate at fraternities or in their own houses; with no student center, students lacked any unifying social space to combat these other issues.

### Economic Issues

While many of Wesleyan’s economic problems came from ambitious spending in the 1960s, others came from bad timing. The Kennedy-Johnson administration’s economic policy, which focused on unemployment, growth, “quality of life,” and

---

<sup>90</sup> “Campus Plan for Wesleyan University” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1971), 5.

<sup>91</sup> “Campus Plan for Wesleyan University,” (1971), 15.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. The report outlines a plan to convert the Butterfield living rooms into bedrooms in order to accommodate this increased enrollment.

poverty, resulted in large-scale domestic and foreign spending. Tax cuts in 1964 meant that the economy continued to grow during the Vietnam War and Johnson's Great Society programs, but by the late 1960s the U.S. economy was severely overheated. Inflation, which had begun in 1965, began creeping upward, while increased international speculation and put more pressure on the U.S. economy. Johnson, who had previously avoided raising taxes, finally did so in 1968 when inflation reached about 5 percent.<sup>93</sup>

By 1971 it became clear that more aggressive economic action was needed, and Nixon announced his New Economic Plan in August of 1971. He initially adopted price and wage controls which had mixed effects on the economy: while these controls did help reduce inflation but at the cost of a minor recession.<sup>94</sup> This recession was exacerbated by a 1972 grain shortage in the Soviet Union and the 1973 Arab Oil embargo, which coalesced to raise food and grain prices. This led to increases in the prices of other goods and services, generating a demand-pull inflation that rendered wage and price controls powerless. In 1974 the inflation rate rose to 12 percent, its highest level since the end of World War I in 1919 and by May of 1975, the unemployment rate had reached 9.2 percent.<sup>95</sup> The economy continued to suffer from both high inflation and unemployment throughout the rest of the decade. Eventually, the Federal Reserve got inflation under control by raising interest

---

<sup>93</sup> Herbert Stein, *Presidential Economics: The Making of Economic Policy from Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond*, (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institution for Public Policy, 1988), 93, 133; Robert Collins, *More: The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 72.

<sup>94</sup> Collins, *More*, 122; Stein, *Presidential Economics*, 158.

<sup>95</sup> Collins, *More*, 127; Stein, *Presidential Economics*, 209.

rates and slowing reserve growth, although the economy endured two short recessions in the process.<sup>96</sup> By 1982, the economy had largely recovered.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the changes made by Campbell, Greene, and Sonenstein seemed sufficient to avoid financial disaster. By 1974, Wesleyan had increased its revenue by \$1.60 million, decreased its expenditures by \$1.85 million, and reduced reliance on its portfolio by \$4.0 million. This prompted the school to revisit several of its building plans, most notably a new, 300-person dorm and a new library, which was desperately needed to ease the crowding in Olin.<sup>97</sup> These projects were expected to be funded either through grants or a new fundraising campaign, the 15th Decade Fund. The 15th Decade Fund proved to be an optimistic venture, as Wesleyan had not instituted a capital drive since Butterfield's failed Development Fund Campaign in the 1950s. Most of the donations to the 15th Decade Fund came through grants, not individual donations, and the campaign did not feature prominently in financial discussions during the decade.<sup>98</sup> Nevertheless, it demonstrates the brief bout of optimism that Wesleyan experienced in the early 1970s. These positive changes were brought to a halt when, in the fall of 1973, Wesleyan lost \$8.8 million in the stock market, partially leading to a year-end reduction in portfolio valuation of about \$25.0 million.<sup>99</sup> Wesleyan's loss coincided with a national drop in stock prices that lasted from January 1973 to October 1974

---

<sup>96</sup> Michael Bryan, "The Great Inflation," *Federal Reserve History*, November 22, 2013. [https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/great\\_inflation](https://www.federalreservehistory.org/essays/great_inflation).

<sup>97</sup> "Wesleyan News Briefing: New Housing Board Meets," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 26, 1973; Clifford Chanin, "Financial Crisis Halts Library; Michael Brennan Appointed CAO," *Wesleyan Argus*, February 5, 1974.

<sup>98</sup> Stuart Walker, "\$1.3M Pledged So Far This Year," *Wesleyan Argus*, February 17, 1976.

<sup>99</sup> Chris Mahoney, "\$8.8M Loss Seen In Stock Market Decline," *Wesleyan Argus*, December 12, 1973.

and eventually cost the school a total of about \$50 million, or \$313 million today, in portfolio value.<sup>100</sup>

As a result, Campbell and his colleagues were forced to double down on their financial plans for Wesleyan. Short term, the school considered eliminating the winter athletics program that existed over January break in order to save energy costs, and halted all construction planning. Longer term, Wesleyan looked toward the community to help define Wesleyan's financial future. The administration released a series of reports, called the "Rainbow Papers" due to their colorful covers that addressed Wesleyan's financial issues. These reports were public and reported on extensively in the *Argus*, ensuring that the faculty, staff, and students were keenly aware of Wesleyan's dire financial situation. This level of financial transparency was unusual in school administrations, and Campbell may have been so open for two reasons. First, it helped foster a mindset of communal cutbacks, everyone was going to have to sacrifice something, and this curbed resentment on campus. Second, it allowed for the entire community to weigh in on decisions, insuring that all options were considered fully. The Rainbow Papers proved vital to the economics of the school, and would come to define Wesleyan's financial policy for the remainder of the decade.

The Orange and Purple Books were released first, in January of 1975, and were meant to lay out the context for Wesleyan's financial crisis. More specifically, their goal was to make sure all parties were on the same page concerning Wesleyan's

---

<sup>100</sup> Donald Lowery, "\$50 Million Drop in Wes Portfolio Value," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 22, 1974.

previous financial decisions and its main academic priorities moving forward.<sup>101</sup> In an introduction to the Orange Book, Campbell wrote that “The knowledge that we have unsuccessfully sought financial stability for several years and, most recently, that a commitment to a balanced budget in 1975-6 has eluded us, has led to the conclusion that a new and more comprehensive approach is called for.”<sup>102</sup> These reports were followed by the Green Book, which presented a series of options for reducing Wesleyan’s reliance on the endowment.

Though it offered suggestions concerning the administration, physical plant, student enrollment, and academic programs, the report concluded that increasing the student/instructor ratio was the single biggest factor in achieving financial stability.<sup>103</sup> The student/faculty ratio had reached an unsustainable 6:1 in 1970 and had stubbornly hung around 10:1 despite the school’s best efforts to raise it even higher.<sup>104</sup> In the 1960s Butterfield had instituted a generous faculty salary to woo academics to Wesleyan, meaning a low student/faculty ratio was a particular financial drain on the school. For Wesleyan, reducing the number of professors while increasing the number of students, the quickest source of revenue, was a clear first step to financial strength.

The last of the Rainbow Papers, officially called A Plan for Action but frequently referred to as the Red Book, was released in September of 1975. Produced

---

<sup>101</sup> “Staff Report Book III: Alternatives for Wesleyan,” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., April 10, 1975), i.

<sup>102</sup> Colin Campbell to the Board of Trustees, in “On the Context for Planning and Decisions at Wesleyan,” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., January 25, 1975),

<sup>103</sup> “On the Context for Planning and Decisions at Wesleyan,” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., January 25, 1975), 24.

<sup>104</sup> “A Planning Report for the 1980s,” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., September, 1979). I-2; Keller, *Academic Strategy*, 47.

after nine months of consultations, the report laid out a basic financial strategy that cut expenditures, mainly on the administrative side, while raising revenue and other income. The report largely ignored the other expensive policies—faculty mortgage subsidies, the sabbatical program—that Wesleyan had set up in the 1960s, and instead focused on immediate cost-cutting measures. These measures include a 10 percent cut in administrative expenses that targeted University Relations, the offices of the Dean of the College, Housing, and the Registrar, the custodial program, energy consumption, and security.<sup>105</sup>

To increase revenue, the report proposed an increase in enrollment, gifts, and grants.<sup>106</sup> This growth in enrollment, 100 students by 1979/80, was the maximum that Wesleyan thought it could admit given existing housing and academic standards. Yet as the school had trouble executing all of its proposed cuts, it would fall back on additional enrollment increases to meet the larger financial goals set out in the Plan for Action. Enrollment grew by 400 between 1975 and 1980, functioning, along with tuition increases, as the main tool for Wesleyan's financial survival.<sup>107</sup> This unexpected growth put a strain on Wesleyan's facilities and, in particular, its residential system. Over this period, housing became more and more fractured as students moved into independent housing units surrounding campus. With no central dining hall or student center to bring the student body together, fraternities served the essential purpose of uniting the campus.

---

<sup>105</sup> Keller, *Academic Strategy*, 46-7.

<sup>106</sup> "A Plan for Action," (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., September 1975), III-3, III-5.

<sup>107</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970*, 440.

### *Spatial Implications*

From 1969 to 1985, Wesleyan's enrollment grew by approximately fifteen hundred, or 110 percent. In the first few years of the 1970s, this growth was planned and, therefore, the school took concrete steps to accommodate the expanding student body. But, as the decade proceeded and the school's financial struggles continued, more and more students were admitted despite an already overcrowded campus. To cope with this dramatic increase, the residential system became increasingly fragmented, and students began living in smaller units further away from the center of campus. Wesleyan began to rely on fraternities, the only spaces large enough to fit even a significant portion of the student body, to fill the residential, dining, and social needs of this fractured campus. Because fraternities decreased in popularity during this time, their important role within the physical campus was largely overlooked, as would become apparent in the next decade as they drew a more critical eye.

### Residential Life

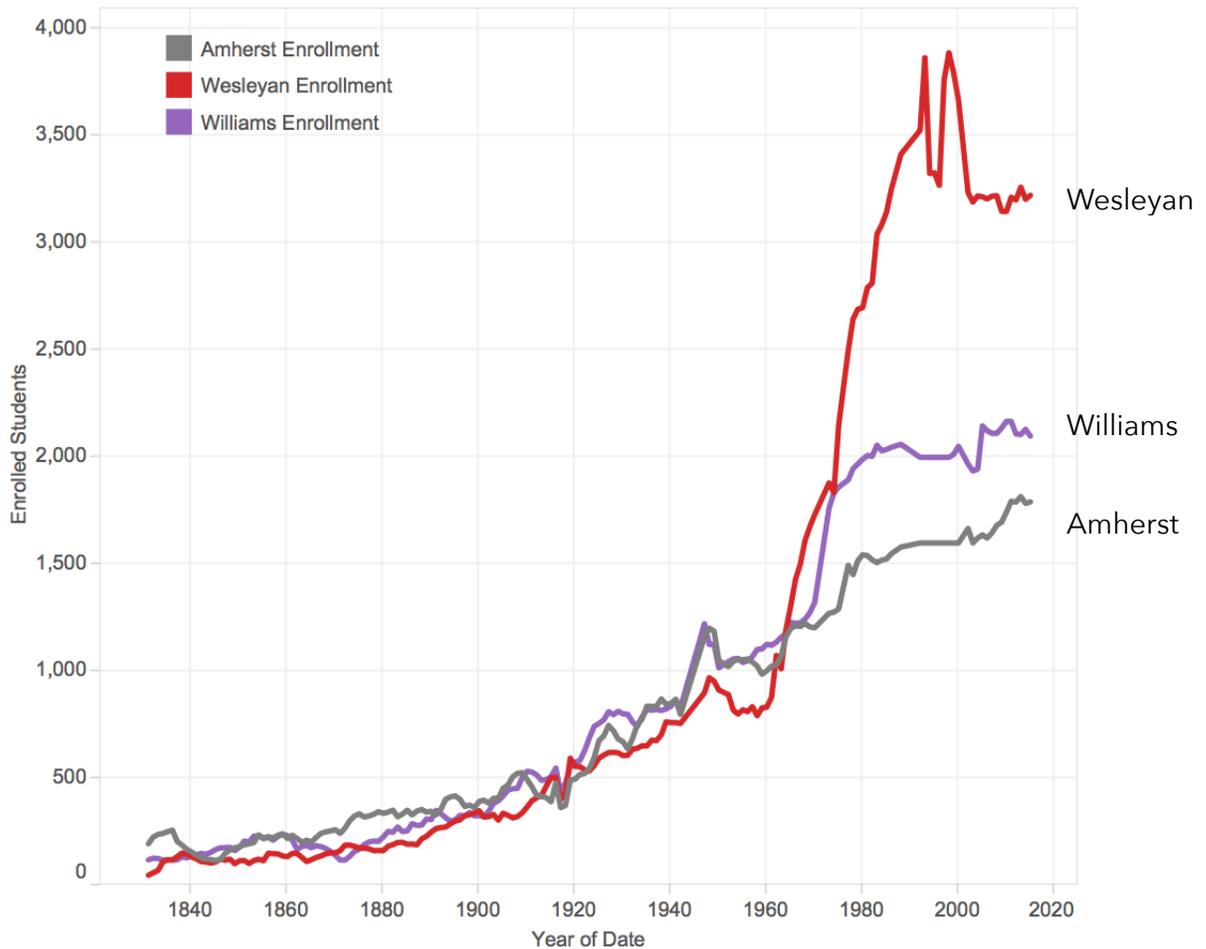
In the 1971 Campus Plan, the administration laid out its goal of growing by about 300 students, to reach an undergraduate total of 1,722, by the 1975/6 school year.<sup>108</sup> This growth could fairly easily be facilitated by converting common rooms in Butterfield College's 4-student suites into bedrooms and roomy Clark Hall doubles into triples.<sup>109</sup> In many ways, these early accommodations were simply course-correcting measures. Many of the buildings constructed in the 1950s and 1960s had

---

<sup>108</sup> "Campus Plan for Wesleyan University," (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1971), 12-14.

<sup>109</sup> Dave Garrow, "New Undergrad Housing Plans Offer Students Full Range of Living Styles," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 29, 1971.

## Historical Enrollment at The Little Three



*“Wesleyan: The Biggest of the ‘Little Three,’” A Spatial History of Wesleyan University, Spring 2015, <https://wesfiles.wesleyan.edu/courses/DigitalHistory/spatialhistory/>.*

generous layouts due to Wesleyan’s wealth at the time, and at the beginning of the 1970s Wesleyan had a high student to facilities ratio.<sup>110</sup> For example, many suites in the Butterfield Dorms had four singles, two bathrooms, and one common room. Changing the common room into a double was a logical solution to allow for initial increases in the enrollment.

---

<sup>110</sup> Campbell, “Current Issues Facing the University,” (speech, 1979).

In addition to converting existing spaces, the school could also accommodate students in the new William Street apartment complex, two dormitories built in conjunction with Middletown and its urban renewal team. Although construction didn't begin on the dorms until 1971, when Wesleyan began tightening its belt, a \$1.6 million subsidy from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development helped ease the school's total expenditure.<sup>111</sup> In addition, the University received positive media coverage for the dorms, which were conceived as a companion to the low-income housing unit, Travers Square, which was constructed on the same Goodyear Rubber Plant site. Therefore, Wesleyan was in many ways obligated to construct High and Low Rise despite its financial state. Nevertheless, the school's rush to get the dorms open, and its desire to save money on certain aspects of the building, are evident from the early experiences of the students living there. When the dorms first opened in the fall of 1973, a missing regulator valve meant some units did not have hot water, while others were not equipped with the proper furniture, were without working electricity, or lacked shower fixtures. Some common areas were not carpeted, and the basement game and laundry rooms were also unfinished.<sup>112</sup> But, because High and Low Rise were crucial in accommodating Wesleyan's growing enrollment, their opening could not be delayed.

When construction started, High and Low Rise was conceived as housing for the soon-to-be burgeoning graduate student community. Yet, because of changes in the school's identity, they were converted to undergraduate residences before its

---

<sup>111</sup> "Wes Gets \$1.6 Million for Housing," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 12, 1971.

<sup>112</sup> Mark Schonberger and Carol Corner, "Getting the Bugs out of William St.," *Wesleyan Argus*, September 7, 1973.

opening in the fall of 1973. As a result of the original design intent, the buildings were intended to promote privacy rather than community, a feature felt by its early undergraduate inhabitants.<sup>113</sup> Each unit had its own living room, kitchen, and bathroom, making it hard for students in different units to mingle with each other. In relation to the rest of campus, the High and Low Rise complex was separate and downhill from College Row and, as a result, relatively far from key buildings like McConaughey and Olin. In this context, High and Low Rise can be seen as a crucial, early shift away from housing concentrated around the center of campus. Despite High and Low Rise's initial issues, the dorms proved fairly popular with students, who enjoyed the opportunity to live more independently. By allowing students to untether from the center of campus as early as sophomore year, High and Low Rise was the first step in institutionalizing independent, on-campus housing.

Although much of Wesleyan's early growth was accommodated fairly easily within older dorms or William Street, the school's population quickly began expanding beyond the 300-person increase that was planned in 1971. By 1975, the school had increased enrollment by 700 and would grow by 400 more by 1980.<sup>114</sup> Put in specific numbers about growth here. The Housing Review Board, which had originally been formed to assist in planning a new dorm, was repurposed in 1973 to find the most desirable ways to increase the capacity of existing buildings.<sup>115</sup> Throughout the 1970s, Wesleyan continued to double up roomy singles, convert common rooms into housing, and transform satellite units it owned into residential

---

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970*, 424.

<sup>115</sup> "Measures to Save Space Proposed by Housing Board," *Wesleyan Argus*, February 19, 1974.

spaces.<sup>116</sup> Despite its best efforts to stretch this existing housing stock, Wesleyan more and more frequently turned to independently managed housing units to absorb the growing student body.

At Wesleyan, independent housing manifested itself in two ways: Wesleyan-owned rental houses and off-campus housing. Wesleyan had been in the business of buying small houses located around the central campus for a number of years. Traditionally, these houses had been purchased either to provide faculty with affordable housing or to acquire the land on which the house stood for future development by the school. This strategy began in the 1960s when Wesleyan conceived of building a new gym around the already-planned hockey rink. Campbell remembers that “it was actually our determination to buy up as much [housing] as we could and really just acknowledge that this was going to become a future Wesleyan area.”<sup>117</sup>

Additionally, many students rented off-campus houses not owned by Wesleyan, although it is hard to get an exact sense of the nature of this housing. In the primary sources both Wesleyan and non-Wesleyan owned houses are often grouped together as off-campus housing, and both types of housing were supervised by a University Rental Agent.<sup>118</sup> In addition, the number and location of the houses rented each year fluctuated, and whether the houses were occupied by undergraduates, graduates, or faculty members is unclear.

---

<sup>116</sup> Don Lowery, “Increased Housing Demand May Require Doubling-Up,” *Wesleyan Argus*, February 15, 1974.

<sup>117</sup> Campbell, interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016.

<sup>118</sup> “A Plan For Action,” (1975), VIII-2.

What is clear is that as Wesleyan's enrollment grew, the wood frame houses that surrounded the University became an important residential resource. Whereas in 1969, 113 undergraduates were living in these "smaller residence units," that number had grown to around 390 by 1975.<sup>119</sup> In addition, in a 1979 report Wesleyan is framed as having "an abundance of residential and educational space," and 150 more can fit "through conversions, some remodeling of existing spaces, and acquisition of additional houses."<sup>120</sup> Wesleyan clearly viewed wood frame houses as an easy solution to the housing shortages brought on by increased enrollment. Although these satellite units provided a flexible housing source, they did create a sense of discord within campus life. Undergraduates were frequently mixed in with faculty, graduates, and Middletown residents, and the location, size, and type of housing stock all varied greatly.

Wesleyan's involvement the larger Middletown real estate market added to this housing disarray. In 1967, during Wesleyan's golden age, it co-founded the Hill Development Corporation (HDC), which worked to develop land around the Middletown area. According to Campbell, the HDC was founded because the Wesleyan "felt that it was the time to expand the role of Wesleyan in the Middletown community, partly simply to make it more accommodating for faculty, partly as good community citizens."<sup>121</sup> The HDC's primary project was Wesleyan Hills, a planned residential community, but it expanded to several other developments as well. Wesleyan's foray into private land development was part of a larger trend of urban

---

<sup>119</sup> "Student Housing Report," (1969), 14; A Plan For Action, (1976), VIII-2.

<sup>120</sup> "A Planning Report for the 1980s," (1979), III-3, III-4.

<sup>121</sup> Campbell, Interview with Taraba, June 13, 2016.

development and renewal during the 1960s. The William Street apartments were conceived in this vein, as were a number of residential condominium developments around Middletown. Some of these, like the Highview Apartments, located on Butternut Street, and the Townhouse Apartments, which were on Cross Street, became off-campus housing options for students starting in the early 1970s.<sup>122</sup>

The most tangible impact of the HDC on the Wesleyan community was its development of the In-Town condominium unit, which was located between Cross Street and Long Lane. When In-Town opened in 1970, it was advertised as a family condominium and its two- and three-bedroom units were aimed at young families in the area.<sup>123</sup> Despite this initial intention, In-Town quickly transformed into an unofficial student residence and by 1975 it had officially been adopted by the school. Wesleyan had assigned In-Town a head resident by that fall and it was listed in an *Argus* roundup of the different dorms on campus and Wesleyan had assigned it a head resident.<sup>124</sup> But its location, a third of a mile from the center of campus, isolated its inhabitants from a lot of student life. Additionally, its level of amenities, some contained fireplaces, washers and dryers, or a deck, and lack of common space, reinforced the separate nature of the units. In this way, In-Town was the most extreme example of campus diffusion at Wesleyan, working to both separate students from the center of campus and from each other. Additionally, In-Town's distance from campus made it a particular liability for female students. Safety, especially in relation to assaults or rape by strangers, had become an increasingly important campus issue

---

<sup>122</sup> "Wesleyan Student Directory: 1972-3," (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., 1972).

<sup>123</sup> "Condominium Open for Inspection in Middletown," *Hartford Courant*, August 30, 1970.

<sup>124</sup> "Student Priorities Project: Part II," *Wesleyan Argus*, September 5, 1975.

during the 1970s, and In-Town's far location, as compared to the central locations of the fraternity houses, would become a point of contention in the future.

Therefore, the Wesleyan residential system became more and more fragmented as enrollment doubled. Wesleyan's properties extended from Washington Street, where it owned a series of large houses, down to William Street, and across to Long Lane. Although underclassman life was generally centered around a number of key dormitories, upperclassman residences became more and more dispersed as the school tacked on additional housing options to accommodate its rapidly growing enrollment. This residential setup came to hurt students, and in particular female students, as all-male residential fraternities became the only space that could physically unite the increasingly fragmented campus.

### Dining and Social Life

Wesleyan's rapid increase in enrollment also stretched its already limited dining system. The school's eating program had been conceived in the mid-1960s when the University was a small, all-men's college, and had therefore quickly become outdated. Most notably, the fraternity eating clubs, which Wesleyan had attempted to phase out with the construction of McConaughey in 1962, made a comeback due to demand for communal dining spaces. Eating clubs will be explored more specifically in the next section, while this section aims to look at the school-sponsored eating options on campus and how they failed to support the student body.

McConaughey, Wesleyan's main dining hall, was constructed in 1962 in order to facilitate the University's growth without increasing its dependence on eating

clubs. When it was constructed, Greek life was losing popularity with both students and faculty, who took issue with its discriminatory nature.<sup>125</sup> When it was constructed, McConaughey had a capacity of 550 seats and could hold just over half of the student body, but enrollment increases meant that by the mid-1970s McConaughey could barely fit the freshman class.<sup>126</sup> Because first-years were required to take a meal plan at McConaughey, the dining hall primarily catered to freshman or the occasional upperclassman living in the Foss Hill dorms.<sup>127</sup> Left without a traditional dining hall, many students were forced to turn to different options.

The other main choice on campus was the grill located in the basement of Downey House. Downey's menu principally consisted of short-order or pre-made food; it was in essence a "a coffee shop which serves breakfast, lunch and dinner in pub-like atmosphere" a 1975 *Argus* article asserted, "no one would eat every meal at Downey House."<sup>128</sup> Downey had been a student union of sorts since the 1930s, but it reopened in 1973 with new food services and a basement pub.<sup>129</sup> Throughout the next decade, the school struggled to figure out exactly how Downey should operate within its ecosystem. In the fall of 1974, Downey added additional seats to the main dining area and opened up the faculty dining room to expand student use of the building.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970*, 322.

<sup>126</sup> In 1973, the freshman class was 564, and it continued to rise throughout the decade. "Student Housing Report," (1969), ix; Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970*, 424.

<sup>127</sup> "Shopping, Services, and On-Campus Housing," *Wesleyan Argus*, August 29, 1975.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Vicky Chu, "Once Upon a Downey," *Wesleyan Argus*, September 26, 2011.

<sup>130</sup> Don Lowery, "Increased Housing Demand May Require Doubling-Up," *Wesleyan Argus*, February 15, 1974.

Downey was revamped again in 1976, when its menu was redone, and 1977, when a bar was added to the basement.

These constant identity shifts, plus Downey's lackluster ability to unite students, resulted in significant financial problems for the facility. In 1975 Downey operated at an \$82,000 deficit, \$25,000 of which was related to food services while the rest was associated with physical plant upkeep.<sup>131</sup> Yet, Downey remained the only school-sponsored space where students could gather. Although not an actual student union—many student services like the bookstore and mail room were held elsewhere—Downey was one of the only places that both had food and attracted upperclassmen. Therefore, Downey's financial issues were largely overlooked by the school.

Because of the limited nature of McConaughey and Downey House, a significant portion of students prepared their own food after freshman year or formed their own eating communities. Under this system, students would form informal potluck groups, where they would alternate grocery shopping, cooking, cleaning and responsibilities. As Wesleyan's enrollment continued to grow, a larger and larger proportion of the student body was living in small, separate units and expected to cook for themselves. Whereas an effective dining system could have mitigated the decentralized residential setup, this collection of dining arrangements exasperated the existing problems.

Wesleyan's decentralized dining setup differed from some of its peer schools. Williams banned Greek life in 1964 and, at that time, assumed responsibility for

---

<sup>131</sup> Eric Segal, "Downey Meal Plans Suggested to Solve Financial Problems," *Wesleyan Argus*, April 27, 1976; "A Plan for Action," (1975). VIII-2, VIII-3.

housing and feeding all of its students.<sup>132</sup> In 1941, Amherst had constructed a central dining hall, Valentine Hall, where all students were required to eat.<sup>133</sup> Middlebury built a new student union in 1960, which contained a dining hall, bookstore, and several lounges. When in 1970 the school began to outgrow this space, it added three more social-dining units on the edge of campus.<sup>134</sup> Bowdoin, on the other hand, relied on fraternities to feed a large portion of its student body throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, many institutions—Connecticut College, Bates—never had fraternities in the first place.

### *Fraternities at Wesleyan*

Reflecting on the role of fraternities during her time at Wesleyan, one woman from the class of 1975 wrote that “They helped provide a focus after freshman year when the focus was the dorms and McConaughey Hall. I was glad that fraternities played so small a role at Wes.”<sup>135</sup> Her response suggests the dual nature of fraternities on Wesleyan’s campus: because of structural gaps, fraternities became the *de facto* centralizing force on a splintered campus, yet numerically their presence remained relatively small. This contradiction would come to a head in the 1980s, but through the 1970s Wesleyan was too dependent on Greek life for residential, dining, and social services to levy any significant criticism at fraternities. But the University’s

---

<sup>132</sup> Chandler, *The Rise and Fall of Fraternities at Williams College*, 101.

<sup>133</sup> “Final Report of the Ad Hoc Trustee Committee on Campus Life,” (Amherst College, February 21, 1984), 2. <https://www.amherst.edu/system/files/1984%2520Final%2520Report%2520on%2520Campus%2520Life.pdf>.

<sup>134</sup> David M. Stameshkin, *The Strength of the Hills: Middlebury College, 1915-1990*, (Hanover, NH: Middlebury College Press, 1996), 110, 134.

<sup>135</sup> Box 2, Folder 6, Kirsten Delegard Thesis Research Notes, Collection #1000-69, Special Collections & Archives, Wesleyan University.

relationship to Greek life proved especially damaging for female students, who relied on residential fraternities for essential services yet were not allowed to join their organizations. This relationship created a strange paradox for many female students, who were dependent on, but not allowed to be members of, these all-male spaces.

### Spatial Implications

Wesleyan, like most other NESCAC schools, has a long history with fraternal life. Many of the first Wesleyan fraternities, like Eclectic (1837) and Psi Upsilon (1842) began as literary societies before evolving into social organizations. Between the 1840s and 1860s there was an increase in Greek interest, and Wesleyan began acquiring more chapters with national associations. By the 1880s, many of these chapters began establishing physical houses on campus, and by 1884 about fifteen percent of students were living in fraternities.<sup>136</sup> After a shortage of dormitory space in the 1890s forced many students off-campus, fraternity alumni raised funds for new chapter houses centered around the main campus. Psi U, Eclectic, Chi Psi, and Alpha Delta Phi all constructed their houses between 1893 and 1907, and as the school added fraternities new chapters would rent or build houses around campus. Wesleyan, spared the expense of building new dormitories, benefitted from this spatial setup.<sup>137</sup>

Wesleyan's administration began to look more critically at fraternities in the 1950s due to their anti-intellectual culture and routine discrimination against black and Jewish students. But besides voicing these criticisms, the school didn't take any significant action toward fraternities, which primarily maintained their place on

---

<sup>136</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1831-1910*, 42-44, 108.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 193-5; Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970*, 73-75.

Wesleyan's campus. The most significant change to Greek life came in the 1960s and 1970s, when fraternity popularity declined both nationally and at Wesleyan. In the fall of 1964, 69 percent of Wesleyan freshman pledged, but by 1971 that number had fallen to 11 percent.<sup>138</sup> In addition to the number of students pledging, the number of fraternities present on campus decreased during this time. In 1969, ten fraternities existed on Wesleyan's campus, but two years later the number was down to seven.<sup>139</sup> When a chapter house disbanded, Wesleyan usually took over the house and either converted it into dormitories, like the Malcolm X house (previously the John Wesley Club), or into academic buildings, like the Center for Romance Languages and Literatures (previously the EQV house).

Though this decline in Greek life illustrates fraternities' lessening significance on campus, it is important to note the differences between the fraternities that closed and those that survived. Many chapters that ended in the late 1960s were not well established, having changed their names and broken with their nationals during the social upheaval of the decade. On the other hand, the fraternities that survived had strong legacies and alumni connections which helped them get through the challenges of smaller pledge classes. The 1960s served to weed out weaker Greek organizations, which, in turn, gave the remaining chapters a greater impact on the student body as their presence was felt more explicitly.

Residentially, fraternities helped facilitate Wesleyan's increasing enrollment numbers. In total, fraternity houses provided an additional 170 to 200 students

---

<sup>138</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970*, 398; "11% of Frosh Say Yes to Frats; Psi U Leads List," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 26, 1971.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*; "Student Housing Report," (1969), 9.

depending on occupancy rates.<sup>140</sup> In a 1977 *Argus* article, Dean of Housing Ed Shanahan recognized that “the 200 students currently housed in fraternities would cause a major problem if the university had to house them.”<sup>141</sup> For the fraternity members, this housing was less expensive than Wesleyan’s other options and frequently had a better location. In addition, fraternity housing provided a sense of residential community, a quality most of Wesleyan’s other housing lacked, and allowed for students to avoid the housing lottery.<sup>142</sup>

In the 1970s, some of these residential fraternities began admitting women. Similar to the integration of black and Jewish students into Greek life, the motivations and rules surrounding female “brothers” varied from fraternity to fraternity. By 1976, Eclectic, Alpha Delt, Beta, Delta Tau, and KNK had all pledged women, helping ensure that “the fraternities were not exclusively oriented towards macho, conservative jocks,” as one 1979 female alumna put it.<sup>143</sup> One major motivation for this movement was decreasing fraternity popularity in the 1970s, which meant many fraternities had difficulty generating sufficient revenue. This task was particularly challenging for fraternities who had broken with their national or alumni groups, which previously provided funding in times of need.

Eclectic had always existed as an independent society and, therefore, alumni were their main source of financial support. In the late 1960s Eclectic had a dramatic break with its alumni group, brought on partially by coeducation and partially by the

---

<sup>140</sup> “A Plan for Action,” (1975), VIII-1.

<sup>141</sup> Tim Redmond, “Frats: What Role Do They Play on Campus?” *Wesleyan Argus*, May 3, 1977.

<sup>142</sup> Redmond, “Frats: What Role Do They Play on Campus?”; Jane Goldenring, “Residence Lay-Outs Cause Problems,” *Wesleyan Argus*, December 10, 1976.

<sup>143</sup> Bethany Kandel, “Women in Frats: You’ve Come a Long Way Baby,” *Wesleyan Argus*, November 16, 1976; Delegard Thesis Research Notes, Box 2, Folder 6.

drug use and mismanaged finances that plagued the society.<sup>144</sup> This rupture meant that there was both no one to protest Eclectic's decision to admit women and no one to provide a financial safety net. For Eclectic, allowing women to pledge expanded their membership base and provided a new source of revenue when one was needed.

Alpha Delt began their journey to coeducation by allowing female boarders to rent rooms, presumably because they didn't have enough interested brothers to fill the house. After moving into the house, many women became interested in the fraternity and were invited to pledge in 1973.<sup>145</sup> Alpha Delt's national bylaws did not allow women to join the fraternity, so technically these women became members of the local chapter. Beta utilized the same tactic when it began pledging women in the early 1970s. Additionally, Beta would submit memberships rosters that included only the first initial of all the "brothers" to hide the identities of their female members. In this way, these fraternities found a method for including women without technically breaking any rules.<sup>146</sup> KNK also pledged women, who constituted around 50 percent of the fraternity in 1976, but it generally struggled to maintain relevancy on campus and, therefore, had an unclear relationship with their national.<sup>147</sup>

In 1970, Delta Tau both disaffiliated with its national, Delta Tau Delta (DTD), and moved into a new house farther down on High Street. Therefore, Delta Tau's house was neither as stately nor as well located as the rest of the fraternities. Delta

---

<sup>144</sup> William B.B. Moody, *A History of The Eclectic Society of Phi Nu Theta, 1837-1970*, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011), 145-6.

<sup>145</sup> "Chapter History," *Alpha Delta Phi Society–Middletown Chapter*, accessed April 2017, <http://middletown.adps.org/about/history/>.

<sup>146</sup> Kandel, "Women in Frats: You've Come a Long Way Baby."

<sup>147</sup> Larry Lew, "This Year's Kappa Nu Kappa Tries to Shed Old Image," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 10, 1975.

Tau started admitting female “brothers” the same year it disaffiliated, but this decision was ultimately short-lived, and Delta Tau returned to its national chapter, old name, and all-male status in 1978.<sup>148</sup> One 1978 Delta Tau alumna remembers these debates about fraternity coeducation, saying “Many women (including me) and many of the more liberated men finally quit the fraternity in disgust.”<sup>149</sup> This turnaround reflects how women were used as a way to balance a fraternity’s finances when it didn’t have the support of alumni or a national chapter.

The result of these financial struggles is that women gained access to several previously all-male spaces. But many residential fraternities, particularly the ones that were well established with both their alumni and national chapter, remained all-male. Most notably DKE, Psi U, and Chi Psi, but also Beta and DTD which both returned to their previous all-male status, had developed powerful networks of funding. Female admission to Eclectic and Alpha Delt, though a good first step, did not significantly alleviate the power dynamics of wealthy, all-male institutions controlling the majority of the social spaces on campus. Not all female students necessarily had an issue with this setup, but it is clear that fraternities with the most physical capital were also the least likely to admit women.

Women also interacted with fraternities through their eating clubs. These organizations mainly catered to upperclassman, and in particular sophomores. Therefore, after freshman year eating clubs provided one of the only opportunities for a communal dining experience. In 1971, around 325 students belonged to an eating

---

<sup>148</sup> “Historical Note,” Guide to the Delta Tau Delta and Phi Rho Literary Society Records, 1903-1971, Special Collections & Archives, <https://www.wesleyan.edu/libr/schome/FAs/de1000-153.xml>.

<sup>149</sup> Delegard Thesis Research Notes, Box 2, Folder 6.

club, and membership continued to rise over the next few years.<sup>150</sup> As residential life became more and more dispersed, the shared nature of eating clubs became an important aspect. Even the single-sex fraternities, DKE, Psi U, and Chi Psi, ran co-ed eating clubs. In some ways, this opened up fraternity houses to all genders and helped lessen the exclusive nature of Greek life. But, in other ways, this is another example of fraternities using women to provide financial stability without allowing for full inclusion. Eating clubs were therefore a double-edged sword in Wesleyan's social life, providing a necessary service that the school itself could not while reinforcing how women were separate on campus.

### Social Implications

Despite the inclusion of women in some fraternities, only about 10 to 15 percent of the student body joined Greek life during the 1970s. As a result, the majority of the student body interacted with fraternities through the parties they hosted. These parties were open to the entire student body, as the College Body Committee (CBC), which was in charge of allocating student life funding, routinely set aside money for these parties. Generally the CBC would contribute \$200 toward these parties and the fraternity hosting was expected to foot the rest of the bill and take care of set-up and clean-up.<sup>151</sup> Implicit within this arrangement is the idea that fraternities were part of a larger Wesleyan-sponsored social network and had a duty to serve the student body. As the only large social space on campus, it was the

---

<sup>150</sup> Dave Garrow, "Seven Eating Clubs Appear Stable; 20% of students Dining at Frats," *Wesleyan Argus*, November 19, 1971; David Rees, "Inflation Hits Eating Clubs; Saga De-Emphasizes Meat," *Wesleyan Argus*, September 11, 1973.

<sup>151</sup> "Frat Council Wants Financial Aid," *Wesleyan Argus*, April 6, 1976.

responsibility of the fraternities, in the same way it was the duty of the CBC, to promote social life.

Students seemed to both recognize and accept how fraternities supported student life. “They did fill a needed gap in providing all-campus social activities,” recalled one 1978 graduate, while a 1977 alumna wrote that “I found [frat parties] not conducive to really meeting and talking to people. But there didn’t seem to be anyone else to organize anything different. Also there was no central gathering place except the post office in Fisk Hall—no student center. A student center would have helped balance the power of the frats.”<sup>152</sup> While fraternities were the only large social spaces, many students did not heavily interact with Greek life during their time at Wesleyan. “They were there for people who were interested,” explained a 1978 alumna, “but special interest houses [independent houses centered around one theme] were there for others, as viable alternatives, as well as the lottery houses [independent housing obtained through the University].”<sup>153</sup> Although the fractured nature of campus forced fraternities to play a centralizing role, it also allowed for different social spheres to coexist without overlapping. Students who did not want to interact with them could simply choose not to, one reason their overriding presence went largely unnoticed throughout the 1970s.

Students who appeared to take issue with fraternities distanced themselves from the institutions rather than criticizing their existence. The plethora of other independent housing meant that smaller groups of students had control of their own social spaces and did not need to interact with the fraternities. In addition, many

---

<sup>152</sup> Delegard Thesis Research Notes, Box 2, Folder 6.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

female students disliked the presence of fraternities, but saw them as a manifestation of Wesleyan's still-masculine culture. For much of the 1970s, Wesleyan's decision to coeducate was still tangible in many aspects of the school, and in particular the physical plant, which inherently takes a long time to shape. This allowed fraternities to play an important, but overlooked, role in Wesleyan's social life.

Fraternities would become more controversial over the next decade as a series of various actions would thrust them into the limelight at both Wesleyan and many of its peer schools. As the University began to regain its financial footing, it made important campus changes that highlighted the outsized role fraternities had been playing on campus for the prior decade. In addition, the student body, and women in particular, began to look more intently upon institutional sexism and the administration's responsibilities regarding student life. Many schools, including Wesleyan, dealt with a series of these similar issues, but unlike these other schools Wesleyan was unable to physically detangle themselves from the Greek system due to lingering financial issues. In this way, decisions made in the 1960s and magnified in the 1970s continued to shape Wesleyan's relationship to Greek life, its female students, and student life more generally.

## CHAPTER THREE

### The Lingering Cost of Financial Errors

Wesleyan finances began to recover during the 1980s, allowing for some overdue renovations to the physical plant. Most notably, the school finally invested in a student union, converting the old Scott Labs building into the Davenport Student Center. Although Davenport ultimately failed as a student center, its presence along with key improvements to Fayerweather and Olin, helped provide more egalitarian gathering places on campus. These renovations did not mitigate Wesleyan's reliance on fraternities but did raise awareness about Wesleyan's dependency on Greek life. In addition, recognition of different gender issues and changes in student expectations of the administration helped foster an increasingly anti-fraternity sentiment on campus.

Nonetheless Wesleyan could not take any substantive actions against its Greek system because it continued to rely on fraternity spaces. Wesleyan's inertia became more apparent as many of its peer schools began reviewing or reforming their fraternity policies. Meanwhile Wesleyan, which fancied itself as a liberal alternative to many of these institutions, did not engage with any fraternity reform. Despite faculty petitions, student protests, and administrative reports, residential fraternities remained largely untouched throughout the 1990s.

Toward the end of this decade, Wesleyan embarked on a new fundraising campaign, a portion of which focused on facility upgrades. This new capital allowed Wesleyan to make some long-awaited spatial alterations, most notably a new student center with an appropriate dining space and two new dormitories. With these additions, Wesleyan finally provided functional alternative spaces to residential

fraternities. Although its too early to see the full historical impact of this decision, these changes gave the University considerably more control over Greek life and the school could now successfully enforce any new regulations. As a result, Wesleyan pushed for coeducation of residential fraternities and, for the first time since the idea came up, made progress toward that objective.

### *Financial Recovery and Expansion*

In the end, the policies that Campbell and his colleagues laid out in the Red Book proved to be quite effective, and in the last years of the 1970s Wesleyan began to come out of its financial slump. It took until 1983 for both Wesleyan and the U.S. economy to fully recover, but by the end of the 1970s the administration had reasons to feel optimistic. This positive attitude was demonstrated in the follow-up to the Red Book, A Planning Report for the 1980s. In a manner consistent with the previous administrative reports, this plan was referred to as the White Book due to the color of its cover and was made public to the faculty and student body. The report highlighted the University's achievements, most notably reducing reliance on the endowment from \$9.2 million to \$6.6 million, but reaffirmed the necessity of financial prudence. In addition to further decreasing the draw from the endowment, the school was still grappling with inflation and fluctuations within tuition, its primary revenue source.<sup>154</sup> Laying out a plan for the future, the report focused on how University Relations, Wesleyan's fundraising office, needed additional development. The report also

---

<sup>154</sup> "A Planning Report for the 1980s," (1979), I-6, I-7, I-12.

recommended that enrollment should increase by about 150, and Olin, the physical education facilities, and Scott Labs all needed serious renovation.<sup>155</sup>

If the 1970s had been about arresting the financial decline of the school, the 1980s became about making long-needed and crucial structural changes to Wesleyan's fiscal management. Wesleyan had survived the seventies by cutting administrative costs and raising tuition and enrollment, but in the end those changes simply kept the school afloat; they did not set it on a path for the future.<sup>156</sup> True financial reform would take a restructuring of the school's curriculum, academic requirements, physical plant, and faculty compensation packages—a challenge which the administration aimed to address in the White Book. In his 1979 speech to the school introducing his plan, Campbell highlighted the school's position by acknowledging "Wesleyan is quite vulnerable. It remains exposed because it is overextended financially, and its academic organization may not have kept pace with institutional needs and student interests."<sup>157</sup> To institute these necessary changes, Campbell focused on improvements to the student/instructor ratio, academic programs, student charges, financial aid, faculty compensation, and fundraising. In addition, the report continued to redefine the terms of drawing from the endowment.<sup>158</sup> Perhaps most importantly, the administration reinvested in its fundraising tactics, pouring money into the previously neglected University Relations office in preparation of launching the largest and most public capital campaign in the school's recent memory.

---

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., I-9, III-3.

<sup>156</sup> Campbell, "Current Issues Facing the University," (speech, 1979).

<sup>157</sup> Keller, *Academic Strategy*, 48.

<sup>158</sup> "A Planning Report for the 1980s," (1979) II-3.

The Campaign for Liberal Learning began in 1982 with the audacious goal of raising \$58.5 million (about \$148 million in 2017 dollars) at a school with little history of successful fundraising and thousands of young alumni who lacked disposable income.<sup>159</sup> In addition, many older graduates conceived of Wesleyan as having an abundance of riches, a view left over from the 1960s, and were not in the habit of donating. Due to these circumstances, Wesleyan had to revise its campaign strategy, shifting the emphasis from a strict capital goal to general improvements in alumni giving.<sup>160</sup> Therefore, the steadily increasing the number of gifts to the Wesleyan Annual Fund became one of the biggest successes of the campaign. Wesleyan eventually raised \$63.7 million between 1982 and 1987 (due to inflation, this is only \$136.6 million in 2017 dollars), part of which went to revitalizing the outdated and cramped physical campus.

### Facilities Changes

The White Book outlined the need for a renovated library, physical education space, and a student center, which became the three big facilities projects of the decade. These renovations worked to restructure the campus in a more egalitarian way by providing spaces which both successfully accommodated the student body and distanced social life from Greek life. Not all of these renovations were successful in crafting functional spaces for the school, but they did represent a renewed focus on quality of student life. Most importantly, these alterations helped lay the groundwork

---

<sup>159</sup> Robert A. Hamilton, "Colleges That Ask, Receive," *New York Times*, November 25, 1984. <http://www.nytimes.com/1984/11/25/nyregion/colleges-that-ask-recieve.html>; <https://data.bls.gov/cgi-bin/cpicalc.pl?cost1=58.5&year1=1982&year2=2017>

<sup>160</sup> Campbell, interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016.

for future discussions about the role of fraternities by drawing attention to the school's lack of functional public spaces.

One of the most important projects of the 1980s was the conversion of the Scott Labs building into the Davenport Student Center. Since 1971, when the physics lab moved to the Science Tower, Scott Labs had been left largely empty. As previously discussed, the campus needed a student center since at least the late 1960s when the Board of Trustees set aside \$1 million for the construction of one. Growth in enrollment and the dispersion of campus had only increased demand for a University center, and students grew so desperate that 200 rallied around Downey House during a November 1980 Board of Trustee meeting to demand one.<sup>161</sup> Because of its central location and unoccupied status, Scott Labs seemed like the obvious answer to this problem. In 1982, the board approved the plan to convert Scott into a student center, and the building opened in 1984.<sup>162</sup> The Surdna Foundation donated about half of the \$3.5 million needed to renovate the building.<sup>163</sup> Because Surdna was founded by John Emory Andrus, class of 1862, the new building was named after one of Andrus's daughters, Edith Jefferson Andrus Davenport, who graduated from Wesleyan during its first period of coeducation.<sup>164</sup>

---

<sup>161</sup> Bill Holder, "At Last!," *Wesleyan University Alumnus*, Fall 1982/Winter 1983, Vertical Files, Davenport Student Center, Wesleyan University, Special Collections & Archives (hereafter referred to as Davenport Vertical File).

<sup>162</sup> "Board Says 'Yes' to Scott Student Center," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 26, 1982.

<sup>163</sup> "Ceremonies Marking the Dedication of the Edith Jefferson Andrus Davenport '97 Campus Center in the John Bell Scott Memorial," Pamphlet, June 9, 1984, Davenport Vertical File.

<sup>164</sup> This building remains the only Wesleyan building to be named after a female graduate of the University. The Suzanne Lemberg Usdan University Center opened in 2007, but Usdan herself didn't go to Wesleyan. Rather, two of her three children attended and all three donated the building in her memory.

Although Davenport had some positive qualities, it largely failed as a student center. It was effective in consolidating student services into one building—most notably the college store, post office, dining services, and several lounges— but the space proved too fractured and the building too small to really bring the campus together. As early as 1986, two years after the building opened, “[s]tudents were critical of [the campus center’s] architectural design and the numerous small areas, which are not conducive to bringing students together,” reported the Board of Trustees.<sup>165</sup> A 1992 report was more specific, stating “the Davenport Campus Center, designed in 1983 to serve as a center of social activity, is too small and too oddly organized to be anything more than a way station on a cross-campus journey.”<sup>166</sup> Therefore, it’s important to consider what Davenport added but also where it fell short. By providing a collective space where there had been none before, it demonstrated the possibilities of a unifying social center on campus. But, because it didn’t deliver on the promises and perks of a functional student union, it failed to drastically alter student life. This meant that even after Davenport’s inauguration, fraternities continued to provide a crucial gathering space on campus.

Like Davenport, the expansion of Olin Library was approved in 1982 and long overdue. Among other problems, Olin had run out of room to hold all of its books and there was severely limited space for students to study. A library committee had existed between 1967 and 1971 to examine the possibilities of constructing a new

---

<sup>165</sup> Wesleyan University Board of Trustee Minutes, (Middletown, CT, September 27, 1986), 9.

<sup>166</sup> “Report of the Residential Life Group,” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., July 31, 1992), 27.

building, but the problem was shelved out of financial necessity.<sup>167</sup> Planning resumed in the early 1980s when the Campaign for Liberal Learning allocated \$9.5 million of its financial goal to the expansion of Olin. After consideration of different options—the Scott Labs building, digging a tunnel between the Science Library and Olin—the architects conceived of “wrapping” an addition around Olin’s facade.<sup>168</sup> This renovation added 340 new study spots and allowed for the organization of the overcrowded bookshelves.<sup>169</sup>

The expansion of Olin, like the construction of Davenport, reshaped the physical campus by providing an adequate neutral space where students could gather. Although it was not an explicitly social setting, the enlarged library did provide an environment where more students could cross paths. A 1987 report reflected this reality, saying “The new library, with its vastly increased study space, has probably helped to reduce Wesleyan’s centrifugal tendencies, and the Campus Center has also helped somewhat.”<sup>170</sup> Even though the student center had serious flaws and the library was not a student center, they worked in tandem to demonstrate to Wesleyan students how social life could function in school-sponsored spaces. In this way, Davenport and the Olin expansion were crucial in confronting the monopoly fraternities had on student space at Wesleyan.

---

<sup>167</sup> Remarks of Nathanael Greene to Board of Trustees, November 15, 1980, Wesleyan University, Special Collections & Archives, Olin Expansion Vertical File (hereafter referred to as Olin Expansion Vertical File).

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.; Campbell, interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016.

<sup>169</sup> Nancy Smith, “Olin Regained,” *Wesleyan University Alumnus*, Spring 1983, Olin Expansion Vertical File.

<sup>170</sup> “Report of the Task Force on Residential Life,” (1987), 7.

The expansion of the school's physical education facilities was perhaps the most important change to Wesleyan's campus during this time. The Fayerweather gymnasium had been constructed in 1894 and last expanded in 1935 when enrollment hovered around 650 men. By the 1960s, the school had largely outgrown Fayerweather and was planning a new athletic facility near the hockey rink. This project was sidelined by financial necessity and left the school with a gym that was not suited to Wesleyan's 2,000-plus student body.

When women first arrived at Wesleyan, access to sports facilities was clearly unequal. One female graduate of 1971 remembered that "I taught swimming and had to share one room, (no showers) with all the little girls I taught. My fellow male instructor had to sneak me a towel because the two trainers were against coeducation and wouldn't have given one to me. I wasn't offended. I just thought it was funny."<sup>171</sup> In order to accommodate women in Fayerweather, the school made number of minor renovations. The weight room, the trainer's room, and the equipment room had previously been part of the men's locker room. To adapt these facilities, the school installed a red shower curtain separating the weight room from the locker room, relocated the equipment room, and added an outside entrance to the training room. This meant a female athlete had to go to "the women's locker room to change into whatever she wants to wear in the training room, and then go outside the building and enter the training room through an outside entrance. The inconvenience cause by such a routine in the winter is not minor."<sup>172</sup> Although the building could hold women, it

---

<sup>171</sup> Kirsten Delegard, "Mixed Memories: Reflections on 22 Years of Coeducation at Wesleyan," (honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 1990), 98.

<sup>172</sup> Jack McCain, "How the Fit Survive," *Wesleyan University Alumnus*, Winter/Spring 1978.

functioned as a reminder of Wesleyan's all-male past and labeled female athletes as less important than their male peers.

Throughout the 1970s, Wesleyan was aware of the unequal nature of the physical education buildings, but did not have the funds to institute any meaningful change. Finally, in 1979, a \$1.3 million addition to Fayerweather was built, adding 634 new lockers, a new shower room for women (the previous one only had ten showers), and a locker rooms for female visiting teams.<sup>173</sup> Although only a temporary solution, this renovation worked to restructure the school around the presence of female students, demonstrating how Wesleyan was moving toward a more inclusive physical campus. These improvements may have partially been influenced by Title IX, which came into effect in 1972 and barred gender discrimination within federally assisted programs.

Even with these renovations, Wesleyan's physical education facilities were still too small and outdated, especially compared to other competing institutions. Therefore, with a series of big donations, most notably from Mansfield Freeman and his son, Houghton Freeman, and subsequent funding from the Campaign for Liberal Learning, the administration pushed forward with the construction of a new physical education center. The new plan generally mirrored what the school had conceived of in the late 1960s: expanding the physical education facilities around the hockey rink that existed on Knowles Avenue. The \$20 million complex began in June of 1988, just as Campbell stepped down, and finished in spring of 1990 under President Chace.

---

<sup>173</sup> Walter Sandulli, "Renovation Near Complete: Fayerweather Set to go Back Into Action," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 23, 1979.

Freeman provided a space in which men and women had equal facilities. It contained the proper amount of locker rooms, showers, and equipment for the growing number of women sports teams on campus. Of course discrepancies still existed, and continue to exist, in the way that men's and women's sports were treated by the public and the school, but spatially Freeman provided much more egalitarian facilities than Fayerweather. The construction of Freeman, along with the renovation of Davenport and Olin, helped to create spaces with the presence of women in mind. Their completion highlighted the areas on campus where this dynamic was not true. Specifically, all-male fraternities became an increasingly important part of the dialogue at Wesleyan, a change that will be addressed in the second section of this chapter.

The last important factor to consider on Wesleyan's campus is its residential system. Unlike the previous three areas, Wesleyan's residential setup was not drastically altered during this time, but rather expanded in the direction in which it was already headed. Whereas in 1975, 380 student lived in independent housing both on- and off-campus, by 1987, to 435 students occupied just on-campus independent housing.<sup>174</sup> During this time, a *de facto* system of graduated housing emerged, with freshman in dorms; sophomores in dorms, program houses, and fraternities; juniors largely in apartments; and seniors largely in houses. Through this system, the idea of independent housing became more and more ingrained in Wesleyan's culture. This setup was exacerbated by the fact that McConaughey still predominantly served the freshman class, and the dining options in Downey House and Davenport were either

---

<sup>174</sup> Off-campus numbers were not verified because the number changed from year to year. "Plan for Action," (1975), VIII-2; "Report of the Task Force on Residential Life," (1987), Appendix B.

restaurant or fast food style.<sup>175</sup> Therefore, neither was suited for regular consumption and the kitchens within independent housing and fraternities remained an important factor in campus culture. Essentially, the residential setup mirrored that in the 1970s, but with an increasing number of students living in independent or wood frame houses. Therefore, the disparate nature of campus pervaded. To examine this issue, Campbell established a Task Force on Residential Life in 1986.<sup>176</sup>

The Task Force on Residential Life, frequently referred to as the TFRL, was key in steering Wesleyan's attitude toward residential life for the next decade. The report recognizes both the somewhat fractured nature of campus and the importance of independent housing in students experiences. Therefore, the TFRL puts its finger on a key problem Wesleyan was facing: the current housing options adversely effected campus cohesion due to their fragmented nature, yet students valued independent housing as essential to their Wesleyan experience. The TFRL was tasked with the difficult objective of generating potential residential solutions that united the student body while maintaining independent housing.

The TFRL published its report in the spring of 1987, after about a year of interviews, surveys, and meetings. Within the school's residential ecosystem, the role of fraternities was explicitly laid out:

One argument [for new residential resources] is the present lack of focus for campus social life, particularly parties, both in the central campus and in outlying complexes...This lack has tended to force a central social role on the fraternities, which do have such spaces. This

---

<sup>175</sup> "Report of the Task Force on Residential Life," (1987), 17.

<sup>176</sup> More specifically, the Task Force on Residential Life was prompted by a 1985 incident at Chi Psi, discussed in the Fraternity Review section. Its original goal was to explore the the positive and negative aspects of program, special interest, and fraternity housing.

is a role which neither the fraternities nor many prospective guests always find desirable.<sup>177</sup>

The TFRL recognized how eliminating Greek life would exacerbate Wesleyan's lack of community spaces, a problem the school had already acknowledged and was working actively to resolve. Implicit in the report's conclusion is the concession that, unless a larger change was made, fraternities were the only spaces on campus able to unite the student body and were therefore still necessary on Wesleyan's campus.

Consequently, while the rest of the school's physical infrastructure was changing to become more inclusive, the residential system, leftover from rapid enrollment expansion in the 1970s, continued to force fraternities into a central role. It's important to note that, according to the TFRL Report, 85.8 percent of students surveyed said that they were were basically or highly satisfied with their residential life.<sup>178</sup> Therefore, residential reform was not a huge issue on campus and many students felt the present system was already satisfactory. But the consequences of this setup were deeply felt, particularly in the Greek life reform movement that began to emerge in the mid-1980s.

### *Fraternity Review*

Wesleyan fraternities had come under fire at various times during the 1970s, but a more large-scale movement against Greek life did not emerge until the mid-1980s. This was true for many of Wesleyan's peer institutions as well who used

---

<sup>177</sup> "Report of the Task Force on Residential Life," (1987), 8.

<sup>178</sup> Students were required to complete the residential life survey in order to register for housing so this statistic is representative of a large proportion of the student body; "Report of the Task Force on Residential Life," (1987), Appendix E, 5.

this change in public sentiment to either reform or eliminate Greek life. Although Wesleyan had cast a critical eye toward its fraternities and made some nominal moves to change them, these efforts were largely halfhearted. Fraternities continued to play a key role in the physical layout of campus and seriously attacking fraternities could have been both detrimental to the school and almost impossible to implement. Fraternity's ownership of their houses and student involvement in Greek life were additional factors in Wesleyan's relationship to fraternities, but it's most important to understand the fraternity houses as social spaces that the school could neither control nor replicate. Female students, who began to take issue with the fact that they were barred access to many of these spaces, were the primary leaders of reform movements at both Wesleyan and other schools. This push for reform can be seen as part of a national change in campus culture as students began to recognize different forms of sexism and expect more administrative intervention into student life. At Wesleyan, though, calls for change can also be interpreted as a specific response to the school's outsized dependence on Greek life.

During the fall rush period in 1985, Chi Psi played a pornographic film as part of a movie night rush event. This incident set off a chain reaction that brought Greek life into the spotlight at Wesleyan and reframed the narrative of fraternities on campus. Upon hearing about the movie, a demonstration was organized by Women Against Violent Expression (WAVE), and "about 400 students linked arms and silently surrounded Chi Psi fraternity in the rain to protest the fraternity's plans to show pornographic films at a rush function."<sup>179</sup> In addition to the peaceful protest,

---

<sup>179</sup> Lyndsey Layton, "Students Surround Chi Psi, Protest Planned Porn Show," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 4, 1985.

“We’ll Get You This Time: Death To Mysogynist [*sic*] Frat Boys” was painted on the Chi Psi house doorstep. This event propelled fraternities into campus dialogue, and it spawned a series of letters to the editor in the *Argus*, a student-faculty coalition on the coeducation of fraternities, and, eventually, a petition signed by 95 faculty members advocating for the coeducation of the all-male residential fraternities at Wesleyan.<sup>180</sup>

The reaction against Chi Psi in 1985 was not the first controversial incident involving pornography on campus. In 1979, a group of students had brought *Deep Throat*, a popular pornographic film at the time, to campus, and screened it in the Science Center Auditorium for \$1.50 per ticket. This incident sparked a campus debate about pornography as a form of violence against women, but despite some outrage the movie was still shown.<sup>181</sup> Nationally, the anti-pornography movement garnered widespread attention when, in the early 1980s, feminist attorney Catherine MacKinnon and feminist writer Andrea Dworkin introduced a series of anti-pornography legislation into various state governments. Although most of these bills were eventually struck down under the First Amendment, they had a wide effect on reframing public understanding of pornography as a vehicle of violence against women. Therefore, the Chi Psi incident took place within a social environment that saw pornography as increasingly dangerous.<sup>182</sup>

---

<sup>180</sup> David Williams, “Coalition Studying All-Male Fraternities to Hold Forum,” *Wesleyan Argus*, February 21, 1986; Jill Goldsmith, “Faculty Petition Against Frats Given to Campbell,” *Wesleyan Argus*, May 8, 1986.

<sup>181</sup> Daniel Trent Grassin, “Achieving ‘Gender Parity’ at Wesleyan University: Admitting Women, Maintaining Patriarchy.” (Honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 2009), 73-79.

<sup>182</sup> Wendy Kaminer, “Feminists Against the First Amendment,” *The Atlantic*, November 1992, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1992/11/feminists-against-the-first-amendment/305051/>.

### Campus and Gender Dynamics in Relation to Fraternities

It's important to consider this controversy in light of other campus narratives at the time. Although many people had opinions on fraternity coeducation, it was also in competition with other campus controversies. In fact, divestment from South Africa was by far the issue that most engaged the student body during this period. Additionally, despite the efforts of faculty to address the coeducation issue, the Board of Trustees barely gave credence to the topic, only mentioning it once and saying that the Student Affairs Committee will "consider a petition from 95 members of the faculty" urging the fraternities to go coed.<sup>183</sup> Nevertheless, the Chi Psi incident did have one important administrative consequence. It spurred Campbell to establish the TFRL, which was tasked with looking at residential life in general, and the role of fraternities, special interest housing, and priority housing in particular.

The TFRL was chaired by Raymond Denworth, class of 1954, former trustee, and DKE alumnus, and consisted of students, faculty, administrators, and trustees. Although not explicitly tasked with forming an opinion on fraternity coeducation, the TFRL eventually concluded "that the time has come for the all-male residential fraternities at Wesleyan to admit women to full membership."<sup>184</sup> Through this declaration, the TFRL made the problem of fraternities a concrete, administrative issue that needed to be addressed, not just a petition the Board could ignore. The Report suggested that coeducation be achieved by the process of "persuasion," meaning it recommended that the school should "approach the student institutions whose policies have been called into question (as well as their parent alumni

---

<sup>183</sup> Wesleyan University Board of Trustee Minutes, (Middletown, CT, May 31, 1986), 177.

<sup>184</sup> "Report of the Task Force on Residential Life," (1987), 4.

organizations) with arguments and encouragement.”<sup>185</sup> Therefore, the administration could adopt the findings of the TFRL without having to actually institute any policies against the all-male residential fraternities. Another factor that made the situation complicated is that Campbell, after 18 years as President, decided to step down in July of 1988. Handling controversies about the report, which had been released the spring of 1987, the residential life issues, and the fraternity question, therefore, all fell to his successor, William Chace.

It is important to consider why this report, and this antipathy toward fraternities, would come about in the mid-1980s when women had already been living with Greek life for a decade and a half. In a survey of all female graduates from 1970 to 1990, Kirsten Delegard found that over half of her respondents in both the classes of 1974 and 1990 thought the role of fraternities was inappropriate. Respondents differed, though, about the scale of the role fraternities played. Forty six percent of the class of 1990 said fraternities played a large role in organizing the social and residential life of the campus, compared to 31 percent of the class of 1974.<sup>186</sup> It is important to keep in mind that these numbers only reflect the opinions of the women who sent in the survey, by no means everyone in the class, and were completed in the fall of 1989, meaning that opinions of the older alumnae could have been affected by the then current dialogue around sexism and fraternity coeducation. Nevertheless, it is telling that the perception of fraternities’s role on campus increased, while in actuality the number of fraternities was steadily decreasing. Several changes in the national

---

<sup>185</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>186</sup> Delegard, “Mixed Memories,” 136.

culture, including the feminist movement, administrative expectations, and fraternity criticism, help explain this shift.

First, women in the 1980s were much more aware of institutional sexism and sexual assault, both issues tied to fraternity coeducation. Reflecting on her experience at Wesleyan, one 1975 graduate wrote “Please note that while I was very aware of my feelings or inhibitions in certain situations, academic and social, neither my self-awareness or feminist consciousness were developed to the point that I clearly, at the time, connected such inhibitions with my gender.”<sup>187</sup> Whereas feminism in the 1970s had focused on opportunity and equality, women in the 1980s had different attitudes regarding pornography and male behavior than their predecessors. Most notably, they were more likely to call out subtle, everyday sexism. Other, more tangible changes that came out of the feminist movement, like the growth in the number of female professors, many with a feminist outlook, and the expansion of women’s sports teams, helped reinforce the ideal of gender equality on Wesleyan’s campus. This change in feminist attitude does not mean that all women were against fraternities as institutions, and many women in the 1980s recognized and supported their importance on campus. But, whereas in the 1970s remnants of Wesleyan’s all-male status were seen as a given, by the 1980s some female students were demanding change.

Along with the broader feminist movement, awareness of sexual assault had drastically increased between the 1970s and 1980s. The formal construct of sexual assault came out of the feminist movement; the term date rape was coined in 1975,

---

<sup>187</sup> Delegard, “Mixed Memories,” 83.

the same year that Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* was published. In her book, Brownmiller refutes the then prevailing belief of rape being solely perpetuated by strangers. The 1984 *Ms. Magazine* Project on Campus Assault expanded on this idea, reporting on the widespread nature of sexual assault, often by people the survivor knew.<sup>188</sup> The 1980s therefore saw the beginning of legislation against sexual assault and the establishment of support services for survivors. As criticism of fraternities began to coalesce around their misogynistic nature, the connection to sexual assault was not far off. Although this conversation would not fully develop for 15 to 20 more years, its beginnings can be traced to this decade.

In addition, expectations of the administration changed during the 1980s. Due to increased competition for quality students, schools began to care about things like retention and attrition rates, and many increased their level of academic services.<sup>189</sup> In addition, the increasingly diverse classes that universities were recruiting demanded a different set of support systems.<sup>190</sup> Because of this, schools began to increase the student services they offered, and more generally, take an increasingly active role in student experiences. These changes were meant to appeal to both students and parents as consumers, assuring them that higher education was worth the increasing price tag. Additionally, as schools became more concerned about their public images, they increasingly tried to control fraternities in order to preempt potential bad press.

---

<sup>188</sup> Eilene Zimmerman, "Campus Sexual Assault: A Timeline of Major Events," *New York Times*, June 22, 2016. [https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/23/education/campus-sexual-assault-a-timeline-of-major-events.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/23/education/campus-sexual-assault-a-timeline-of-major-events.html?_r=0); Janet Meyer, "History of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Methods," *National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence*, November 6, 2000. [http://www.ncdsv.org/images/History\\_of\\_SAPE\\_Long\\_Version\\_2000.pdf](http://www.ncdsv.org/images/History_of_SAPE_Long_Version_2000.pdf).

<sup>189</sup> Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education*, 329-30.

<sup>190</sup> Thelin, *Essential Documents in the History of Higher Education*, 291.

Therefore, the 1980s rewrote the traditional doctrine on how involved the administration should be in student experiences, and once they became involved, the fraternity issue became a central place where administrations were expected to step in.

The last reason fraternities at Wesleyan were under increased scrutiny was that, although their popularity decreased during the 1960s and 1970s, they experienced a resurgence in popularity in the 1980s.<sup>191</sup> Partially due to that revival, fraternity reform became a talking point within elite, northeast, liberal arts colleges. The fraternity review trend began in the 1970s when Greek organizations were increasingly unable to sustain themselves financially. But it gained momentum throughout the next decade as schools began to look at the values fraternities brought to campus.<sup>192</sup> Amherst, Colgate, Dartmouth, Dickinson, Franklin and Marshall, Gettysburg, Middlebury, Colby, and Bowdoin all instituted fraternity reviews of some sort. Both the incidents leading up to, and the results of these reviews, were surely on the radar of Wesleyan students and helped shape their perception of Wesleyan fraternities. For example, in 1988 Delta Upsilon brothers at Middlebury hung a mannequin outside of their house with “its head and face bashed in, both breasts dripping red paint and the words ‘Random Hole’ painted on the back.”<sup>193</sup> Although it didn’t take place at Wesleyan, this event highlighted the intense misogyny that could exist on the most liberal of college campuses. In addition, by 1984 both Amherst and

---

<sup>191</sup> Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 274.

<sup>192</sup> Kimberly A. Hokanson, "The Changing Status of Fraternities at Northeastern, Liberal Arts Colleges: Case Studies of Bowdoin and Colby Colleges." (PhD diss., Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1992), 15-17.

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

Williams, whose actions were frequently reported on in the *Argus*, had eliminated fraternities from their campus. It's likely that these and other outside events contributed to a broader critical view of Wesleyan's fraternities.

### Comparative Fraternity Reviews

These outside events also help provide context that illustrates Wesleyan's dependence on its fraternities for essential campus spaces. The other schools in the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC) sports league provide a good comparative model, as they all have roughly similar sizes, locations, value systems, and types of students. Additionally, many had been all-male until the early 1970s. Out of the 11 schools, two (Bates and Connecticut College) never had fraternities, four (Wesleyan, Trinity, Tufts, and Hamilton) still have fraternities, and the remaining five (Williams, Amherst, Middlebury, Colby, and Bowdoin) eliminated Greek life between 1964 and 1997. In the mid-1990s, Hamilton banned fraternity housing and dining, meaning that though Greek life exists and affects the social life, it doesn't have any role in the physical campus.<sup>194</sup> Thus, only three, including Wesleyan, still have residential fraternities.

Looking at the schools who completely eliminated Greek life, some key trends emerge. Because college administrators all conferred among each other throughout the year, it is not surprising that most of these schools follow the same pattern of action. These reviews were triggered by either one central issue, like the mannequin

---

<sup>194</sup> Zach Schonfeld, "Inside the Colleges That Killed Frats for Good," *Newsweek*, March 10, 2014. <http://www.newsweek.com/inside-colleges-killed-frats-good-231346>.

## Fraternity Elimination at Comparative Colleges

School	Triggering Event	Committee Formed	Reform Measure	Elimination Date	New Facilities
<b>Amherst</b>	Series of small events that resulted in fraternities briefly going coed	Ad Hoc Committee on Campus Life (1983/4)	Elimination of fraternities	1984	Keefe Campus Center built in 1987
<b>Bowdoin</b>	Losing qualified candidates to schools without Greek life	Trustee Commission on Residential Life	Phase out fraternities and establish "College Houses"	1997	Invest \$12 million in dorms and campus social spaces
<b>Colby</b>	Series of small events	Trustee Commission (1983)	Elimination of fraternities and set up a Residential Commons System	1984	\$3.5 million was added to the capital campaign goal for a new student center
<b>Middlebury</b>	Graphic mannequin hung in front of the DU house	Task Force on Student Social Life (1989), Special Committee on Attitudes Toward Gender (1990)	One year to admit women on an equal basis	1991, replaced with "social houses"	McCullough Student Center established in 1991
<b>Wesleyan</b>	Chi Psi pornographic movie	Task Force on Residential Life (1986/7)	Residential fraternities have to go coed		
<b>Williams</b>	Student petition to eliminate fraternities on campus due on discriminatory nature	Committee of Review on the Fraternity Question, nicknamed the Angevine Committee (1962)	Eliminate fraternities and have the college take over housing, dining, and social life	1964	Driscoll Dining Hall (1963), Greylock Quad (1965, dormitories & dining), Mission Park (1971, dining)

incident at Middlebury, or a series of small grievances that added up.<sup>195</sup> For example, at Williams, which eliminated fraternities when it was still all-male in 1964, routine discrimination against black and Jewish students prompted the administration to take action. These incidents drew attention to fraternities and led to initial stop-gap attempts at reform or regulation. When these initial solutions begin to seem inadequate, a more comprehensive examination of Greek life took place, frequently through committees set up to examine student life. Amherst's Ad-Hoc Trustee Committee on Campus Life (1983-84), Colby's Trustee Commission (1983), and Middlebury's Task Force on Student Social Life (1989) are just three examples, but every school had at least one if not multiples of these reports issued.

Sometimes these reports recommended complete elimination of Greek life, but more frequently they would first propose coeducation. Amherst ordered its fraternities to coeducate in 1981, and throughout the 1980s, Bowdoin attempted to make its fraternities go coed, eventually succeeding in 1992, before moving for complete elimination in 1997.<sup>196</sup> Similarly, Middlebury gave its fraternities one year to admit women on an equal basis, but ended up eliminating Greek life completely and instead transforming the old fraternity houses into "Social Houses." These units function somewhat similarly to fraternities, as they still house students and throw parties. But they are all mixed-gender and owned by Middlebury, which gives the school much more jurisdiction.<sup>197</sup> Despite administrative efforts, fraternities would

---

<sup>195</sup> Hokanson, "The Changing Status of Fraternities at Northeastern, Liberal Arts Colleges," 43.

<sup>196</sup> "Campus Journal; At Bowdoin, an All-Male Era's Vestige Won't Budge," *New York Times*, December 16, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/12/16/education/campus-journal-at-bowdoin-an-all-male-era-s-vestige-won-t-budge.html>.

<sup>197</sup> "Social Houses and the Truth in Marketing," Editorial, *Middlebury Campus*, March 6, 2013, <https://middleburycampus.com/article/social-houses-and-the-truth-in-marketing/>.

frequently go underground and continue to exist on campus for a number of years before finally fizzling out. At Amherst, off-campus fraternities survived until 2014, when the administration cracked down on the three remaining groups.<sup>198</sup>

In many ways, the events at Wesleyan mirror precipitating events at other schools. The Chi Psi movie protest can be seen as the triggering event, leading the school to create the TFRL, which recommended the coeducation of residential fraternities at Wesleyan. But, whereas at other schools these rulings were enforced and eventually lead to the elimination of Greek life, Wesleyan let the coeducation issue linger in the periphery of campus discussion without taking any direct action. There are several distinct reasons why Wesleyan, which fancies itself the one of the most radical of the NESCAC schools, ended up taking this separate, more conservative path, including space allocation, house ownership, and fraternity enrollment.

As many of these schools decided to abolish fraternities, new student centers, residence halls, and dining spaces frequently accompanied the decision. For example, when Colby eliminated fraternities in 1984, it added \$3.5 million to its capital campaign for a new student center, while when Amherst's Board of Trustees discontinued fraternities they also authorized construction for a new student center, which opened in 1987.<sup>199</sup> Similarly, Bowdoin, which had relied on the fraternities to provide housing and dining services to many students, had to invest \$12 million in its

---

<sup>198</sup> Only about 100 students participated in Amherst's off-campus fraternities. Matt Rocheleau, "Move to Ban Frats at Amherst College Resisted," *Boston Globe*, May 24, 2014; Richard Pérez-Peña and Steven Yaccino, "Efforts by Colleges to Curb Assaults Focus on Fraternities," *New York Times*, June 12, 2014.

<sup>199</sup> Hokanson, "The Changing Status of Fraternities at Northeastern, Liberal Arts Colleges," 84.

physical plant.<sup>200</sup> Williams built a series of dormitories and dining halls to make up for the loss of fraternity space, including Driscoll Dining Hall and the Greylock Quadrangle.<sup>201</sup>

As previously noted, at Wesleyan Davenport largely failed as a student center, and the school still did not have sufficient revenue for a new student union, dorms, or dining spaces. The University continued to suffer from a \$3.5 million deficit in its annual budget and around \$35 million of deferred maintenance.<sup>202</sup> Although the endowment had grown since its nadir in 1980, the ghost of Wesleyan's financial crisis still haunted the school.<sup>203</sup> In addition to many other physical necessities, the administration was fighting a war with the faculty over their compensation and the funding of various academic departments, meaning the budget had little flexibility. President Chace admitted in 1992 that "The University will not be in a financial position soon to address housing and dining shortcomings by building new facilities. For the short term, creative low-cost solutions must be sought."<sup>204</sup> Without the means

---

<sup>200</sup> "Bowdoin Makes Progress on Residential Life Goals with Purchase of Former Fraternities," *Bowdoin College*, September 1, 2000. <http://www.bowdoin.edu/news/archives/1bowdoincampus/000854.shtml>; Shannon Burke, "Bowdoin College to Eliminate Fraternities," *The Daily Pennsylvanian*, March 7, 1997, [http://www.thedp.com/index.php/article/1997/03/bowdoin\\_college\\_to\\_eliminate\\_fraternities](http://www.thedp.com/index.php/article/1997/03/bowdoin_college_to_eliminate_fraternities).

<sup>201</sup> Chandler, *The Rise and Fall of Fraternities at Williams College*, 129; Jennifer Luo, "A History of Food at Williams College: Dining, Farming, and Gardening: How Williams Students Ate, 1793-2011," August 19, 2011, 34-5, <https://sustainability.williams.edu/files/2012/03/A-History-of-Food-at-Williams-College.pdf>.

<sup>202</sup> William M. Chace, *100 Semesters: My Adventures as a Student, Professor, and University President, and What I Learned Along the Way*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 201.

<sup>203</sup> Potts, *Wesleyan University 1910-1970*, 425.

<sup>204</sup> "The University Plan," (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., May 1992), 67.

to build a proper student center, eliminating fraternities would leave the campus without any sort of centralizing force in student life.

Wesleyan was also dealing with the reality of who owned the various fraternity houses on campus. In the early 1990s, when the idea of persuasion and coeducation was being looked at critically, there were six residential fraternities on campus—DKE, Beta, Psi U, Chi Psi, Eclectic, and Alpha Delt.<sup>205</sup> At this point, the school owned the Eclectic building, which was sold to them in the 1970s when the fraternity broke with its alumni group, and the Chi Psi Lodge, which the university acquired after it was condemned in 1979. The agreement reached with Chi Psi stipulated that the fraternity would rent the house for 20 years, after which they would have an option to buy it back.<sup>206</sup> Therefore, although Wesleyan owned that house, its control over the building was very limited. This meant that Wesleyan only had unfettered ownership of one house, which was already coed.

With no plans to eliminate fraternities from campus, which can render a house useless and therefore force its sale to the school, it is difficult to persuade alumni or nationals to sell their fraternity house. Wesleyan could not move to ban fraternities because of the central role they played on campus, and therefore had no logical means for acquiring the houses it did not own. In principle Wesleyan could have gone to court over the properties, claiming they were discriminatory, but that would have

---

<sup>205</sup> A 1992 fraternities pamphlet also recognized Kappa Alpha Theta, a sorority, and the Gamma Literary Society as Greek life groups; Omega Kappa Alpha has also appeared in other fraternity literature. Additionally, various historically black fraternities and sororities have been reported on in the *Argus* throughout this time period. Although these groups existed, some were only around for a few years and none of them had residential status. Therefore, they will not be addressed extensively.

<sup>206</sup> Justin Pottle, "The Lost Brotherhood: The Tragic History of Chi Psi at Wesleyan," *Wesleyan Argus*, October 13, 2009.

proved costly, alienated many alumni, and did not guarantee a victory. In light of this, instituting any form of incremental change with neither the agreement nor control of the fraternities proved nearly impossible.

Another factor at play was the double-edged sword of low fraternity participation at Wesleyan. Whereas other schools had large percentages of their population participating in Greek life—40 percent of men at Middlebury in 1983, 42 percent of students at Amherst in the early 1980s—Wesleyan’s participation numbers consistently hovered between ten and fifteen percent.<sup>207</sup> The number of fraternities had continuously declined since the 1950s, and even recently fraternities had continued to lose momentum. Delta Tau Delta, a residential fraternity with a national chapter, was not able to get the requisite number of members in 1988 and sold their house to the school in 1991. It was subsequently converted into a dorm and dining area in 1992.<sup>208</sup> In schools where fraternity enrollment constituted a significant portion of the student body, it was clear that the administration had to act to regulate the fraternity system. At Wesleyan, participation was so low that it fostered an illusion that administrative action wasn’t necessary because eventually fraternity popularity would fade on its own. Despite the prominence of fraternities on High Street, administrators could assure themselves that they were only one small aspect of the Wesleyan experience.

---

<sup>207</sup> Hokanson, "The Changing Status of Fraternities at Northeastern, Liberal Arts Colleges," 38, 20-1.

<sup>208</sup> "The University Plan," (1992), 105; Diana Strauss, "Houses Divided," *Wesleyan University Alumnus*, Summer 1990, 18-24.

### Changes That Were Made

Although Wesleyan's actions regarding Greek life were way less combative than their peers, the administration did not completely ignore the TFRL's recommendations. Based on the report's call for the coeducation of fraternities and their subsequent lack of compliance, Chace "unrecognized" the all-male residential fraternities in 1990 and adopted a stance of "no support, no intrusion" in 1993.<sup>209</sup> More controversially, he instituted changes in Wesleyan's dining policies which adversely effected the fraternity eating clubs. Chace made this decision out of financial necessity rather than malice toward Greek life, but the result was that Wesleyan had full control of its dining program for the very first time.

When Chace assumed the presidency, Wesleyan still did not have a fully balanced budget. Wesleyan's expensive graduate programs, combined with deferred physical plant maintenance and a recession in the early 1990s, had resulted an annual budget deficit of \$3.5 million.<sup>210</sup> One part of Wesleyan's plan to save money was to change food service providers and the school switched from Marriott to ARA (later Aramark). ARA incurred such a substantial loss in its first year that Wesleyan was, again, forced to revamp its dining system. Because the school's dining system was mainly utilized by freshman and mandatory on-campus dining was very unpopular, the administration cut back food services on campus to help balance the finances. The next year, this limited service lead to the Student Dining Committee to decide that, rather than reduced options, the school should instate a mandatory on-campus dining

---

<sup>209</sup> "An Inside Look at Fraternities," *Disorientation* (pamphlet), September 1992, 22, Wesleyan University Special Collections & Archives Fraternities Vertical File (hereafter referred to as Fraternities Vertical File); President William Chace to Alumni, October 1993, Fraternities Vertical File.

<sup>210</sup> Chace, *100 Semesters*, 210.

clause starting with the class of 1995.<sup>211</sup> Students largely opposed mandatory dining, and protested many of the changes.

One consequence of mandatory dining was the elimination of fraternity eating clubs, which relied on sophomores as their main source of income. Although some saw mandatory dining as an attack on the fraternities, the decision was made with economic, not fraternity, interests in mind. Nevertheless, mandatory dining did limit fraternity reach into general campus life. In the 1991/2 school year, 180 people had been members of an eating club, and though many were fraternity brothers by this point, fraternity-based meal plans remained a way in which Greek spaces could be accessed by the entire student body.<sup>212</sup> Mandatory dining did not eliminate fraternity eating clubs, several of which were eventually incorporated into the Wesleyan meal plan's "points system." Nevertheless, like the construction of Davenport, the Olin extension, and the Freeman Athletic Center, this change reduced the importance of fraternities on campus.

Looking back, in the 1960s, Wesleyan had recognized the importance of a student center and additional dormitories. Those needs became even more pressing as enrollment skyrocketed during the 1970s, but financially the school was not able to provide those spaces for its students. During that time, fraternities filled many holes left by the physical campus, particularly in dining, social and residential areas. The 1980s enabled some key renovation projects, but the school's financial issues kept it from fully divorcing itself from Greek life. Whereas other schools eliminated fraternities, Wesleyan hung onto the system out of physical necessity for the spaces.

---

<sup>211</sup> "Report of the Residential Life Group," (1992), 35-6.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-9.

The existence of all-male institutions at Wesleyan would continue to effect gender dynamics, most notably in relation to a resurgence of dialogue surrounding sexual assault. Nevertheless, it was not until Wesleyan changed its physical campus that it could address these issues.

### *Continued Changes*

Reflecting on the growth of Wesleyan's enrollment and the subsequent effect on its facilities, former President Campbell said "It took until Doug Bennet became president [to build more] housing. That was too long, and it should have been under my administration, and it should have been under Bill Chace's, but it just didn't happen."<sup>213</sup> Decades of deferred maintenance came to a head under Douglas Bennet, who became president of Wesleyan in 1995 after Chace accepted the presidency of Emory University. Bennet's tenure saw the University's consolidation of independent housing and its construction of an effective student center, as well as a number of other building projects. These additions to campus finally succeeded in giving Wesleyan enough separation from fraternity space to enable significant reform measures. This legacy will be explored more in depth in the conclusion, whereas this section will look at what physical changes took place and how that shaped fraternity relations.

It's important to note the perception of fraternities on campus during this time. Coeducation of residential fraternities was a big issue in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as specific events and actions by other schools thrust fraternities into the

---

<sup>213</sup> Campbell, interview by Taraba, June 13, 2016.

spotlight.<sup>214</sup> As is typical of the cyclical nature of campus controversies, though, campus dialogue shifted away from fraternities for the next several years. During this period most students simply seemed unconcerned with the larger implications of Greek life. Students appear to have conceptualized fraternity houses as merely as an important social space. Besides small incidents that appeared every few years, fraternities largely just existed, offering up their space for public use whenever necessary.

### Chace Presidency

After Colin Campbell stepped down in 1988, William Chace was selected as Wesleyan's fourteenth president. Although he remained president for six years, Chace struggled to fully grasp Wesleyan's culture. "But I knew, and the school knew, that we were not meant for each other," reflect Chace in his 2006 memoir.<sup>215</sup> The main initiative of Chace's presidency was to bring the university into financial equilibrium, and his proposal to achieve that, the University Plan, became the cornerstone of his presidency. His financial focus made him very unpopular with the faculty, while the students perceived him as bureaucratic and tyrannical. As Professor emeritus Richard Slotkin described it, "Chace came in with a mandate to cut, to reduce. He largely fulfilled that, but I didn't have much respect for his intellect or his manners or his understanding of anything that mattered about the institution."<sup>216</sup> An *Argus* editorial

---

<sup>214</sup> In the late 2000s and early 2010s, a series of public relations disasters would drive fraternities back into campus dialogue and eventually prompt a shift in Greek life at Wesleyan. These developments will be touched on in the conclusion.

<sup>215</sup> Chace, *100 Semesters*, 268.

<sup>216</sup> Richard Slotkin, interview by Nancy Smith, Wesleyan University Oral History Project, February 25, 2014.

published a year after he stepped down called Chace “our own personal Darth Vader, Simon LeGree, and Hans Gruber all wrapped up into a neat, little, Joycean package.”<sup>217</sup>

Chace’s primary motivation for leaving Wesleyan was a bombing of South College that took place in the spring of 1990. Two Molotov cocktails were thrown through the windows of Chace’s office at 4:00 AM on the morning of April 7th. The university offered a \$10,000 reward for information about the bombings, but no one was ever indicted for the crime.<sup>218</sup> Although surprising, the act did not come out of the blue. Student-administration tension had been running high all year; in January 50 to 60 black students seized the admissions office. A month after the bombings racist graffiti appeared in the Malcolm X basement, possibly done by residents themselves.<sup>219</sup> The final note of a difficult year was the murder of Nicholas Haddad ’92 by his friend, University of Connecticut student Kumar Viswanathan, in a Hartford park during the summer of 1990.<sup>220</sup> Haddad had been an important activist on campus and was suspected of involvement with the South College bombings. His death, essentially a drug deal gone wrong, added to the sense of unrest. Reflecting on that time, Chace recognized “There was a great deal of racial strife on the campus.

---

<sup>217</sup> As a professor of English literature, Chace was an expert on Joyce; Henry A. Myers, “ARA Fills Vacuum Left by President’s Departure,” *Wesleyan Argus*, September 30, 1994.

<sup>218</sup> “Activism or Terrorism?: The Chace Firebombing, Twenty Years On,” *Wesleying* (blog), April 20, 2010, <http://wesleying.org/2010/04/20/activism-or-terrorism-the-chace-firebombing-twenty-years-on/>; Alex Navarro, “Shock, Loss, or Could it be Expected?,” *Wesleyan Argus*, April 8, 1990.

<sup>219</sup> “‘Where Are They Now?’: An Interview with Former President William Chace,” *Wesleying* (blog), May 26, 2013, <http://wesleying.org/2013/05/26/where-are-they-now-an-interview-with-former-president-william-chace/>.

<sup>220</sup> Kirk Johnson, “Death of a Student Rebel: Who, Unmasked, Was He?,” *New York Times*, July 20, 1990, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/07/20/nyregion/death-of-a-student-rebel-who-unmasked-was-he.html?pagewanted=all>.

Some violence. A student was murdered. All this tension between the faculty and the administration, between the students and the administration, between the students and the Board of Trustees. It was a very difficult place. And those were the hardest years of my life.”<sup>221</sup> Chace stayed at Wesleyan for four more years.

Although his University Plan acknowledged the inadequacies of many Wesleyan facilities, particularly residential and dining, it also recognized the lack of funds to solve these problems in the near future.<sup>222</sup> Therefore, the campus footprint generally remained the same during Chace’s tenure. Despite not being able to physically improve the facilities, the administration did try to think of ways to re-conceptualize them. As previously discussed, Chace instituted a much-protested mandatory dining plan that helped reshape the use of the existing dining facilities. Additionally, the University Plan consisted of a Report of the Residential Life Group, which attempted to come up with low-cost solutions for Wesleyan’s housing issues. Based off of the 1987 TFRL Report, the Residential Life Group largely repeated that report’s same key ideas regarding a lack of community.

To instill Wesleyan with a sense of community, the Residential Life Group proposed initiating a cluster system to organize the school’s housing. This system would center existing residential units around a series of expanded dining halls. Each cluster would contain 400 to 500 students across all grades, and students would be assigned to one cluster before arriving on campus. The cluster system was conceived as a way to “establish a structural framework for the development of a sense of

---

<sup>221</sup> “‘Where Are They Now?’: An Interview with Former President William Chace,” *Wesleying* (blog), May 26, 2013.

<sup>222</sup> “The University Plan,” (1992), 9, 67.

community in residential life at Wesleyan, one of the major concerns guiding our work.”<sup>223</sup> The cluster system was reminiscent of the “social houses” systems that had been adopted by Bowdoin and Middlebury after they eliminated Greek life. Most importantly, the system would not involve any new construction. The student body reacted quite negatively to this proposal, and the plan was “met with so much disapproval from student organizations that the administration abandoned the idea soon after it was proposed.”<sup>224</sup> Student reaction against the cluster proposal is important because it demonstrates how essential the idea of independent housing had become to Wesleyan’s identity. The graduated housing program had come to fruition in the 1970s when the University’s campus became unable to hold a large portion of the student body. Reinforced over decades, though, independent living had come to define much of student experience at Wesleyan.

### Bennet Presidency

Douglas Bennet was announced as Wesleyan’s next president in April of 1995. For a long time, Wesleyan had struggled to successfully fundraise, and therefore the school was looking for someone who could bring in money to help grow the endowment and with a vision to keep the school moving forward. In some ways, Bennet can be seen as an authentically Wesleyan choice; he graduated in 1959 and his father and two of his children also attended to Wesleyan.<sup>225</sup> At the same time, he can

---

<sup>223</sup> “Report of the Residential Life Group,” (1992), 28.

<sup>224</sup> Jonah Sachs, “WSA Begins to Organize Against Controversial ‘Clusters’ Proposal,” *Wesleyan Argus*, December 9, 1994.

<sup>225</sup> “Office of the President: Wesleyan’s Fifteenth President,” Wesleyan University, <http://www.wesleyan.edu/president/pastpresidents/bennet.html>.

be viewed as part of a larger trend toward the corporatization of private higher education. As Professor Emeritus Allan Berlind said “The problems of the hierarchies and business models of operation I think became accentuated during Doug’s era...”<sup>226</sup> Although he had a Ph.D. in history from Harvard, Bennet had most recently spent time working in government and running National Public Radio. Therefore, he did not have direct leadership or faculty experience in a university environment.

Bennet used his first two years in office to wrap up Chace’s University Plan, but during that time also worked to develop his own Strategy for Wesleyan, which was released in 1998. The report outlined three key areas for Wesleyan to focus on: the academic core and faculty excellence (\$55 million), financial aid program (\$96 million), and facilities (\$55 million). It also allocated an additional \$44 million to helping grow the Wesleyan Annual Fund. These goals were expected to be met through an expansive capital drive, the Wesleyan Campaign, which was endorsed by the Board in 1998. The campaign aimed to raise \$250 million for Wesleyan and exceeded this goal by \$31 million.<sup>227</sup> This money allowed Wesleyan to reinvest in its physical campus. Whereas the school had spent \$2.9 million on repair and maintenance in the fiscal year 1991, that number jumped to \$8.6 million in 2001.<sup>228</sup>

Excluding the construction of Freeman during the late 1980s, the most recent new construction on campus had been the CFA and High and Low Rise, which both

---

<sup>226</sup> Allan Berlind, interview by Heather Zavond, Wesleyan University Oral History Project, November 12, 2015.

<sup>227</sup> “Preface and Overview, Wesleyan University Re-Accreditation Self-Study,” Wesleyan University, 2002, vi, <http://www.wesleyan.edu/accreditation/previouselfstudyreports/2002selfstudy.pdf>.

<sup>228</sup> “Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students of Wesleyan University,” (Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, October 6-9, 2002), 34, <http://www.wesleyan.edu/accreditation/previouselfstudyreports/2002visitingcommitteereport.pdf>.

opened in 1972. Therefore, it's safe to say that Wesleyan was in desperate need of many new construction projects. Before crafting his Strategy for Wesleyan, Bennet had a master planner come to campus to assess the most necessary construction projects. A large of building construction program eventually came out of this period, including the Center for Film Studies and the Freeman extension, but the report particularly highlighted Wesleyan's need for changes in its housing and dining systems, along with the creation of a new student center.

As previously discussed, the Davenport Student Center was ineffective in a number of ways, and the building had been criticized practically since it opened in 1984. Although many previous plans had proposed the Fayerweather area as a potential place for a student center, it was not until 2003 that the final plan for the Usdan University Center was drafted.<sup>229</sup> The project, which cost about \$47 million, including a renovation of Fayerweather and the building which housed the old squash courts, remade the whole section of campus by College Row and Andrus Field.<sup>230</sup> When Usdan opened in 2007, it consolidated dining, lounges, game rooms, and office space. The dining facilities could hold 750 people, a 200 person increase from McConaughey, which was demolished after Usdan opened. Usdan was a huge improvement over Davenport, mainly because it functioned as a student center should. It did a good job of bringing the entire student body under one roof, and although it still primarily fed freshman and sophomores, it was not as explicitly an underclassman space as McConaughey had been. It didn't have the quirky charms of

---

<sup>229</sup> "Something Old, Something New," *Wesleyan Magazine*, December 20, 2007, <http://magazine.wesleyan.edu/2007/12/20/something-old-something-new/>.

<sup>230</sup> Hilary Moss, "Long-Awaited Usdan Center Opens Doors," *Wesleyan Argus*, August 30, 2007.

McConaughey—in particular the balcony that allowed students to make announcements to the entire school—but this was primarily a result of Usdan’s location on college row. Squeezed between Fayerweather and the squash building, the student center was limited by its plot of land.<sup>231</sup>

In addition to the construction of Usdan, Wesleyan made two important housing adjustments under Bennet. First of all, it decided to consolidate the wood frame house system into a “senior village” of sorts. This program, suggested the Residential Life Facilities Master Planning Committee, would unify the individual wood frame houses through common design features, concentrate senior life around the Pine Street, Fountain Street, and Warren Avenue areas, and add furniture to the houses.<sup>232</sup> Previously Wesleyan had owned many houses in one neighborhood but they were not separated by usage, meaning graduates, undergraduates, and faculty housing was adjacent. The senior village plan condensed seniors to specific areas in hopes of fostering “both community development and a sense of connection to the institution—important developmental needs for seniors.”<sup>233</sup>

Although this development plan did not involve any drastic reconceptualization of the space, it proved successful in creating a sense of cohesion the school had long sought. Adding furniture to what had previously been characterized as “unfurnished rentals” made the wood frames seem more like on-campus living, which helped facilitate a sense of community without any new

---

<sup>231</sup> Laura Brown, “New University Center Puts a Spin on a Well-Versed Tradition,” *Wesleyan Argus*, February 20, 2007.

<sup>232</sup> “Residential Life Facilities Master Planning Committee Report,” (Special Collections & Archives, Olin Library, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., May 5, 1998), Appendix D.

<sup>233</sup> “Residential Life Facilities Master Planning Committee Report,” (1998), 6.

construction. In addition, uniting these various houses transformed the common spaces in the surrounding area. The backyards that connected all of the houses suddenly became a shared student space that could be used for outdoor events and accommodate significant portions of the student body. Because these backyards were owned by the school but operated by the students, the space was open to whomever wanted to enter. Many houses had access to this backyard space and the housing lottery, rather than one social group, determined who got to live there. It's important to note that the shared space was an outdoor one. Consequently, it was most conveniently utilized when the weather permitted students to be outside. In this way, neither the outdoor space nor the senior houses themselves, whose capacity was not comparable to fraternities, completely erased the need for fraternity houses. Much like the other changes on campus, the senior village idea instead worked to reimagine space, allowing for an alternative to, but not a replacement of, Greek houses.

The second major adjustment was the construction of the two Fauver dormitories between Vine Street, Church Street, and Foss Hill Drive.<sup>234</sup> One of the dormitories was designed for freshman students and therefore consisted of only double rooms. The purpose of this Fauver was to concentrate the freshman population in doubles, leaving the singles in the Butterfield and Foss Hill dorms for sophomores or juniors.<sup>235</sup> This reallocation of space was meant to reinforce a sense of class unity. The second dorm, also known as the Fauver Apartments or Senior Fauver, furthered the senior village plan by consolidating upperclassman housing in one specific corner

---

<sup>234</sup> The freshman Fauver dorm would be renamed Bennet Hall in 2012 to honor the former president, but for clarity's sake I will refer to both by their names during the time frame of this chapter.

<sup>235</sup> Jessica Eber, "New Fauver Dorms Will Centralize Student Residences," *Wesleyan Argus*, September 24, 2004.

of campus and allowing for the sale of the distant In-Town apartments. In addition, by adding 270 beds, these two dorms practically eliminated the need for off-campus housing. Previously, about 200 students a year lived off campus, but in 2005, when the Fauver dorms opened, that number dropped to around 40.<sup>236</sup> The construction of the Fauvers shifted the norms of housing at Wesleyan. Students were now expected to live on-campus and, therefore, could expect their housing to promote a sense of community that had been lacking from Wesleyan's residential life for a long time.

These housing changes proved important in readjusting, yet again, the school's relationship to fraternities, which is most notably demonstrated in Bennet's renewed mandate to coeducate fraternity houses.<sup>237</sup> Unlike the 1990s, when Chace had attempted to coeducate Greek life, the administration now had control of the campus residential market. Previously, fraternities had been grouped under off-campus housing, and it was fairly easy to get permission to live there due to the large percent of students approved for off-campus housing every year. With the construction of the Fauver dorms, though, Wesleyan approved fewer students for off-campus status. Therefore, under Bennet's new policies, fraternities had two choices: allow women to live in their house and, therefore, maintain their on-campus status or go "off-campus" and have residents pay both the \$5,000 university housing fees and the \$3,500 fraternity fees.<sup>238</sup> It is important to understand that these policies were not mandating that the fraternity itself go coed, but rather that women be allowed to live

---

<sup>236</sup> Sarah Levin and Greg Dubinsky, "Off-Campus Housing to be Virtually Eliminated," *Wesleyan Argus*, September 21, 2004.

<sup>237</sup> Michael Brewin, "Bennet Targets Fraternities," Editorial, *Wesleyan Argus*, December 10, 2004.

<sup>238</sup> Stacey Stowe, "Wesleyan Fraternities Face Pressure to House Women," *New York Times*, December 20, 2004.

in the houses based on the school's nondiscrimination clause. The fraternity itself did not need to pledge women to comply with the school's mandate. Additionally, this policy was primarily aimed at DKE, Beta, and Psi U, as the other residential fraternities, Eclectic and Alpha Delt, had been coed since the 1970s. Due to this change in residential life, DKE was forced to go coed, with three women applying to live in the house and one being selected for the 2005/6 school year.<sup>239</sup> Psi U refused to comply, with one senior declaring "We'll take our chances in the fall," and, therefore, moved off-campus.<sup>240</sup> Beta, similarly, refused to allow women to live in their house. Therefore, both Psi U and Beta paid rent to both the school and their respective fraternity, with Psi U alumni footing the fraternity housing fees for residents while Beta brothers and their families took the financial hit themselves.<sup>241</sup>

Despite these events, fraternity coeducation in the mid-2000s was not an issue that received extensive attention from the student body. The mandate for fraternities to go coed received little attention in the *Argus*, and students seem to have generally had become less concerned with the role of fraternities on campus than they had been in the 1980s. When the fraternities went to the Wesleyan Student Assembly in the fall of 2005 to ask for support, the members passed a resolution standing behind the continued existence of fraternities with little fanfare or debate.<sup>242</sup> This lack of student interest in fraternities could be for two main reasons. First of all, as evidenced from the fraternity review trend of the 1980s, either one large event or a series of smaller

---

<sup>239</sup> Amy Feigenbau, "Frats Change Policies: Psi U Moves Off Campus; DKE to Board Women," *Wesleyan Argus*, May 3, 2005.

<sup>240</sup> Stowe, "Wesleyan Fraternities Face Pressure to House Women."

<sup>241</sup> Brian Colgan, "Frats Receive WSA Backing," *Wesleyan Argus*, November 1, 2005.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*

events frequently catalyze fraternity discussions on campus. During the mid-2000s, there was nothing of this sort to thrust fraternities into the spotlight. It no doubt helped that the number of fraternities on campus had decreased, meaning that there were fewer sources where controversy could arise. Fraternities also remained popular with many students, men and women, and their presence did add to campus life both socially and spatially. They were still the largest indoor space for students to gather and therefore held an important role on campus. Despite the fact that the senior village backyard area was a large, democratizing space, it was not good for winter events or large-scale performances, like concerts. Nevertheless, as these developed as a space that could be utilized for social events, fraternities began to seem increasingly outdated.

Bennet's housing policy change demonstrates the essential interconnected nature of residential housing and fraternity power at Wesleyan. By centralizing Wesleyan's residential campus, and in particular doing so in a different area of campus than the fraternities, Wesleyan was able to create a sense of the student community and ownership outside of these exclusively male institutions. Wesleyan remained reliant on fraternities far longer than many of its peer schools, but it had trouble instituting any changes due to its symbiotic relationship with Greek life. Once the dorm and student center changes made under Bennet began to reshape the campus, fraternities were in trouble because they had lost their trump card within the administration.

President Bennet stepped down after the 2006/7 school year, and Michael Roth was chosen as the next president of Wesleyan. Usdan, which was conceived

under Bennet, opened in the fall of 2007 when Roth took office. Through his ambitious fundraising and construction, Bennet had shifted the school dynamic, setting up a spatial situation in which fraternities assumed a lesser importance. As fraternities became controversial on campus during Roth's tenure, he was able to take a distinctly different approach from his predecessors.

## CONCLUSION

In the fall of 2014, University President Michael Roth and Chair of the Board of Trustees Joshua Boger sent out an email to the Wesleyan community announcing that “with equity and inclusion in mind, we have decided that residential fraternities must become fully co-educational over the next three years.”<sup>243</sup> Roth was the fourth Wesleyan President to attempt fraternity coeducation, a process that started in 1987, but his efforts ultimately proved to be more effective than his predecessors. Part of Roth’s success can be attributed to a shift in public sentiment. Two of Wesleyan’s fraternities had recently made national headlines due to sexual assault lawsuits. In the lawsuit against Beta Theta Pi, the plaintiff, a former Wesleyan student, referred to Beta as a “rape factory.” This term, appearing in countless headlines, became emblematic of sexual assault, Greek life, and college campuses more generally. Prompted by this situation, Roth pushed for fraternity coeducation and, as in the past, the fraternities pushed back.

By 2014, however, the school was in a different position. With a proper student center, residential system, and dining plan, Wesleyan was not dependent on fraternity space to unite its student body. DKE filed a lawsuit against Wesleyan to protest the mandate and, although the case is still pending, the alumni-owned house was closed in September 2015. Wesleyan’s Beta chapter was disbanded by its national following a September 2014 incident where a female student fell out of a third-floor

---

<sup>243</sup> Michael Roth and Joshua Boger to the Wesleyan Community, “Greek Life at Wesleyan,” e-mail message, September 22, 2014 (Fraternities Vertical File).

window.<sup>244</sup> Like DKE, the Beta house is owned by its chapter's alumni. In April 2016, the alumni group put the house on the market, but as of now the rooms are rented out to Middletown residents.<sup>245</sup> Psi U's national charter permits women to join, and so the fraternity began pledging female brothers in the spring of 2016. Nevertheless, the house was on probation for the 2015/2016 school year due to two sexual assault cases and allegations of a group narcotics purchase. Therefore, for the first time since Greek life began at Wesleyan, there were no all-male residential fraternities on campus during the 2015/2016 school year.

Although the removal of three large, indoor spaces, affected student life at Wesleyan, the social center of campus shifted from High Street, where it had been located for over a century and a half, to the senior wood frame houses. These houses have become increasingly essential to student life as fraternities have dwindled but contain their own issues. They are extremely expensive for the school to maintain due to both the wear and tear of student parties and the energy inefficient nature of the single-family dwellings. Shortly after the Senior Village plan came out, Wesleyan launched several "prototype houses," which were larger independent houses that contained three individual units. These were conceptualized as a potential solution to the financial inefficiency of wood frames, but this housing plan disappeared from the school's agenda after the 2008 recession. By and large, most senior houses remain

---

<sup>244</sup> Shawn R. Beals, "Wesleyan Frat Goes Through Year Without Home While It Fights For Reinstatement," *Hartford Courant*, March 21, 2016, <http://www.courant.com/community/middletown/hc-wesleyan-fraternity-lawsuit-dke-0206-20160321-story.html>.

<sup>245</sup> Shawn R. Beals, "Beta Theta Pi Alumni Put Former Wesleyan Fraternity House On Market," *Hartford Courant*, April 15, 2016, <http://www.courant.com/community/middletown/hc-middletown-beta-house-wesleyan-0415-20160415-story.html>.

single-family. In this way, Wesleyan is still paying the price, literally, for its financial issues and massive expansion in the 1970s.

Wesleyan's 1960s idealism came from a moment of extraordinary wealth, and set a precedent of spending that was unsustainable, especially considering the national financial situation in the 1970s. Therefore, when women entered Wesleyan's campus, the school did not have the funding to truly accommodate these new female students. While on the surface coeducation appeared to be an easy, immediate success, the school's lack of egalitarian social spaces made all-fraternities a central, discriminatory force on campus. Fraternities continued to exist as places that encouraged heavy drinking, drugs, and sexual attacks, even as Wesleyan promoted itself as a progressive, egalitarian institution. These paradoxical values became more apparent as time went on. The construction of the Freeman Athletic Center, which opened in 1990, went a long way in reconciling the spatial gender discrepancies on campus. The rise of women's sports more generally, along with the increased presence of female professors, advances in the feminist movement, and action taken by other schools, also contributed to an increasingly critical view of fraternities.

Ever since Wesleyan reimagined itself in the 1960s, it has been a place full of contradictions. Both a small college and a research university, both a bastion of liberal ideals and an unquestioning home for Greek life, Wesleyan lives in a world of oppositions. President Chace, in his memoir, correctly describes Wesleyan as having a "habit of being at sixes and sevens with everything including itself..."<sup>246</sup> Perhaps, on some level, this facet of Wesleyan's personality allowed for fraternities to exist, play

---

<sup>246</sup> Chace, *100 Semesters*, 265.

an essential role in student life, and exclude women from full-fledged membership for over two decades beyond the advent of coeducation.

Implementing coeducation at Wesleyan proved a difficult process that lasted than anyone expected. But as all-male residential fraternities came to define social life at Wesleyan, women were unfairly left out of the school's social composition.

Whereas men on campus had houses of their own, women not only lacked comparable spaces but also had to utilize these bastions of male privilege to access to dining and social life. In this way, women were doubly disadvantaged by Wesleyan's spatial setup. The administration allowed this setup to exist on campus for far too long and, in doing so, privileged the comfort of one group of students over another.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### *Archival Sources*

- “A Pilot Plan.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. November 1968.
- “A Plan for Action.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. September 1975.
- “A Planning Report for the 1980s.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. September 1979.
- Campbell, Colin. “Current Issues Facing the University.” Speech. Crowell Concert Hall. Middletown, CT. September 24, 1979.
- “Campus Plan for Wesleyan University.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. 1971.
- “Celebrating Wesleyan: An Interim Report on the University Plan.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. January 1995.
- Coeducation Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- Davenport Student Center Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- Delegard, Kirsten. Thesis Research Notes, Collection #1000-69, Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- “Development Plan for Wesleyan University: Excerpts from Section 112 Credit Application Urban Renewal Project #2 City of Middletown.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. 1968.
- Edwin D. Etherington Papers. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- Fauver Dormitories Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- Fayerweather Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- Fraternities Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- Freeman Athletic Center Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- “Guidelines and Recommendations for Campus Planning.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. January 1969.
- High and Low Rise Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- Housing Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- Olin Expansion Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.
- “On the Context for Planning and Decisions at Wesleyan.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. January 25, 1975.
- “Report of the Residential Life Group.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. July 31, 1992.
- “Report of the Task Force on Residential Life.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. Spring 1987.
- “Residential Life Facilities Master Planning Committee Report.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. May 5, 1998.

Science Tower and Library Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.

“Staff Report Book III: Alternatives for Wesleyan.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. April 10, 1975.

“Strategy For Wesleyan.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. October 30, 1998.

“The Student Center: Guidelines for Programming and Planning.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. Summer 1969.

Student Directories. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. 1967-1980.

“Student Housing: Program Analysis Report.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. January 8, 1961.

“Student Housing Report.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. 1969.

“The University Plan.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. May 1992.

Usdan University Center Vertical File. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.

Victor L. Butterfield Papers. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University.

Wesleyan University Board of Trustee Minutes. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. 1986-1986.

— — —. Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. 1986-1987.

“Wesleyan University: The Next Decade.” Special Collections & Archives. Wesleyan University. 1964.

*Published Sources*

Bank, Barbara J. *Gender and Higher Education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011.

Chace, William M. *100 Semesters: My Adventures as a Student, Professor, and University President, and What I Learned Along the Way*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

Chandler, John W. *The Rise and Fall of Fraternities at Williams College: Clashing Cultures and the Transformation of a Liberal Arts College*. Williamstown: Williams College Press, 2014.

Collins, Robert M. *The Politics of Economic Growth in Postwar America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Davenport, Nicholas. “Yours for the New Social Order: Student Radicals at Wesleyan University, 1929-1941.” Honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 2010.

Delegard, Kirsten. “Mixed Memories: Reflections on 22 Years of Coeducation at Wesleyan.” Honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 1990.

“Final Report of the Ad Hoc Trustee Committee on Campus Life.” Amherst College. February 21, 1984.

- Grassain, Daniel Trent. "Achieving 'Gender Parity' at Wesleyan University: Admitting Women, Maintaining Patriarchy." Honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 2009.
- Hokanson, Kimberly A. "The Changing Status of Fraternities at Northeastern, Liberal Arts Colleges: Case Studies of Bowdoin and Colby College." PhD diss., Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1992.
- Horowitz, Helen Lefkowitz. *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987.
- Keller, George. *Academic Strategy: The Management Revolution in American Higher Education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983.
- Knight, Louise Wilby. "The 'Quails': The History of Wesleyan University's First Period of Coeducation 1872-1912." Honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 1972.
- Miller-Bernal, Leslie and Susan L. Poulson. *Going Coed: Women's Experiences in Formerly Men's Colleges and Universities, 1950-2000*. Nashville: Vanderbilt Press, 2004.
- Malkin, Nancy Weiss. *Keep the Damed Women Out: The Struggle for Coeducation*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016.
- Moody, William B.B. *A History of The Eclectic Society of Phi Nu Theta, 1837-1970*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2011.
- "Office of the President: Presidents of Wesleyan." Wesleyan University. <http://www.wesleyan.edu/president/pastpresidents/index.html>.
- Potts, David B. *Wesleyan University, 1831-1910: Collegiate Enterprise in New England*. Hanover, NH; Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1992.
- — —. *Wesleyan University, 1910-1970: Academic Ambition and Middle-Class America*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2015.
- "Preface and Overview, Wesleyan University Re-Accreditation Self-Study." Wesleyan University. 2002.
- "Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students of Wesleyan University." Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. October 6-9, 2002.
- Ricks, Alexandra. "When Workers Organized at Wesleyan University." Honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 2016.
- Sawyer, Robinson A. "The Elimination of Fraternities at Williams College." Honors thesis, Williams College, 2003.
- Stameshkin, David M. *The Strength of the Hills: Middlebury College, 1915-1990*. Hanover, NH: Middlebury College Press, 1996.
- Stein, Herbert. *Presidential Economics: The Making of Economic Policy from Roosevelt to Reagan and Beyond*. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institution for Public Policy, 1988.
- Svonkin, Stuart. "The Pluralistic Ideal at Wesleyan: Wesleyan's Orientation toward Race, Class, Gender and Religion within the Student Body, 1870-1970." Honors thesis, Wesleyan University, 1989.
- Syrett, Nicholas L. *The Company He Keeps: A History of White College Fraternities*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009.
- Thelin, John R. *A History of American Higher Education*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004.

- — — *Essential Documents in the History of American Higher Education*.  
 Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014.
- Van Dusen, Albert E. *Connecticut*. New York: Random House, 1961.
- Young Jr., Alford A. *Revolt of the Privileged: The Coming Together of the Black Community at Wesleyan University, 1965-1976*. New York: U.T.A.C.P.T., Inc., 1988.

### *Interviews*

- Barber, William. "Wesleyan University Oral History Project." By Nancy Smith. (December 13, 2013; January 15, 2014).
- Campbell, Colin. Interview by Suzy Taraba. Williamsburg, VA. June 13, 2016.
- Connor, John Anthony "Tony." "Wesleyan University Oral History Project." By Nancy Smith. (April 17, 2015).
- Morea, Donna. Interview by Author. Wesleyan University Usdan University Center. March 4, 2017.
- Rosenbaum, Robert. "Wesleyan University Oral History Project." By Maddie Neufeld. (April 17, 2012).
- Slotkin, Richard. "Wesleyan University Oral History Project." By Nancy Smith. (February 25, 2014).
- Taraba, Suzy. Interview by Author. Wesleyan University Davison Reading Room. March 8, 2017.

### *Periodicals*

- The Atlantic*
- Boston Globe*
- Daily Pennsylvanian*
- Middlebury Campus*
- New York Times*
- Newsweek*
- Wesleyan Argus*
- Wesleyan Hermes*
- Wesleyan University Alumni Magazine*