“YOUR YEARS HERE HAVE BEEN MOST UNREAL”:
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM DURING THE VIETNAM WAR ERA AT
NORTHERN APPALACHIAN UNIVERSITIES

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of The University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

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May, 2016
“YOUR YEARS HERE HAVE BEEN MOST UNREAL”:
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM DURING THE VIETNAM WAR ERA AT
NORTHERN APPALACHIAN UNIVERSITIES

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Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

The following dissertation explores student political and social activism at northern Appalachian universities during the Vietnam War era. Drawing from student newspapers and archival sources, the dissertation argues that students forged a dual identity as students and citizens making claims to decision-making authority at their respective universities through seeing a correlation between their roles as citizens of the nation and citizens of the university. This student-citizen identity developed from student engagement with multiple strands of activism, including: antiwar, antipoverty, civil rights, and students’ rights. Students framed this identity against what they believed was a generational divide between them and their parents; for their part, the parents also framed their response to their children in this way, too. The dissertation shows these two generations were not as different as either believed, but in the end, the differences mattered more. Further, the dissertation investigates this development at schools in Appalachia because of the lack of scholarship on these schools both from historians of the Sixties and those of Appalachia. By highlighting the activism of students during the Vietnam War era, the dissertation helps to challenge the existing historiography of the Sixties in Appalachia, which focuses primarily on poverty, unions, and out-migration from the region, presenting Appalachia as victimized and without internal agency. Additionally, by focusing on northern Appalachia, the dissertation adds to the overall field of Appalachian historiography that largely ignores the northern segments of the

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region. Through exploring how students at Ohio University, the University of Pittsburgh, and West Virginia University engaged with questions of war and dissent, patriotism and citizenship during the period 1964 to 1972, the dissertation offers new details to the study of student activism in the Sixties and Appalachia’s experience of the Vietnam War era.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents, Lee and Charlotte Weyant. They have never wavered in their support and encouragement of me, in this and all things. I would not be where I am today if it were not for them.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This project has taken a long time to complete, and, yet, it is not complete. It is done, for now. I have taken these questions, ideas, thoughts, concerns, and arguments as far as I can for the time being and so I will set them aside for a brief moment to consider what is next. Such is the life of an academic, I guess. It seems only right and appropriate that as this project ends, I take a moment to thank and acknowledge those people who helped, guided, or endured me during these years. I am positive I will forget someone in this listing, for that, I apologize now—and will, most likely, apologize dozens of times over in the future.

In 2009, I was fortunate to find my way into teaching in the History Department of the University of Akron. The faculty and staff of the department were so welcoming and accepting, their confidence and encouragement helped propel me into a return to graduate study. I entered a unique position as both adjunct faculty member and graduate student, teaching multiple sections in the Humanities and World Civilizations programs while taking courses myself. I could not have succeeded in these efforts without terrific lecturers to work with, including: Rose Eichler, Constance Bouchard, Michael Graham, Stephen Harp, and Janet Klein. I had the great fortune of working alongside and taking classes from a number of other great faculty in the department, including: Martin Wainwright, Kevin Kern, Michael Levin, Martha Santos, and Lesley Gordon. I also want to express my gratitude to the dissertation committee: Walter Hixson, Zachary Williams,
Kenneth Bindas, and William Lyons—any and all problems, errors, or issues held within this dissertation are not their fault, but my own. Lastly, though perhaps most importantly, I must thank Gregory Wilson. Whether I went to him concerned or excited, frustrated or elated, he offered cogent advice, criticism, and encouragement. I often left our conversations thinking of a thousand things I wanted to do, and then realizing I had no idea how to do them—but that did not stop me from trying.

I also need to acknowledge the many friends and colleagues who were instrumental in making this dissertation a reality. In no particular order, I want to thank the following: Scott and Amy Wetter, Erika and Alex Briesacher, Lisa and Noah Lazear, Sara Phillips, Lucius and Janice Wedge, Nathaniel Basset, Ian Campbell, Thomas Barefoot, Jonathan Sapp, Katie Brown, Angela Riotto, Anne Maltempi, and Daniel Hovatter. All of you have opened your homes, your hearts, and your ears to my incessant, vapid ridiculousness over the past few years, and for that, I am grateful. I must also single out Abigail Bernhardt for special thanks—as I think the rest of you should as well. As my cellmate, I mean, officemate, Abby got the brunt of my mental breakdown into lunacy that resulted from writing this dissertation. She accepted this role without complaint or question; she provided a sounding board for ideas, a source of inspiration for new ideas, and a constant reminder of the good that comes from friendship. I cannot thank her enough for being there and for protecting me from the Raggle Taggle Muffin People.

In all fairness, this journey did not begin when I entered the University of Akron; my passion for history is a lifelong obsession. No matter how manic and crazy the past few years have been, or how much my colleagues and classmates have supported me, there is a group of people who have put up with my insanity for much longer. Therefore,
it is with a full heart I thank my family in Pennsylvania and Boston, the holidays and random weekend visits were much needed respites. The warmth, love, and joy shared during those encounters sustained me through this process in incalculable ways. I want to say a special thank you to Matt and Lizzi, for the words of encouragement, love, and support. Additionally, as you may have noted, this dissertation is dedicated to my parents: Lee and Char. They are their own special brand of crazy, but I love them. It is from them that I learned certain important lessons, including the idea that one should never give up one’s dreams, that pride should never get in the way of asking for help, and doing what one loves is worth any hardship to achieve. And, finally, though I know she does not want me to say anything, none of this would be possible without the efforts of my wife and friend, Amanda. Amanda has pushed me to achieve that which she has always known I was capable. For all that she has done to make this dissertation possible, I cannot begin to say thank you.

The path I took to this moment was not one I wish to repeat, nor would I wish it upon even those who I dislike greatly; though, the long and wandering path has its benefits, as I have had ample time to reflect and to ask if I am headed in the right direction. As I traveled the longer path, I learned two very important things when it comes to my academic and professional life: (1) If you are not having fun, you are doing it wrong; and (2) The worst thing that can happen is they say “yes.” These two ideas have become something of a mantra as I completed this project. While I guess only time will tell if I am headed in the right direction, for now I am pleased to be where I am and am excited for where I may go in the future.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“WE ALL WANT TO CHANGE THE WORLD”:

PEACE, FREEDOM, AND THE MOUNTAINS, 1964-1972

You say you want a revolution
Well, you know
We all want to change the world
You tell me that it’s evolution
Well, you know
We all want to change the world
But when you talk about destruction
Don’t you know you can count me out
--“Revolution,” The Beatles (1968)\textsuperscript{1}

Kiss me goodbye and write me while I’m gone
Goodbye, my sweetheart, Hello Vietnam.
America has heard the bugle call
And you know it involves us, one an’ all
I don’t suppose that war will ever end
There’s fighting that will break us up again
--“Hello Vietnam,” Johnny Wright (1965)\textsuperscript{2}

On May 31, 1967, Dr. David H. Kurtzman, the retiring chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh, delivered a short but pointed commencement address in which he called on the recent graduates to serve as their own advocates and to continue to pursue their own course of excellence. Kurtzman reflected on the changes the students had faced since they


arrived at the University in the fall of 1963, stating poignantly, “your years here have been most unreal.” He asked the students to remember the lessons they had learned during their time at the University, those from both inside and beyond the classroom walls, and to put them to productive and positive use to build a better society. In these pursuits, Kurtzman challenged the students to confront stereotypes, break down assumptions, and overcome barriers that artificially separated individuals. The chancellor urged students to “keep faith with the democratic system” though he stated he would “not caution [them] to be patient with the process of government, for the great changes in society are not made by people who are patient.” Kurtzman ended his address by charging the graduating class with a mission to improve society and make new again the promises of the nation in service to all humanity.¹

In his commencement address, Kurtzman called on the assembled young people to go forth and change the world, a typical theme for such a speech. However, Kurtzman noted on several occasions during the relatively short address that this was not a new process, but a continuation of efforts already underway. He recognized that young people were already taking strides to improve their nation and the lives of others. His call for action within the boundaries of the existing democratic system echoed liberal calls for reform and fears of radicalism. On the whole, the speech recognized that the nation and the world were much different places than they had been only a few years earlier and that young people were already engaged in activism to enhance and expand changes in race relations, student-administration relations, and to build empowered communities.

Kurtzman’s description of the middle years of the 1960s as “unreal” suggests no hint of the upheavals and unrest yet to come.

The graduating class of 1967 that Dr. Kurtzman addressed that May had seen a number of dramatic changes at Pitt and in the nation. Before their first freshman semester began, the March on Washington drew more than a quarter-million people to the nation’s capital to call for jobs and racial equality and by the end of the semester an assassin had struck down President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas. The students left campus the following spring in the midst of Beatlemania, some traveled to Mississippi for Freedom Summer, and when they returned to campus for the fall the United States was at war in Vietnam. Before they finished their sophomore year some would travel to Selma, Alabama, to march with Dr. King, others participated in the first Pitt campus teach-in on Vietnam, and others even traveled to Washington to march in the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) antiwar rally. Throughout their junior year, they leveled challenges against women’s hours, antiwar protests grew in frequency, and prowar counterdemonstrations emerged. By their senior year, they witnessed an escalation in the war and anti-draft activism, an Angry Arts against the War program, peace vigils, and a growing black empowerment movement locally and nationwide. Much about the world they had known when they graduated high school in 1963, had changed for Pitt’s class of 1967, and in ways they could not have foreseen. Through it all, students sought to expand their control, their influence over the events that directly affected them. They claimed this right as citizens of the University and of the nation and in the name of democracy and patriotism.
Analyzing activism at the University of Pittsburgh, along with Ohio University and West Virginia University, provides a gateway to broadening and deepening the work of scholars trying to understand the origins, ideas, methods, actions, and legacies of the New Left. Pitt, OU, and WVU together open this scholarship to northern Appalachia. Since Kenneth Heineman’s *Campus Wars*, the literature has expanded beyond the elite and private schools to analyze activism at a host of other universities and colleges. To date, scholars have left Appalachia out of the discussion. Bringing it in by examining these three institutions adds to our knowledge in several important ways.

**Historiography: Activism and Appalachia**

Overall, this dissertation confronts, engages, and adds to two chief historiographical fields: the study of student activism during the Sixties and the study of Appalachia. By-and-large, these two fields have not often intersected, with a notable exception in Thomas Kiffmeyer’s *Reformers to Radicals*. The bulk of student activism historiography overlooks Appalachia as a region of inquiry assuming that, as the President’s Appalachian Regional Commission report stated in 1964, “Appalachia is a region apart,” imagined and studied as the “other” anti-America, a region behind, and worthy only as an object of assistance not one actively engaged in making the activism of the era. Further, and not without good reason, Appalachian historiography focuses on the War on Poverty, environmental and economic strife, and population outflows during the Sixties. There has been limited scholarly attention on student activism. Thus, this work situates itself at the crossroads of these two historiographical fields and suggests a way to look at both from a new angle.
The historiography of the Sixties, and student activism in particular, began largely with narratives constructed by male (most often white) participants in the antiwar, civil rights, students’ rights, and, generally, New Left movements. These works, some appearing in the midst of the struggles or shortly thereafter, highlight the contemporary frustrations, explanations, and aspirations of the ongoing movements. Authors such as Jerry Farber, Paul Hoffman, Michael Ferber, Staughton Lynd, and Kirkpatrick Sale provided the analyses around which the initial framework of scholarship formed. In doing so, they emphasized the importance of New Left organizations (most importantly Students for a Democratic Society, SDS) and interpretations, and suggested a sense of uniqueness that separated the Sixties from previous moments in American history. They fed later scholarship’s assumptions that there was a singular, coherent movement at work that was national in scope and increasingly radical in orientation. This narrative placed disproportionate emphasis on white, male, middle-class, students from elite universities who were inspired by the civil rights movement, engaged in political discourse, and became increasingly radicalized, with some eventually taking up revolutionary violence. Actions at elite colleges and in major cities on either coast garnered national (if not international) attention and served as the important building blocks of the narrative which projected an image of the Sixties as a decade born in optimism ending with hopes dashed and promises broken. By the late-1980s, former leaders of SDS Todd Gitlin and Tom Hayden produced memoirs and institutional histories that buttressed this basic narrative of an explosive, radical Sixties.2

Scholars have increasingly scrutinized the intense spotlight shone on SDS as the focal point for understanding Sixties activism. The first major challenge was the 1984 work of Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up*. This work still focused on white, middle-class, male antiwar activists but suggested that the real center of student activism in the 1960s was the more moderate groups like the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. In 1992, Melvin Small and William Hoover’s collection of essays, *Give Peace a Chance*, and Terry Anderson’s later synthetic overview, *The Movement and the Sixties*, helped to expand the historical gaze to include organizations such as Clergy and Laymen Concern about Vietnam (CALCAV) as well as movements beyond those related to war, including feminism, environmentalism, and, the surprisingly obscured, civil rights movement. Anderson’s sweeping synthesis attempted to reconcile the inexplicable gap between the civil rights movement and the New Left, which claimed to have drawn inspiration from the calls for freedom.3 Doug McAdam explored this connection in greater detail in his 1988 sociological study of the Mississippi Freedom Project simply entitled *Freedom Summer*. McAdam found that white student activists who participated in 1964’s Freedom Summer returned to campuses throughout the nation radicalized and became leaders in other movements, most prominently the Free Speech Movement at the University of California, Berkeley.4

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4 Doug McAdam, *Freedom Summer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). The connections between the civil rights and peace movements of the Sixties have been explored in greater detail recently by several authors, see: W. J. Rorabaugh, *Berkeley at War: The 1960s* (New York: Oxford University
These works established several key frameworks and assumptions that continue to shape scholars’ understanding of the Sixties. First, they centered the narrative on white, middle-class men at elite universities. Second, they established the sense of a decade of optimism torn asunder by despair, frustration, and violence. Third, they offered a top-down, organizationally defined narrative of activism. While the organizations squabbled over strategies and tactics, the narrative suggested, they shared a similar vision of what the problem was that confronted the nation. These assumptions of who were the central actors, what they sought to achieve, and the trajectory of their struggle further reinforced a false sense of unity amongst the often described “movement.” Scholars throughout the 1990s and early 2000s assailed these assumptions expanding the definition of participants, strategies, and localities of activism.

One of the central assumptions within Sixties historiography prior to the 1990s was a split between a “good” Sixties and a “radical” (read as, bad) Sixties. This assumption exists within the King-centric narrative of civil rights that the period 1954 to 1965 represented some sort of “golden age” of nonviolent protest shattered by Black Nationalist radicalism. Similarly, there was an assumption of a good or orderly antiwar activism (usually pre-1968) that radicals hijacked. In this conception, somewhere between 1965 and 1968 the Sixties descended into radical hedonism that tore the nation apart. Neither Presidents Johnson nor Nixon, nor even the silent majority, were capable

of redeeming America—this narrative played well in Ronald Reagan’s presidential campaigns of the 1980s, presenting himself as the leader America needed as it awoke from the dark night of malaise because it was “morning again in America.”

The historiography of student activism in the Sixties shares several trends with other components of Sixties studies such as civil rights, women’s rights, and the environmental movements. The transition in the study of student activism from top-down approaches that emphasize elite institutions, national organizations, and prominent figures to a focus on social and cultural approaches that build from the bottom up looking at the grassroots, local institutions, and decentralized activism mirrored trends with the larger study of the Sixties. As Sixties historiography expanded, the definition of agents


6 Scholars of the civil rights movement have struggled against their own set of entrenched narratives. Perhaps the most entrenched, myth-creating narratives surround Martin Luther King, Jr., nonviolence, and ideas of black power. Institutional histories such as Clayborne Carson’s *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* served the same framing purposes as Sale’s *SDS* and placed greater emphasis on organizations and suggested a convenient rise and fall chronology; see, Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981).

Further, the King-centric narratives that dominated throughout the 1970s and 1980s (which still remain the basis of many textbook analyses of civil rights) presented the great man vision of history in which King became the undisputed leader of a unified movement for political equality that became dashed upon the rocky shoals of black nationalism and black power—most often associated with Malcolm X, an interesting feat since Malcolm X died three years before King. The King-centric narrative further suggested a false unity surrounding the pursuit of political civil rights and obscured the continuity between the events of the 1950s to 1970s and the long struggle for political rights reaching back to the 1860s if not the overall struggle for freedom which began with the first arrival of African slaves in 1619. Scholars have increasingly challenged the notion of a unified movement for political civil rights, see: Timothy B. Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001); Lance Hill, *The Deacons for Defense: Armed Resistance and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long
Beginning in the late 1990s and early 2000s, three important changes came to the historiography of the black freedom struggle/civil rights movement. The first, embodied in the work of scholars such as Mary Dudziak, Thomas Borstelmann, and Carol Anderson, sought to contextualize the struggles for political civil rights within the larger framework of the Cold War. These authors argued that the Cold War simultaneously provided opportunities for activism while it limited the scope of activists’ demands; see, Mary L. Dudziak, Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); Thomas Borstelmann, The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Carol Anderson, Eyes Off the Prize: The United Nations and the African American Struggle for Human Rights, 1944-1955 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).


of change correspondingly broadened to include increasing numbers of potential actors. Though this dissertation does retain a focus on white, middle-class, male students—in part due to the student body make-up of the institutions under investigation—it recognizes and takes steps to integrate, when possible, connections to these additional constituencies. White, male students have dominated the historiography of student activism, especially antiwar activism, due to the disproportionate amount of emphasis given to New Left organizations, such as SDS, and the history-memos of these groups’ leaders. Similarly, black men, such as King and Malcolm X, have served as the central foci for civil rights historiography. In both cases, societal biases constructed a false sense of women as solely playing subordinate roles. In recent decades, these assumptions have begun to crumble.

To remedy further the distortion created by the participant narratives historiography, Kenneth Heineman’s *Campus Wars* investigated four non-elite state universities (Kent State University, Michigan State University, Pennsylvania State University, and SUNY-Buffalo) and their interactions with their local communities—most often referred to by the colloquial phrase, “town and gown” interactions. At its core, *Campus Wars* argued that the focus on elite institutions and nationally prominent events obscured the lived experience of the vast majority of young people during the Vietnam War era. Ultimately, what *Campus Wars* demonstrated is that the Sixties played out differently on various campuses, yet student activism was still present on some level at each campus.7

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Heineman’s work, combined with quarter-century and thirtieth anniversaries of events from the 1960s, touched off a firestorm of new scholarship in the 1990s highlighting the vast and varied Sixties experiences. Marc Gilbert’s edited volume, *The Vietnam War on Campus* offered several essays on the Sixties experience at places like Ball State University and Iowa State University. Mary Ann Wynkoop’s *Dissent in the Heartland* provided a book-length investigation of activism on the campus of Indiana University in Bloomington. In *TheyMarched Into Sunlight*, David Maraniss juxtaposed events at the University of Wisconsin in 1967 with events unfolding in Vietnam simultaneously, thereby connecting the antiwar movement and the war in real time. By-and-large, these studies (including Heineman’s) have not challenged the centrality of antiwar activism, just the location of focus. One exception was Rusty Monhollon’s “*This is America?*” which offered a detailed local study of Lawrence, Kansas, in which he situated the antiwar movement and student-led activism at the University of Kansas within the larger conservative city’s response to the New Left.

Another effort to complicate the narrative of the Sixties further came in 2004 with Michael Foley’s *Confronting the War Machine*. Foley focused renewed attention on the issues of selective service and responses to the draft. In initially writing his dissertation for the University of New Hampshire, which would become *Confronting the War Machine*, Foley was fortunate enough to work with Michael Ferber who was at that time

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9 Rusty L. Monhollon, “*This is America?*” *The Sixties in Lawrence, Kansas* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).
a professor of English at the University. Not surprisingly, then, Foley built from the ideas put forward three decades earlier by Ferber and Lynd, by seeking to breakdown assumptions about those who opposed the draft and to differentiate between those who fled or evaded the draft and those who stood and directly fought the system. *Confronting the War Machine* suggested the deep intellectual and moral roots of draft resistance, which differed from evasion in that it sought to challenge the inherent authority of the system, to question its legality and morality, whereas evading the draft, in Foley’s presentation, was cowardly and self-centered. By offering a more nuanced look at responses to the draft, Foley helped to provide a new angle from which to understand the intellectual underpinnings of dissent during the Vietnam War era.10

A growing trend in recent years in the study of the Sixties focused increasing attention on conservatism. Scholars have begun to question seriously the roots of modern conservatism and how the movement intimately intertwined with the struggles of the Sixties. With the rise of neo-conservatism in the United States in the first decade of the twenty-first century, many argued that Americans were again fighting the Sixties in the public sphere. Scholars, such as John Andrew, Lisa McGirr, David Farber, and Jeff Roche, explored the major youth and student organization, Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), as a counterpoint to the focus given to SDS, grassroots conservatism in areas such as Orange County, California, and various other components of mid-twentieth century American society.


century conservatism. Some scholars constructed comparative studies pitting the New Left against the New Right for ownership of the Sixties. In 2007, Michael Flamm and David Steigerwald’s *Debating the 1960s* offered a new synthesis that the Sixties were a period when post-war liberalism came under attack from all sides—specifically, from radicals and conservatives. The recognition of a tri-partite divide amongst students and activists of the Sixties helped to complicate further scholars understanding of the period.

By-and-large, scholars have not studied the universities of this dissertation within either the wider historiography of student activism or that of Appalachia. Of the three schools, only West Virginia University has had any published treatment of its experience of the Vietnam War era. This came in the form of Jeffrey Drobney’s 1995 article, “A Generation in Revolt,” which appeared as part of the wave of early 1990s essays and collections commemorating quarter-century anniversaries of events of the Sixties. Unfortunately, Drobney’s work suffered from several deficiencies. He provided little background exploration of student political and social activism at WVU prior to the events of 1970 on which he focused. Drobney relied largely on administration sources and interpretations, which led him to the erroneous vision of a nearly uniform conservative student body. Given the limitations on sources and lack of historical

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contextualization, Drobney’s conclusion that the events of May 1970, a series of demonstrations in the wake of the Cambodian invasion and killings at Kent State, were an isolated incident and could not be “seen as a continuation of previous student protests, since antiwar activism had been relatively limited when compared to other large universities” makes a degree of logical sense. However, as this dissertation will demonstrate, there was a history of antiwar activism, connected to a wide variety of other political and social issues, including efforts to end in loco parentis policies, civil rights and antipoverty work, the activities of a campus chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, and events such as the October 1969 Moratorium, from which the events of May 1970 emerged.14 Drobney’s article serves as a cautionary note for those who seek to explore student activism in Appalachia, that one must be wary of popular assumptions about the region as well as be aware of the cross-causal formation of student activism.

The current state of the field of student activism during the Sixties rests on several central tenets. First, there was no singular or normative student experience of the Sixties. Second, local relations between schools and the communities they inhabit as well as the actions of administrators played a significant role in determining the scope and regularity of unrest. Third, these works shift the discourse from its focus on the major and unique events to the experiences of the majority of young people in smaller communities and lesser-known campuses. These authors also highlight the cross-cause development of ideas, tactics, and engagement noting how students engaged in antiwar activism often participated in civil rights and students’ rights activities. Often in these works, groups

like SDS become caricatured revolutionaries, their ideas dismissed as naïve idealism. Moreover, these analyses frequently show the actions of students as the response to external impulses—off campus events or repressive administrations—and thereby remove student agency. A growing historiography (to which this dissertation adds) argues that historians must interrogate students, in all their conflicted and fractured states, on their own terms; that student activism represents an all-encompassing term that unites antiwar, civil rights, and students’ rights agendas as well as differing political positions. By seeing the actions of students during the upheavals of the 1960s as part of a larger negotiation of a multi-faceted identity, one could better understand the student experience of the decade. Particularly, at northern Appalachian universities, this approach helps explain why the students did what they did rather than fault them for not doing what other student communities did.

Building from the expanded base of Sixties studies post-Heineman, the dissertation shines the historical spotlight on Appalachia, an often-overlooked region of the country. Far too often Appalachia enters the collective consciousness, especially in terms of the Sixties, as a site of poverty programs and coal-mining unrest; however, Appalachia did not escape the Vietnam War era without directly engaging with the central issues that stirred activism and upheaval throughout the nation. Further, the students attending universities in northern Appalachia were neither more nor less disinterested or apathetic than their counterparts around the nation. Northern Appalachian universities may not have made the national news as often as schools on the coasts, but that did not mean they lacked student engagement with political and social issues.
Millions of years old, thousands of feet high, and projecting an image of impenetrability, the mountains of Appalachia suggest a sense of timelessness that has come to pervade perceptions of Appalachian society. Several competing definitions of the region exist; some definitions emphasize geography or natural resources (especially coal) as a unifying factor, others argue for socio-cultural connections, and yet another set of ideas suggest a political definition. Despite the wide array of ways of understanding and imagining Appalachia, what unites the disparate definitions is the centrality of the mountains. Thus, the most effective definitions of the region recognize the basic reality that the people and the mountains have shaped each other. The steep mountains and narrow valleys that made traversing the region difficult also served to strengthen kinship bonds and helped forge a certain kind of imagined self-reliance amongst many mountaineers; however, contrary to some constructed images there was no singular or essential Appalachian identity. Appalachian residents changed the mountains as they cut down acres of trees and punctured holes into the earth, eventually leveling entire mountains scaring the countryside in pursuit of coal. While one recognizes the importance of geography, one must not accept a geographic determinism that suggests Appalachian poverty and degradation were inevitable or inescapable.

The popular imagination of the region constructed a conflicted vision of the effects of modernity in Appalachia, seeing a place where individuals stubbornly clung to their antiquated ways in face of progress while simultaneously becoming victims of development, all of which resulted in crushing poverty, ignorance, and despair. In this imagining, Appalachia symbolized both the negatives of development and the intransigence of tradition. Appalachian scholar Allen Batteau described this view when
he stated for many “Appalachia represented poverty ennobled and perfected.” Within the historiography, Appalachia has played the role of American other, often appearing as a counterpoint to arguments about slave power in the antebellum South, as a backdrop for discussions of unionization and the effects of natural resource extraction, and as the chief battleground in the federally directed War on Poverty. Themes such as poverty, exploitation, development, and labor unrest, have reappeared frequently in the historiography often to reinforce a sense of Appalachian victimhood.

Historian John Alexander Williams rightly asserted Appalachia is “a place that has been invented, not discovered.” For decades, scholars across multiple disciplines have sought to define Appalachia, creating dozens of different, yet equally valid, constructions. Each of these invented Appalachias carries its own assumptions and prejudices, either romanticizing or denigrating mountain life. In the end, Appalachia exists because observers and inhabitants believe it exists. As noted Appalachian scholar Ronald Eller put it, “We know Appalachia exists because we need it to exist in order to define what we are not.”

Scholars have traced the origins of modern conceptions of Appalachia to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was in these years as the western frontier supposedly disappeared and industrialization radically altered American society that Appalachia

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17 Bruce Ergood and Bruce E. Kuhre put together a collection of printed sources on various aspects of Appalachia including several definitions of the region, see: Bruce Ergood and Bruce E. Kuhre, editors, *Appalachia: Social Context Past and Present*, Second Edition (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt, 1983).

emerged as a distinct region in the public consciousness, a place where the modern world had failed to take root. Scholars attribute much of this image construction to “local color” writers depicting supposedly essential scenes of Appalachian life as well as northern journalists who found Appalachia a convenient counterpoint for their stories about urbanization, industrialization, and modernization. For nearly a century, Appalachia played the deviant role that challenged the myth of American modernity.\textsuperscript{19}

Since the 1870s, journalists, essayists, and scholars have constructed Appalachia as backward and economically inferior, as the foil necessary for arguments in favor of industrialization and urbanization. This conception suggested that lacking the skills and desire to acquire said skills, Appalachians reproduced poverty with each successive generation, as if it were part of their birthright. Supposedly, these internal-external tensions helped forge a self-replicating Appalachian identity of the “mountaineer,” who embodied national images of its constructed pioneer past and represented the timeless frontier culture—thus, to modernize would be to destroy their distinct cultural identity.\textsuperscript{20}

In 1963, Harry Caudill’s \textit{Night Comes to the Cumberlands} established the narrative framework for much of Appalachian scholarship as well as official and popular imaginations of the region during the following few decades. His work reached a national audience and worked in tandem with the media and political attention coming from the Kennedy administration and Congress. Caudill traced the roots of Appalachian identity to


\textsuperscript{20} Henry D. Shapiro, \textit{Appalachia on Our Minds}, x-xiv; Dwight B. Billings and Kathleen M. Blee, \textit{The Road to Poverty: The Making of Wealth and Hardship in Appalachia} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 8-11.
the 1660s and to a process that, by the late-antebellum period, created an enduring and unyielding identity, which remained intact until the present. Appalachian inhabitants actively resisted progress and modernity in an effort to maintain their distinct culture of freedom, according to Caudill. The resident’s supposed insular and non-materialist worldview—what Caudill calls “frontier equality”—made them incapable of negotiating effective business deals with the outside corporations who sought to exploit the region’s natural resources resulting in the creation of a debt spiral that led to widespread and ever-deepening poverty. Appalachia became an internal American colony exploited by absentee corporations, which created an artificial dependency structure, best exemplified by the company towns erected by distant Coal Barons. A culture of poverty developed to rationalize this exploitation which praised hard work and stoic acceptance of deprivation, built on a corrupted vision of the past which suggested that pioneer families had suffered to survive in the harsh wilderness of the mountains and that this rugged spirit had been passed on to their descendants. Further, as changing industrial structures reduced the need for Appalachian workers, unemployment swept through the region and increasing numbers of residents found themselves accepting welfare money, often while telling themselves it was temporary and that they had weathered rough patches before. Each year, thousands of the region’s residents, especially the young people, fled to other states in pursuit of better conditions and hoping to break the cycle of poverty.21

Caudill’s passionate prose painted a vivid portrait of Appalachia that became the dominant construct in the popular mind. The graphic depictions of the conditions of

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Appalachia reinforced a growing reform impulse in the early 1960s to address poverty more generally. Caudill’s work dovetailed with Michael Harrington’s earlier work from 1962, *The Other America*. Unlike contemporary liberal thinkers who saw poverty as sporadic and random “pockets,” Harrington, like Caudill, argued poverty was systemic, an essential by-product of American capitalism. Exploitation and degradation caused by the American system created and sustained the culture of poverty. Caudill’s work furthered the call for action that Harrington had made; but, despite stoking flames of reform, Caudill’s depictions reinforced negative stereotypes of Appalachian backwardness and victimhood while also portraying an essentialist, yet heroic, image of long-suffering, resolute individualists.

Following Caudill’s portrayal of Appalachia by only a few years was the equally influential and depressing evaluation offered by Presbyterian minister Jack E. Weller in *Yesterday’s People*. Caudill offered a foreword to Weller’s text, rehashing his own views on the culture of poverty, Appalachia’s colonial status, and the nearly eternal nature of Appalachian identity. What followed were over one hundred and fifty pages of conjecture and anecdotes presented as objective facts. Written in the style of ethnography, Weller attempted to unlock the true essence of Appalachians and dig to the root of their persistent poverty. His work served as a handbook for many poverty warriors drawn to the region by the middle years of the Sixties in large part because its depictions reinforced the notion that modernization theories could solve Appalachia’s many problems. In the end, Weller’s book offered few effective insights into Appalachia or its

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people and served largely to perpetuate existing stereotypes and advance a particular political agenda in harmony with that of Caudill’s previous work.\(^{23}\)

Established by President Kennedy, the President’s Appalachian Regional Commission investigated the nature of poverty in the mountains and offered solutions. The commission emerged from Kennedy’s personal experiences in West Virginia during the 1960 Democratic primary and the growing popular image of Appalachia by writers like Harry Caudill. In 1964, the commission issued its final report to President Johnson in which they argued Appalachian isolation and backwardness had caused poverty to linger despite national prosperity. The commission’s report imagined Appalachia as a unified whole and offered solutions on a regional basis driven by federal assistance. At its core, the commission’s report suggested the application of modernization theory, used as the basis for America’s development aid to the Third World, to Appalachia. In this view, Appalachia was an internal third world nation populated by the poorest Americans deprived of all of the conveniences of modern American society.

It should come as little surprise that economic history provided the backbone for much of the Appalachian historiography, especially the use of concepts such as dependency and development, given the emphasis on poverty in the 1964 PARC report, as well as writers like Caudill. The influence of economics in the historiography of Appalachia took two largely interrelated and mutually reinforcing forms: dependency theory and “culture of poverty.” Dependency theories applied the core-periphery model of Immanuel Wallerstein’s world systems analysis to the economic relations of

Appalachia, by suggesting that the American economic system had fully integrated Appalachia, only not as an equal.\textsuperscript{24} The argument rested on the assumption of Appalachia existing in an internal colonial relationship with nonlocal corporate interests, mostly in the northeast, that made up the metropole or core. It suggested that industrialization in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries irrevocably altered the nature of Appalachia, allowing the capitalist system to ravage the region through resource exploitation. These market forces relegated the region to the economic periphery, which resulted in a devastating shift from near self-sufficiency to dependency through the creation of an export-focused extraction monoculture. This use of dependency and periphery perpetuated the idea of Appalachian victimhood and implicitly accepted the notion that the region suffered from a backward and subservient position that one could affix blame for—in this case, assigning fault to the corporate interests who held Appalachia in this perpetual near-colonial state.\textsuperscript{25}

Scholars have argued that a culture of poverty formed in Appalachia in response to the economic subordination created by industrialization proved too difficult to overcome and continued to mire the region in poverty. In this way, the conceptions of Caudill and Weller had become so entrenched that they defined the parameters of academic study.\textsuperscript{26} An example of this entrenchment comes from studies of Appalachia

\textsuperscript{24} Immanuel Wallerstein, \textit{Historical Capitalism} (New York: Verso, 1983).


\textsuperscript{26} John Gaventa, \textit{Power and Powerlessness}, 161; Batteau, \textit{The Invention of Appalachia}, 15-17; Drake, \textit{A History of Appalachia}, 126-30; Williams, \textit{Appalachia}, 325-27.
during the early Cold War. Much of the recent scholarship on Appalachia in the early Cold War years (1945-1960) focused almost exclusively on the issues of poverty, unions, and out-migration, the very framework of Caudill’s vision of Appalachia. Further, these studies suggested that a near-universal culture of poverty pervaded the region causing increased union activity and driving young people from the region. However, the history of Appalachia from 1945 to 1960 was not solely a chronicle of regional poverty, the lurching from one mine disaster or union strike to the next, nor was it just the story of those who fled the region in pursuit of better opportunities. While the narrative of industrialization’s decline in America and its wide-ranging ramifications represents an important component of the Appalachian story in the mid-twentieth century, it was not the sole force at work in the region.

By-and-large, scholars of Appalachia have not explored the larger trends of Cold War American culture, society, and politics within the region. Works on the period only tangentially address the effects of important issues such as suburbanization, urban sprawl, and highway development. If they do address them at all, it is often to point to the lack of urbanization within the region or the frustrations in constructing the new highways proposed by the 1956 National Interstate and Defense Highway Act due to the difficult terrain of the region. Further, while virtually every book on Joseph McCarthy notes that his rise to prominence and notoriety began with his speech at the Republican Women’s Club dinner in Wheeling, West Virginia, in 1950, the long-range effects of the Second Red Scare and domestic containment go largely ignored; unless when discussing
unionization of miners and steelworkers in the region.²⁷ Studies have recognized the importance of Appalachian manufacturers in the production of many of the goods that fueled the mass consumption society rapidly expanding in the early years of the Cold War, but few address in any depth the question of how Appalachians participated in this new consumer culture—implying that the widespread poverty of the region left the citizens of the mountains incapable of any such participation. No study thoroughly explores the effects of mass media or the homogenization and nationalization of culture in Appalachia wrought by expanding radio and, later, television ownership and broadcast stations, though several books address this process in general throughout the nation.²⁸ Despite exceptional scholarship on how the early Cold War affected familial and gender roles, scholars appear to assume Appalachian families remained static and unchanged by these wider national affects.²⁹ Furthermore, while scholars continue to pull on the strings


As to linking McCarthyism to union activity in Appalachia, even in Elizabeth and Ken Fones-Wolf’s excellent article on Cold War pageantry the central focus is the economic relations of mine-owners and miners; see, Elizabeth Fones-Wolf and Ken Fones-Wolf, “Cold War Americanism: Business, Pageantry, and Anticommunism in Weirton, West Virginia,” *Business History Review* 77, 1 (Spring 2003): 61-91.


that wove together the military-industrial-academic complex, Appalachian universities and institutes remain unconnected to this tapestry.\(^{30}\) This gap in Appalachia’s historiography coincides with a corresponding hole in Cold War historiography that largely leaves Appalachia untouched. Overall, Appalachia exists in the historiography up through World War II and then disappears until John F. Kennedy seemingly rediscovered it during the 1960 presidential primary.\(^{31}\)

One recent work, *Uneven Ground*, by Ronald Eller, provides an overview of Appalachia post-1945, though this work places a great deal of emphasis on labor and economic history, supporting rather than challenging the existing trends within the field. For Eller, the important components of the period 1945 to 1960 were union strikes, the 1950 National Bituminous Coal Wage Agreement (or, the Love-Lewis Agreement), the out-migration of Appalachians to places like Akron, Ohio, and the effects of mechanization and early movements toward deindustrialization. Like so many others, the same drumbeat of poverty, unions, and migration dominated Eller’s portrayal of the period; however, larger socio-cultural trends of these early Cold War years did not appear with any in-depth analysis within Eller’s work.\(^{32}\)


The lone exception to this dearth of Cold War Appalachian analysis comes from Jerry Bruce Thomas’ *An Appalachian Reawakening*. Thomas’ work represents one of the few attempts to move the discussion of Appalachia in the period 1945 to 1960 beyond economic and labor histories. Thomas provides an analysis of socio-cultural trends unfolding in West Virginia connecting them to the wider national trends of post-World War II America. At times, his discussion is limited, for example, devoting only a handful of pages to suburbanization and the influence of mass media.33 Even these truncated sections are more extensive than what one finds in other works on the period, which often choose to focus greater attention on the intrigue surrounding the Love-Lewis Agreement and its ramifications.

This is not to say that *An Appalachian Reawakening* does not fall back onto some of the same conceptual frameworks as other studies of the period, but rather that Thomas’ work moves beyond the same labor and economic histories to explore on some level different aspects of West Virginia. His chapter on the Civil Rights Movement returns to the general historiographical trend of union and labor centrality by discussing how mechanization and a downswing in coal consumption led to layoffs that disproportionately affected black miners, because they often held the unskilled positions rendered obsolete by mechanization. He noted that black out-migration rates were triple that of whites, returning to one of the central themes of most Cold War studies of Appalachia. However, he also spends a great deal of time discussing school desegregation in West Virginia, a topic one finds scant discussion of elsewhere. Though

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Thomas rightly spent a great deal of time addressing the issue of poverty and its effects on the region, unlike other authors he also discussed the middle class in Appalachia. In a refreshing attempt to move beyond the singular dimension that suggests all Appalachians were locked into some form of Dickensian nightmare of poverty, Thomas argued that middle and professional class families existed and that they generally despised the national depiction of all Appalachians as poor, mountain-shack dwellers.\footnote{Thomas, An Appalachian Reawakening, 85-125.}

The students of northern Appalachian universities, like their counterparts around the nation engaged in social and political activism in response to the events and trends they witnessed in Cold War American society. By looking at how Appalachian youth interacted with their campus, local, state, and national communities, and the similarities with the larger national movements in student activism, it becomes clear that the young people of Appalachia must have experienced the same socio-cultural, political, and economic changes as the rest of the nation, at least on some level. Thus, despite a dearth of scholarly studies that expand beyond poverty, unions, and migration during the period 1945 to 1960 in Appalachia, the student activism of the Sixties suggests a greater continuity with the national narrative, though with distinct regional differences.

**Questions/Arguments:**

The questions at the heart of this research differ some from those posed by other historians and scholars of student activism in the Sixties. To be sure, the questions of previous scholars influence and provide a framework for this study. They include, questions about why the Sixties happened, whether it was a unique period, what role did
liberalism and its real or perceived failures play, how does this period help us understand the rising tide of modern conservatism, and what can be learned from the decelionist narrative of the New Left. However, the questions this study sets out focus most intensely on northern Appalachian students, how they conceptualized the role of the university in American society, and what, if anything, did they see as a unifying factor among the various issues they felt strongly about.

At the core of the study are questions surrounding how students debated the definitions of student and citizen in a time of unrest and why, despite the limited successes of protest and dissent, students felt compelled to act. Further, how did the conflicted nature of college campuses in the Sixties facilitate the development of student activism? The dissertation argues that the activism of the Sixties drew from earlier antecedents of activism. Despite popular assumptions and continued views of both generations, the Baby Boom Generation shared a great deal in common with the so-called “Greatest Generation.” The generation gap that emerged between the two had much to do with their similarities and the myth constructions surrounding the Greatest Generation. Both groups confronted questions of war and dissent as well as liberal reform impulses. Young people in the 1930s and 1940s participated in political and social activism, sometimes for the same things the Boomers would in the 1960s—civil rights, antiwar, and campus policies. In the wake of the Second World War, and as a component of America’s propaganda war with the Soviet Union, the generation that faced the Great Depression and World War II became the object of concerted efforts of myth construction. When confronted with a mythologized earlier generation they could
seemingly never match, Boomers rebelled. In the end, however, there was much more that united the two groups of Americans than separated them.

Not only did student activists of the 1960s share commonalities with earlier generations of young people, they also seemed to reflect wider national trends. A question of timing exists, as in why student activism seemed to appear later in Appalachia and whether this was simply a misconception by a limited scope applied to student activism or as a result of limited conceptions of when “the Sixties” happened. Ultimately, the question that became the central focus around which the rest of the study developed was: What united student activism on national issues like the war in Vietnam and civil rights to activism on campus issues such as against in loco parentis? In other words, what was it that led students to get involved in the first place and then led them into other areas of activism, how did they justify their actions, and why did they feel such a sense of obligation to become active?

Through their words and actions, the students of northern Appalachian universities forged a dual-identity as students and citizens, arguing that the obligations of each required them to act to improve their communities. Like millions of other young people around the nation during the Vietnam War era, they confronted conflicting meanings of patriotism, dissent, and citizenship, and tied these debates directly to the role of the university in American society and their rights as students. For these students the national and the local intertwined significantly. Throughout it all, student activists argued that an individual could have a positive impact on society and it was their obligation as students and citizens to do their part to make the world a little better than they had found it. Thus, to understand better the Sixties, one must recognize not only the cross-causal
connections of activism and dissent, but also the interplay between the local and national as encoded in the student-citizen identity. Many saw the college campus as the nation in microcosm, what was happening at one level directly influenced and connected with the other and that through the dual-identity as student-citizens, young people of the Vietnam War era united the local and the national. To explore this further, the dissertation specifically sets out to explore cross-causal connections of activism on civil rights, antipoverty, antiwar, and campus policies—such as *in loco parentis*.

The conclusion drawn from this research is that the reoccurring and unifying theme is that of citizenship. Students who became involved in activism did so because of their definition of the proper role of a citizen. The citizenship they envisioned involved active participation and sought to reform society, and, on occasion, revolutionize it. They argued that as citizens of the United States and citizens of the university, they had an obligation to act. Often, activism surrounding campus issues served as a proxy for larger national issues, things that students could not directly affect. In other words, they voiced their displeasure with the war in Vietnam and the draft, and hoped that through massed demonstrations they may affect U.S. policy; however, while they could only hope to influence over national policies, they felt that they could exert a direct control over their campus. In essence, by fighting against women’s hours and demanding a greater say in the decision-making processes of the universities, students were suggesting that they were making an argument for their access to greater influence in the political decision-making processes of the nation. The social activism, civil rights and poverty, in particular, served as a means to exert political power as well by working at the grassroots level to build communities that could fight for and sustain their rights, to do what
students were hoping to do for themselves. Student activism used many tactics and strategies, adopted and adapted from other movements, sometimes sought to build communities of activist-agents who would possess the skills necessary to fight for and retain some level of control in the decision-making process and at other times attempted to harness a general sense of disgust and frustration through mass marches and demonstrations. The problem came when the size of the crowd and the volume of their chants became the measure of success rather than access to decision-making power.

The schools in northern Appalachia provide clear examples of this. These were schools with small black populations and few participants in Freedom Summer so the theory that civil rights led to other activism, as put forward by Doug McAdam, seems to have only limited explanatory power though the cross-causal nature of activism McAdam identifies does provide a needed window into understanding student activism. Further, northern Appalachian schools were not elite universities and did not draw large numbers of their student body from upper and upper-middle class families. They operated in a region that many generally assumed backward and disconnected from the mainstream of American society. Yet, these campuses saw the same types of activism as happened throughout the nation. The question that begs to be asked then is why. Why are these schools, given their location and thereby the student populations they draw, so similar to the rest of the nation in their experience of the Sixties? The answer is that the unifying factor of student activism in the Sixties is an emphasis on citizenship; that the arguments made at Berkeley, Columbia, or Wisconsin rested in assumptions of the proper role of citizens within a democracy, and that the students in western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, and northern West Virginia struggled with these same questions. The scholarship
surrounding the schools on the coasts or those schools that drew national media attention emphasized their uniqueness and assumed an ability to generalize about all student populations. By looking at the actions of students on northern Appalachian campuses one sees that the question is not why did large-scale takeover events not occur at these schools, but why did these schools experience the activism that they did. In other words, the riots and takeovers that drew national attention were not the thing that united these student populations, but why they acted did. Whether one looks at Berkeley or Morgantown, New York or Pittsburgh, Madison or Athens, the development of an identity as a student-citizen rested as the cornerstone of student activism in the Sixties.

The call of antiwar, civil rights, and students’ rights activism resounded on campuses throughout northern Appalachia. Though the activists responding to these challenges did not necessarily achieve their goals—discrimination may have ended as official policy but remained a de facto component of American society, the war in Vietnam continued to trudge along eventually even being spread to Cambodia, and college administrations continued to limit student participation in institutional governance—the very fact that these students felt compelled to act, in the face of long odds, suggests something important at work. Michael Foley argued in Confronting the War Machine, that despite their small size and ultimate failures draft resisters represent crucial components of the Vietnam War era and studying them allows scholars to understand better the period.35 Scholars can and should apply this argument to the wider realm of student activism in the Sixties.

35 Foley, Confronting the War Machine, 15-16.
Following Foley’s lead, by looking at student activism and its limited (perhaps, negligible) gains, the dissertation helps elucidate the twin questions of why students felt compelled to act and how they defined the appropriate parameters of their engagement. Further, it demonstrates that in some ways the assertion of failure is misleading. While the multiversity remained intact and student participation in institutional governance increased only marginally, students did succeed in forcing some important changes on college campuses: the discontinuation of ROTC as required study for male students (in some cases, the outright abolition of ROTC); fundamental changes in “women’s hours” and other aspects of the *in loco parentis* apparatus of school administrations; and the creation of black studies and other area studies programs as credit-bearing courses and potential degree fields. On a national level, students fought for and achieved the reduction of the voting age from 21 to 18, they fought for expanded definitions of conscientious objection and won, they fought against compulsory military service and they achieved an all-volunteer military. Through sit-ins, boycotts, and demonstrations students helped support national civil rights legislation and at the local level, they achieved the desegregation of housing, businesses, and employment. Due in large part to the actions of young people the nation in 1975 appeared very different from it had in 1955, even if Appalachia remained mired in poverty and labor disputes.

Although none of the campuses under investigation drew sustained national attention nor did the students generate dramatic or foundational shifts in student-administration relations, these campuses were contested grounds as students of the Vietnam War era negotiated their dual identities as students and citizens amongst themselves and with other university constituencies. Northern Appalachian students, like
their counterparts around the nation, made claims of authority and power based on their roles as citizens within the American democratic system, and, thereby, forged a dualistic identity of a student-citizen. The student-citizen identity represented a melding of various impulses into an imagined, unified—if at times contradictory—identity. Young people united in a generational sense through their shared youth and liminal space in American political society. The Baby Boom Generation often found that politicians called them the future leaders of America. In an economic sense, youth represented an increasingly important target market. Culturally, the Boomer generation shared the same entertainment outlets, whether it was music, movies, or television, all of which, by the middle of the 1960s, reinforced a supposed youth generation. As the theme song from *The Monkees*, a popular television show aimed at Sixties youth, said, “We’re the young generation, and we’ve got something to say.”  

This generation saw a shared identity in their youth and in expressing their views and that as citizens of the nation and the university these views should carry weight. On college campuses, young people shared experiences that created a generalized, though not monolithic, student identity. In many ways, the fractured and competing notions of student reflected the same divisions within American society. Students inspired by social activism, like antipoverty work or the civil rights movement, united through culture and college, commodified by merchants, and politicized by civic leaders forged competing definitions of the student-citizen identity.

Student identity is defined through complex binaries of inclusion and exclusion. All forms of identity exist in oppositional relationships, who are and who are not

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members of a particular group. Such distinctions emerge through internal constructions and external definitions. In this way, identity exists as both a definition of self and of a group, which exists in a state of continuous flux, constructed through the input of vast factors and situational understandings. In addition to expressing distinction from others, identity serves to reinforce sameness within the group. Thus, students existed as a category in opposition with administrators and faculty, in so doing students differentiated themselves from these other components of the university while suggesting a unity amongst themselves. Simultaneously, the distinctiveness and sameness of the university and the wider community—the town and gown interactions—provides a contested and contradictory space in which these definitions of self and group played out.

In conceptualizing their definition of student as analogous to citizen and the university as the nation in microcosm, students established parallels for defining and justifying an expanded and increasingly active participation in the decision-making processes of the university. The student as citizen was not an entirely new concept in the Sixties; however, the idea of an active citizenship defined through expanded participation in the political process received a new emphasis during these years. In conceptualizing the university as a civil society, an entity that exists to perform civic functions, students built a parallel form of citizenship that afforded them an opportunity to experience and experiment with the meaning and obligations of citizenship within the wider American community. Citizenship, the set of duties and obligations of a member of a political

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community, rests on the notion that all constituent members of political communities exist and act as equals and therefore have equal right to offer or deny consent to the activities of the political community. By constructing an image of the university as civic society, wherein all constituent members—administrators, faculty, and students—were equal partners, students made a claim of university citizenship. Lacking the vote, the majority of students were not full members of the American citizenry, yet they believed they possessed the requisite qualities and temperament to be full citizens; thus, participating in and expanding the civic functions of the universities afforded students opportunities to demonstrate their abilities and make claims for full citizenship. The conception of citizenship as active underscored the New Left vision of participatory democracy and grew from long-standing notions of the moral obligation of citizens to engage in the civic process.38

During a series of lectures in 1963, later published as *The Uses of the University*, Clark Kerr laid out a detailed analysis of the state of the modern American university, or the “multiversity.” Kerr, the chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley and president of the University of California system, argued that modern American universities did not represent one, unique campus culture but rather had multiple constituencies, functions, and centers of power. The multiversity concept in action created a level of anxiety amongst students, as they felt increasingly distant and disenfranchised while universities expanded their course offerings and physical

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footprints. Students felt compelled to try to define themselves, their roles, and their community within an increasingly faceless university society from which they increasingly felt distant.

In response to impulses that pulled students in myriad and contradictory directions, a contested student identity developed. Students invented their own culture in which they imagined a united campus based on shared experiences, shared frustrations, and shared aspirations. However, dissension existed as different groups of students claimed the right to define these parameters. For many students, the creation of a unified student body was an explicit and intended action; for others, the sense of shared “studentness” was incidental and, at times, seen as overly contrived. Though never fully unified, student communities emerged—as students of a particular university, for instance, but also as a shared identity with college students across the nation.

Both E.P. Thompson and Benedict Anderson provide the basis for understanding the creation of a “student” identity, or student consciousness. Thompson argued that shared experiences and the trauma of the Industrial Revolution brought English workers together into a “working-class” that they identified with as part of a dialectic with the propertied classes just as students constructed their connections in opposition to the college administration. However, Thompson suggested a singular, unified working class emerged from these experiences; which obscures the many internal divisions within and amongst laborers. Anderson argued that nations are imagined communities. He argued that no matter how small, one cannot necessarily know all fellow members of the

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community but all shared an assumed connection to each other as relative equals. According to Anderson, print capitalism provided the cohesive framework to hold together nations within their imagined geographic limits by creating a sense of shared ideas.40 Students forged their identities with a mixture of Thompson’s ideas on shared experience and dialectic constructions of identity, with Anderson’s views on how members of nations forge imagined connections that unify them across defined territories, Clark Kerr’s ideas about the existence and effects of the multiversity, and, the final piece, a generational consciousness stoked by several sources.

Though many college students never met everyone on campus, they shared a “student” identity. The student newspapers, as organs of the student body, spread this identity. Also, shared experiences, such as courses and programs of study, and invented traditions, usually in the form of extracurricular activities and sporting events, helped to forge a shared identity. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger’s 1983 collection of essays, *The Invention of Tradition*, highlighted the importance of invented customs and traditions to the formation of identity. The various authors argued that these inventions draw their power through the necessary forgetting of their creation.41 Students dutifully participated in a variety of traditions created by both the institution and themselves, and thereby they recreated and strengthened the student identity. Existing members of the student communities and the universities themselves used these customs and traditions to indoctrinate new students; a process often referred to as creating “school spirit.”


Superficially, the definition of student seems certain enough; a student is any person enrolled to take at minimum a single class. However, as is usually the case with simple answers, this definition hides within it a vast array of assumptions and obscures the many conflicts and negotiations that are part-and-parcel of defining an identity. Different communities and constituencies define what it meant to be a student: administrators, faculty, the community-at-large, and students themselves. Though these various groups shared a relatively common set of assumptions, what it meant to be a student was not (and is not) a settled argument.

The administrative definition of students (that of one enrolled in one or more classes) rested on seeing these young people as solely tuition-bearing units, whereas other definitions focused more on either the function or the humanity of the individuals so classified. Faculty, who had more day-to-day contact with students than administrators generally, may have conceived of students within a specific dialectic power relationship—they, as educators and the dominant half of the relationship, imparted wisdom to eager intellectual sponges that occupied their classrooms. Residents of the communities in which college and universities resided often viewed the entire college as set apart, aloof from the rest of society; but, just as often, viewed students as their children—petulant and self-entitled with over-developed senses of their own importance. Moreover, for students, the number of cliques and communities on campus suggest that there were multiple claims to the true, essential, and authentic student identity, defined through admission to one or more of these groups.⁴²

⁴² Kerr identified various power constituencies that affect the university, which include: the administration, faculty, public authorities, and students. Therefore, each must hold a definition of what it meant to be students, which were roughly extrapolated from Kerr’s presentation; see, Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 15-22.
Admittedly, many of the chief actors engaged in antiwar activism at northern Appalachian universities were white and male. The immediacy brought by possible conscription, that one failed exam could lead to induction and on to the Mekong Delta, made many men more attuned to the war, and, for many, more likely to engage in public demonstrations. Though white men were more vocal and visible within the antiwar movement on northern Appalachian campuses, they were not the sole actors. When one contextualizes antiwar activism within the larger panorama of student activism the leadership and contributions of female and black students emerges. The same impulses that drove civil rights and women’s rights activities inherently connected to antiwar rallies and demonstrations. Students saw direct connections between local, state, national, and collegiate communities—efforts to improve one community were thereby efforts to improve all, through this notion of the student-citizen. This conception of student-citizen was not limited to white men, but emerged within the diverse population of the universities. While the dissertation does often present the words and actions of white male students, it also attempts to integrate women and blacks, to show cross-cause development and the breadth of student activism.

Thus, for the sake of brevity in the following chapters, the term “students” serves as a shorthand for a specific subset of students on college campuses. It would be too simplistic to refer to them simply as “radical” students because many liberal and moderate (and a few conservative) students shared some of these views. Perhaps “active” students would be appropriate; though, again there is a great deal of nuance within who one does and does not consider “active”—is letter-writing active? Or, must one engage in
demonstrations? Or, is it not merely participating in but planning rallies that defines active? Further, “antiwar,” “anti-ROTC,” or “anti-discrimination,” fail as adequate descriptors because students views were not always constructed in negative terms, thus they were equally, “peace,” “academic freedom,” or “equality” students. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, a scholar of undergraduate cultures, provided a tripartite division of college students into the insiders as those who embraced the extracurricular activities college life yet not academics, the careerists who focused on grades and professional preparation rather than the social facets of college life, and “rebels,” who cared about learning if not grades and wanted to refocus campus social life away from frivolity and toward matters of moral conscience. By-and-large, it is this rebel subset of students the following chapters refer to when using the generic “students” term. These individuals often were, but were not exclusively, part of the New Left. Further, given the very small minority populations on northern Appalachian campuses during these years, there is also an assumed whiteness to the term “student,” though the following chapters do attempt to make racial distinctions when appropriate. Thus, to keep the chapters from bogging down with parsing the word “student” at every turn, the dissertation consciously uses a more ambiguous term, “students,” despite its potential flaws or oversimplifications.

It becomes clear by investigating the events and incidents at northern Appalachian universities during the Vietnam War era of the mid-1960s to the early-1970s that the lack of large, violent, and/or radical demonstrations did not indicate apathetic campuses; but, rather, that the students sought to exert their power and influence over university

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decision-making, and society in general, in myriad ways during these turbulent years. In specific, students engaged in activism surrounding civil rights, antipoverty, antiwar, and campus policies—such as *in loco parentis*.

Students forged a new identity as student-citizens in a time of war and unrest. They argued that one could not easily separate one facet of their selves from another; that being a student did not absolve one from their obligations as a citizen. However, the students debated and negotiated what those obligations were and how one should interact with authority, whether in the form of the university or the state. They sought to define also the role of the university itself within the context of American society. Students brought multiple layers of identity, from their personal backgrounds to their campus lives, to bear in their understanding of their position in society. Through how students engaged in campus politics and larger social concerns, one can see how they defined citizenship and patriotism. Thus, through investigating the activities of northern Appalachian university students one gains a window into the multiple ways in which young people experienced the Sixties. Scholars also gain a more complex understanding of Appalachia during the period as well as a more nuanced version of the concepts of student identity and activism during the Vietnam War era. As students and citizens, young people felt compelled to act to improve their communities and their nation.

Further, this research helps added a corrective to Appalachian historiography on several fronts. By highlighting the active engagement of northern Appalachian youth, the dissertation challenges the long-standing emphasis on Appalachian victimhood. While regionally distinct, Appalachia was not removed from the wider national impulses of the Sixties. Thus, Appalachian scholars need to connect more fully the region with the
national; this dissertation offers one way to link these narratives. Finally, by shifting the focus to northern Appalachia, the dissertation forces the field to embrace more than the central mountains of eastern Kentucky and southern West Virginia and challenges notions of Appalachia’s constructed southernness.

The President’s Appalachian Regional Commission provided a base point for defining Appalachia, a unified region stretching from Pennsylvania to Alabama whose dominant geographic feature were the mountains. Since the initial report in 1964, the government definition of Appalachia has expanded some, adding new states and counties, and, by the 2000s, dividing the region into five separate subregions. This dissertation collapses the current Appalachian Regional Commission designations of “northern” and “north central” into a singular “northern” that more closely represents the initial subdivisions ARC created in the mid-1970s. Despite its anachronistic nature, in that it does not coincided with the 1964 imagining of a unified region, the use of “northern” here more closely reflects the colloquial definitions and the initial subdivisions created by ARC in the 1970s, if not the current five subregions. In the end, the dissertation asserts that Appalachia in the Sixties existed in the minds of many as the supposed crossroads of modernity and traditional America and was located in an area defined by both poverty and the mountains. Yet, the region cannot be fully understood through the lens of resource exploitation and cultural deficiencies as contemporary writers, such as Harry Caudill and Jack Weller, led many to believe.44 While its experience with the Sixties was in many ways distinct, the Sixties did not skip over the region.

44 Caudill, Night Came to the Cumberlands; President’s Appalachian Regional Commission, Appalachia: A Report By the President’s Appalachian Regional Commission, 1964 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964); Weller, Yesterday’s People; Shapiro, Appalachia on Our Mind.
Scope, Sources, and Organization:

The following dissertation explores student political and social activism at northern Appalachian universities from 1964 to 1972. The dissertation draws heavily from student newspapers and archival sources. It consists of five substantive chapters that look at the development of the student-citizen identity, situate the schools selected within Appalachia, and provide a chronological investigation of the political and social activism in northern Appalachia.

The periodization of 1964 to 1972 is not meant to suggest student political and social activism began in 1964 or ended in 1972. Rather, the suggestion is that these years saw a convergence of multiple streams of activism—antiwar, civil rights, poverty, and students’ rights. Through exploring their experiences as students at northern Appalachian universities and how they crafted their own “Sixties” within the context of their schools and Appalachia, one sees that Appalachia was not set apart from the major issues and concerns of the era. Appalachia was not simply an object of study or exploitation, but rather an active region in shaping the 1960s.

The schools chosen for this study include Ohio University, the University of Pittsburgh, and West Virginia University. Selections were made based on several factors, including (1) whether they fit within the geographically defined northern Appalachia; (2) whether, by the mid-1960s, they existed as a doctoral-granting state university (or state-related university); and, (3) whether they had some level of connection with one or more of the other schools in the region (athletics rivalry, regional organizations, etc.). In all, the selection was not meant to be exhaustive. Further, the study draws from Kenneth
Heineman’s *Campus Wars* and his arguments regarding the presence of student activism at non-elite state universities. However, where Heineman’s four campus covered a wider geographical area, the goal of this study is to look at a narrower cross-section of schools where there is a greater potential for overlap in the makeup of the student bodies. Young people from western Pennsylvania, eastern Ohio, and northern West Virginia attended each of these schools.

While undoubtedly, Athens, OH, and Morgantown, WV, are within Appalachia, there are lingering doubts as to whether Pittsburgh fits within the parameters of Appalachia most often conceptualized as a region of shack-dwellers livening in a Dickensian nightmare of poverty deep in some remote hollow. Pittsburgh sits well within the geographical boundaries of Appalachia; federal officials have defined all of the surrounding counties for at least 80 miles in any direction as Appalachia, thus it seems incongruous to suggest that Pittsburgh is somehow not a part of Appalachia given its obvious geographic connection. Pittsburgh, whether consciously aware of it or not, is an Appalachian city—by far the largest Appalachian city. However, one need not be consciously aware that one is in Appalachia for the narrative constructions of Appalachia to have effect. The students at the University of Pittsburgh engaged in many of the same activities, including poverty and civil rights outreach, as students at Ohio University and West Virginia University. Additionally, Pittsburgh serves as a counter to the existing narrative of Appalachia as southern, rural, and poor, by suggesting that the region was also northern, urban, and industrial.

The second chapter sets a general overview of the population under investigation and focuses on the connections, or lack thereof, between the so-called “Greatest
“Generation” and the Baby Boom Generation. Both at the time and in the historical narrative, a supposed “generation gap” has served as explanation for why students rebelled or for generating the conditions for unrest. Through comparing how these two generations addressed liberal reforms and responded to military conflicts, the chapter suggests that there are greater similarities between the two generations than either, or the popular imagination, would have one believe. While the Boomers grew up in the world fashioned by members of the Greatest Generation and faced similar questions of war and dissent, patriotism and citizenship, they often arrived at different answers in large part due to the difference in historical context in which they faced these questions. Thus, while generational differences existed scholars have perhaps overdrawn them and reduced their explanatory power.

The third chapter examines Cold War American universities and Appalachia. The chapter argues that the changing nature of the university and its position within American society provided part of the cultural milieu in which the student activism of the Sixties emerged. The growth of the military-industrial-academic complex fueled and reinforced by the creation of the multiversity, combined with increasing enrollments helped to fracture further an already conflicted student identity. Moreover, Appalachia, imagined as a relatively uniform region of abject poverty, became a primary target in the War on Poverty by the mid-1960s, thereby offering additional fuel to energize student activism in an effort to eradicate the perceived aberration to the mid-twentieth century American affluence. While undoubtedly poverty, unions, and out-migration played essential roles in the formation of Appalachia, both in its perception and existence, individuals short-change the story of Appalachia if these become the sole components of its tale. The
Chapter concludes with brief biographical sketches of each of the three universities that seek to provide the story of each institution from founding to the 1960s. Through these, one sees the diversity yet similarity in the development of universities in the northern Appalachian region.

Chapter four explores the conflicted nature of the college campus in the 1960s. Internal divisions within the student body as to the nature of their role as students as well as between growing political factions drove this conflict, which suggested different roles for them as citizens. Three general categories of students existed on campus by the 1960s: “careerists,” “insiders,” and “rebels.” The main difference between each group was the level of emphasis they put on scholastic achievement (i.e., grades), extracurricular functions, and on the pursuit of knowledge (regardless of grades). Insiders had largely controlled the university community through the 1950s, emphasizing scholastic achievement as the price one pays for the more important jocularity of extracurricular activities. By the early 1960s, student newspapers spent the greatest amount of column space covering and promoting these activities. Between 1964 and 1967, a marked shift in student visions of political and social activism occurred from a nearly universal hostility in 1964 to increasing engagement by 1967. Students drew increasing numbers of connections to national movements and debated the influence of events in places like Berkeley on their campuses in northern Appalachia. The newspapers were alive with debates, at time ferocious in their language, as students grappled with questions of their proper role within the college and nation. They debated the meaning of patriotism and citizenship, as well as the proper expressions of dissent. However, more than debate in the newspapers, students increasingly took action. The period 1964 to
1967 saw a transition in student engagement with social and political issues from that of near-universal passivity to a growing amount of active participation. This participation took two forms: the first, a desire to forge empowered communities and the second, an emphasis on mass demonstrations. Despite adding column space to cover the growing rebel causes for social and political activism, the student newspapers still primarily functioned to provide coverage and promotion of the extracurricular social functions of the insiders. Thus, the college campus of the mid-1960s saw divisions between what it meant to be a student and what it meant to be a citizen.

The student-citizen identity becomes the central focus of chapter five. This chapter explores the impact of the Selective Service System on student conceptions of the role of the university and on their role as citizens. Through exploring the debates on issues such as the nature of military education (i.e., ROTC), the right of the military or defense industries to recruit on campus, and on the draft itself, one sees that northern Appalachian students, like their counterparts around the nation, sought to define more clearly their conceptions of patriotism and citizenship. In late 1967, and throughout 1968, incidents of draft resistance began to appear and become more frequent. Draft resisters argued that their understanding of patriotism, citizenship, and humanity required them to act as they did, to call down upon themselves the wrath of the federal government in order to show to their fellow citizens through redemptive suffering the injustices and immorality of conscription and war. In many of the statements of resistance, or of those supporting resisters, one finds references to the lessons learned as students thereby directly linking the actions one undertakes as a student with those of a citizen. The student newspapers continued to provide the venue for spirited student debate over the
issue, though some increasingly took on a liberal-to-New Left editorial stance that some students found distasteful. University administrators confronted growing numbers of student demands for an enhanced voice in the decision-making structures of the institution. However, while 1968 saw important events and ideas, it was not a breakpoint but a continuation of processes begun during the previous three years. If anything makes 1968 a watershed year, it is the seemingly universal adoption of mass protest as the model of student activism over community-building.

The sixth chapter explores the interconnections between national protest and local activism. By 1969, political and social activism amongst students had grown exponentially, and national rallies and demonstrations against the war in Vietnam drew hundreds and thousands of participants. However, in the fall of 1969 a new tactic emerged, rather than have thousands of people descend on a handful of cities, organizers would seek to hold thousands of demonstrations simultaneously around the country. The October 1969 Moratorium represented an effort to take the national and bring it local. It acknowledged the validity of the old adage, “all politics is local.” Over the next few years, while national demonstrations petered out, local protests continued. The local activism of the late-1960s and early 1970s represented a continuation of earlier forms of student engagement. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the question often asked of student activism—where did it go—misunderstands the nature of student activism. The large mass rallies and demonstrations, marching through the streets, were the anomaly not the standard. Student activism after a brief flirtation with the large national scene returned to its local roots.
One of the largest sources, especially for chapter 4, is student newspapers. In part, this is due to the fact that there are limited additional sources to get at student voices. Most of the archival sources that provide student voices address a period post-1967. This is perhaps the result of the ephemeral nature of short-lived student organizations, or the lack of a bureaucratic nature among some New Left and New Left-inspired student groups. Further, to see the conflicted nature of campus, the student newspapers offer some insight through what they deemed worthy to discuss and present. However, chapters 5 and 6 integrate additional archival sources beyond the student newspapers, though the newspapers continue to serve as a vital source.

There are flaws inherent in using student newspapers, chief among these problems being a question of bias. They obviously do not present an unfiltered view of campus life—external restrictions of various forms exist (such as advisors and administration censors) as well as self-censorship and student editorial control. However, the student newspapers offer one of the few ways, if not the only way in some cases, to determine what was happening on campus, things that cannot be found through reading the academic bulletins and yearbooks. Additionally, they offer insights that differ from official administration sources. The papers help to highlight cross-casual development of student activism as one sees similar names and groups appearing in a variety of contexts. Also, since campus papers often address, if only in a cursory way at times, national and international events, seeing what is presented, and how, can offer some insights into why or how students formulated their views. In part, using the newspapers offers a way to get at the student voice and to that end, the goal is to analyze the language deployed in the articles, editorials, and letters to the editor.
Conclusion:

This dissertation serves to fill an existing gap in two historiographies, those of student activism during the Sixties and the Sixties in Appalachia. It explores the ideas of generational conflict and attempts to define the physical locale of student protest. Further, using student newspapers and archival sources, the dissertation moves chronologically from roughly 1964 to approximately 1972. It explores the development of a student-citizen identity, which serves as the unifying force behind the diverse social and political activism of the Sixties. Additionally, it argues that while poverty did represent a key component in defining Appalachia in the Sixties and as a gateway to expanded activism for some students, it did not serve as the sole defining factor of the region or its people as popular and political imaginings would lead one to believe. Students at northern Appalachian universities were not set apart from the wide spectrum of impulses that convulsed through the nation during the Vietnam War era, but participated fully, crafting their own Sixties experiences. By expanding the historical gaze to northern Appalachian universities during the tumultuous years of the 1960s, historians enlarge their understandings of student activism and challenge long-standing myths about Appalachia.
CHAPTER II

“TALKIN’ ‘BOUT MY GENERATION”:\n
EXPLORING THE CONTINUITY BETWEEN THE GREATEST AND BABY BOOM GENERATIONS

People try to put us d-down (Talkin’ ‘bout my generation)\nJust because we get around (Talkin’ ‘bout my generation)\nThings they do look awful c-c-cold (Talkin’ ‘bout my generation)\nI hope I die before I get old (Talkin’ ‘bout my generation)\nThis is my generation\nThis is my generation, baby\n--“My Generation,” The Who (1965)¹

Look what’s happening out in the streets\nGot a revolution (got to revolution)\nHey, I’m dancing down the streets\nGot a revolution (got to revolution)\nOh, ain’t it amazing all the people I meet?\nGot a revolution (got to revolution)\nOne generation got old\nOne generation got soul\nThis generation got no destination to hold\n--“Volunteers,” Jefferson Airplane (1969)²

Introduction:

The turbulence of “the Sixties” has often played out in the popular imagination as some form of morality play depicting youthful rebels who failed to recognize the gravity of the

times they inhabited against a stoic older generation that resolutely faced economic depression and global war. Although there may be some truth in this framework, this mental picture constructs a false sense of discontinuity between the Depression and Baby Boom Generations, as well as the Sixties and the larger trajectory of American history. While members of both generations accepted these supposed differences as true at the time, politicians, as well as historians, have played a key role in maintaining and perpetuating this sense of discontinuity and notion of a generation gap. To understand better the Sixties, one must be mindful of this false image of discontinuity and recognize that there was much that linked Baby Boomers with the so-called “Greatest Generation.”

To see the Sixties clearly, and to frame the activism on campuses in northern Appalachia more precisely, one must confront the generational mythologies directly. The Depression Generation did not stolidly suffer through economic dislocation nor universally “rally ‘round the flag” and willingly sacrifice en masse during World War II, the supposedly “last good war.” Their efforts to create and sustain the inflated image of

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1 In his 1998 book about the Depression Generation, Tom Brokaw declared this group America’s “Greatest Generation.” The phrase has come to be the dominant, if not only, moniker used to describe this group. In fact, while Brokaw does not construct much of the mythology surrounding this generation, his various books have served to perpetuate the nostalgic images within the popular imagination. See, Tom Brokaw, The Greatest Generation (New York: Random House, 1998).


self-sacrifice and devout patriotism provided a skewed framework in which they evaluated their children’s actions, as well as helped to distort the Baby Boom Generation’s self-image by comparing themselves to a mythic “Greatest Generation.” Boomers internalized these comparisons and accepted their supposed differences and in the case of the “New Left” emphasized, one may even say reveled in, the distinctions between themselves and an earlier era. However, when held to the light of history, one finds many sites of continuity between the two generations, not least was the idealization during the Boomers’ adolescence of the white, suburban, post-World War II world created by the Depression Generation. Boomers shared a generational culture that would both transcend politics and serve as the nucleus for their later politicization. In part, the generational sense of Boomers grew from their inherent acceptance of a perceived uniqueness or distinctness from the Depression Generation that preceded it. In investigating these generational connections, historians can help to contextualize better the Sixties, while also seeing the continuity of American history. The Sixties were not a breakpoint in American history but a continuation of a long trend of new citizens rising to take up the mantle of political leadership and adapting, adopting, and rejecting, the legacy of their predecessors.

Over the past twenty to twenty-five years, memory studies have become a major component of virtually every sector of the field of history. Historians have attempted to understand how the popular imagination constructs its understanding of the past and the implications for society, politics, and culture that derive from these constructions.³

³ In 1989, the Journal of American History published an edition dedicated, in large part, to the idea of memory studies as a burgeoning field of research. The journal’s editor, David Thelen, penned an introductory article that laid out the foundations of the growing trend and offered insights into its potential future. Since then, scholars have written dozens of works on memory. One of the most influential, at least
However, some myths and memories have proven more difficult to dismantle than others have, as they appear ensnared within the gravitational pull of an overly attractive nostalgia trap.

Contemporary sentimentality for the mid-twentieth century makes it a period rife with constructed memory and myth. Much of this popular imagining of the recent past puts the period of the Vietnam War in direct (and often negative) comparison with the World War II era that preceded it. This comparison sets two antagonistic generational forces in opposition, the first being the young people who came of age during the Great Depression and World War II and supposedly bore the brunt of existential crises stoically and emerged stronger economically, politically, and socially having willingly sacrificed so much for the preservation of the nation (and perhaps the very world itself). In this imagining, the second generation, born into affluence and complacency faltered under pressures of limited crises refusing to bear the burdens their citizenship demanded and who led America down a path that weakened the nation economically, politically, and socially. Thus, the popular imagination constructs a struggle between a generation


4 In between the two generations, some have identified a smaller group often referred to as the “Silent Generation.” Born during the Depression, these were the young men who fought in the Korean
forged into an early adulthood through crisis and who both understood and accepted their roles as citizens and a generation which never evolved beyond petulant children who shirked their responsibilities and thought only of themselves.

For decades, the mythology constructed around the Greatest Generation has presented a uniquely inspiring group of Americans who suffered the twin tragedies of economic collapse and global war, with an indomitable and resilient spirit. Historian Kenneth Rose has argued that the vast mythology built around the Greatest Generation has done a disservice to them and to later generations through robbing those who experienced the Great Depression and World War II of their humanity by making them superhuman rather than ordinary folks in extraordinary situations. In creating this false standard, the myths make it impossible for any future generation of supposedly regular people to meet that standard. Boomers, born and raised in the shadow of this seemingly unreachable pinnacle of American generations, confronted a false contrast between their own internal struggles, tensions, and angst and a supposedly solid and resolute generation that bore the burdens of the nation with quiet resolve and determination. As Philip Conflict, alongside servicemen of the Depression Generation. The young men and women of the Silent Generation attended colleges teeming with World War II servicemen (many of whom were able to attend college due to the G.I. Bill). While scholars, such as Elwood Carlson, have noted the distinctions between the Depression and Silent Generations, these two generations also shared a number of commonalities. See, Elwood Carlson, *The Lucky Few: Between the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boom* (Berlin: Springer, 2008).

In the end, I chose to focus on the myths surrounding the so-called “Greatest Generation” to highlight the false claims made regarding members of that generation and the Baby Boom Generation and that each generation faced a particular mythos that obscured reality. Later in the chapter, I meld the Depression and Silent Generations as the “parents” in a binary relationship with the Baby Boom children. While I recognize that this may unfairly remove the agency of members of the Silent Generation, I do not believe that it inherently upsets my arguments that: A) Boomers were responding to the cultural world of the 1950s and 1960s, or B) the mythology surrounding both World War II and the Vietnam War, and the people who lived through those experiences, has created false frameworks for our understanding. Further, as young people began to engage in the social and political activism of the Sixties, they were more likely to lock horns with university administrators and political leaders who come from the Depression Generation.


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Caputo shows in his memoir *A Rumor of War*, World War II became a benchmark by which his generation measured the fighting in Vietnam and, as such, the perceptions of vast differences between the two generations became starker.\(^6\)

Titles of generations, like those of time periods, are slippery terms and one must recognize their fluidity rather than assume they are concrete and absolute entities. Scholars have generally defined the “Baby Boom Generation” as those persons born between the years 1946 and 1964; however, one should see this dating as more of a general guideline. While census data may suggest a surge in births during these years, culturally these years seem to cover different groups of people.\(^7\) Using the standard, 1946 to 1964, one arrives at a population entering college as freshmen between the years 1964 and 1982. It would be hard to suggest freshmen entering campus life in the first years of the Reagan administration share a generational culture with those entering college only a few months after the Beatles made their first American appearance. In 1991, researchers William Strauss and Neil Howe argued that the Baby Boom represented those born between 1943 and 1960; they argued that generations should consider cultural differences. In her work on Cold War families, Elaine Tyler May stated emphatically, “the baby boom was not the result of the return to peace,” but “began during the war.” May went on to assert that the cause for a sustained bulge in births during the 1940s and 1950s was a pro-family cultural shift that promoted marriage at a younger age and “the

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belief in the positive value of having several children.” Historian Kenneth Rose, in his work which attempted to de-mystify the Greatest Generation, argued, “There was a rush to the altar in the four months prior to passage of the Selective Service Act of 1940 in large part because that act exempted fathers from the draft.” Rose went on to add, “it is perhaps no coincidence that nine months or so after the 1940 law went into effect there was an 11 percent spike in the birth rate.”

Thus, it seems those young people entering college between roughly 1960 and 1975 share a greater cultural connection.

It is this cadre of people, born between 1942 and 1957, who make up the cultural Baby Boom Generation. They constitute the bulk of the student populations, as well as those who would enlist in the military or the National Guard, during the Vietnam War era. These individuals forged a cultural generation around certain music, movies, or entertainment that transcended political divisions. It is this group of individuals who helped create the iconic student organizations of the Sixties—Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), Young Americans for Freedom (YAF), and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)—suggesting a shared sense that youth should assume some level of leadership in the struggles for freedom and equality, as they defined the concepts.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, marketers and politicians targeted this

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specific cadre of people heavily; it was a practice that later generations of advertisers carried on over the decades, but its postwar origins were here with the children who would come of age in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Upon further examination, it becomes evident that the Greatest and Baby Boom Generations did not differ as dramatically as popular imagination would have one believe. Both faced questions of war and peace, dissent and patriotism, economic and social justice, though the answers they arrived at were not always the same. Regardless, there were similar impulses that drove both groups of people—debates regarding the proper role of government; economic and social reform efforts that raised questions about opportunity and equality; concerns about the proper role of men and women in the economy and society; and tensions over America’s global role and the effects it had domestically. Both generations constructed liberal reform programs that, in part, targeted the region of Appalachia, either as part of a larger national economic crisis or because of its supposed aberration in the face of national affluence. Further, each generation turned college campuses into platforms for social and political activism.


10 For a sampling of scholarship that explores how young people in the 1930s answered these questions, see: Eileen Eagan, Class, Culture, and the Classroom: The Student Peace Movement of the 1930s (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1981); Robert Cohen, When the Old Left was Young: Student Radicals and America’s First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Justus Doenecke, Storm on the Horizon: The Challenge to American Intervention, 1939-1941 (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000).

The Baby Boomers grew up in the world forged by the Depression Generation. The quest for security defined those who came of age in economic turmoil and global strife and provided the structure for the consensus politics and conformist culture of the late 1940s and 1950s.\(^\text{11}\) A culture of fear stoked, initially, by the Truman administration over the expansion of Communism grew rapidly and eventually gave rise to the inquisitional tactics of Joseph McCarthy. Several historians have discussed how containment, domestic and international, became the basic nature of postwar life. This framework defined social, political, and economic relationships and gave great latitude to those who guarded the American way of life from dissidents and nonconformists at home as well as Communists abroad.\(^\text{12}\) The paranoia of the Second Red Scare penetrated the college campuses of the early Cold War years and, along with a growing military-industrial-academic complex, altered the relationship between the government and various university constituencies, including those in northern Appalachia.\(^\text{13}\)


The youth culture of the 1950s and 1960s that initially existed apart from politics would eventually become the hotbed of activism, all along the political spectrum. That is not to say the political world did not play a role in defining the Baby Boom Generation, but that initially this generational identity was apolitical in its outlook. Boomers shared a culture even if they did not agree on questions of the proper nature or role of the government in the lives of individuals or citizens’ obligations to the government. Even when this began to change and some young people chose to storm college administration buildings and engage in various forms of civil disobedience, there was a generational connection between these activists and the majority of students who did not get involved or who rejected radical politics. Before Boomers ever marched onto college campuses, they held a sense of their shared generational identity. Politicians often referred to them in a collective sense as America’s future leaders, marketers and advertisers targeted young people as a consumer class, and the movies, television shows, and music of the period reinforced suburban, white, middle class values. These shared values and expectations linked young people from all regions of the country in a generational cadre through their shared culture. However, when some saw a disconnect between reality and these ideals, the constructed images served as fuel for their politicization.

The Baby Boom Generation was no more naïve or un-American than their parents’ generation, nor was the Depression Generation as self-sacrificing as popular

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14 In this context, “apolitical” suggests that the young people defined within this generation—by themselves and others—did not see themselves as a political unit. This description is meant to suggest that what linked young people of the Baby Boom era was not necessarily a shared set of partisan political ideals. The argument is that a youth identity existed prior to the politicization of the Sixties; rather than a partisan political identity creating a youth identity, one sees a generational, youth identity became politicized. Furthermore, young people of the Baby Boom Generation continued to share this generational identity even as partisan polarization occurred in response to events or movements such as the civil rights movement or the war in Vietnam.
imagination believes. The internal rifts within the Baby Boom Generation resulted from a later politicization; however, prior to this split there existed a youth culture that members of this generation shared including those raised in Appalachia. Thus, divisions with the Baby Boom Generation between the New Left and the New Right derive from a central cultural connectivity. To see this continuity between Boomers and their parents more effectively, one needs to complicate the simplistic archetypes and push beyond the assumed reality of discontinuity. The Sixties were both something new and simultaneously grounded in America’s past as a new generation of citizens attempted to answer the longstanding and difficult questions surrounding war and dissent, equality and freedom. Therefore, to understand the turmoil of the Sixties, and the conflict in northern Appalachia, one must situate those years in the historical context that engulfs them.

(Mis)Connections of the “Greatest” and the “Baby Boom” Generations:
In some ways, the post-World War II world of the Baby Boomers resembled that of the Depression Generation. The global economy was responding to the outcome of a world war, some nations turned to reactionary or radical solutions to their economic and political instabilities, while in the United States there was a renewed emphasis on liberal democracy and capitalism. The wide range of political activity during the 1930s has obscured student activism from popular memory of the period, according to Robert Cohen; and as a result, constructed a faulty assumption of earlier inaction that falsely suggested a unique nature to the Sixties.¹⁵ Both periods also saw an expansion of liberal reform efforts; where the New Deal sought to end an immediate crisis and prevent a

¹⁵ Cohen, When the Old Left was Young, xix.
similar problem in the future, the policies associated with the presidential administrations of Truman, Kennedy, Johnson, and even Eisenhower to some degree, focused on opportunity and reaching those communities not aided by the New Deal. Through these reform efforts citizens’ interactions with the federal government expanded. The links between these periods of reform make sense, as a similar cast of characters exists in both; however, the similarities should not be overly stated, just as the differences between them should not be overdrawn.

Both the Depression and Baby Boom Generations engaged in liberal reform efforts and faced questions of global conflict, by comparing how each responded to these realities one sees the connections and parallels between the two generations. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s liberal reform program represented a continuation of an impulse reaching forward from the Progressive Era, in the same way, the efforts of John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson built on the liberal structures of the New Deal. In whole, much of the first seven decades of the twentieth century saw a generally liberal consensus. The reform effort of the 1960s represented efforts to expand and fulfill the promises of earlier reform efforts.16 The young people who came of age during the New Frontier and Great Society

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experienced similar calls for economic and social equality as those who came of age during the New Deal. In both eras, thousands of young people spurred on as citizens of the university and of the nation joined movements and organizations inspired by radical rhetoric, though the goals they pursued were still largely liberal in their orientation. They sought to expand the freedom of expression and demanded the implementation of mechanisms that would allow greater numbers of people (including themselves) to be able to enter into the private marketplace. Both generations, inspired by these liberal reform impulses and determined to enact an active interpretation of citizenship obligations, would challenge authority at various levels—national, state, local, and collegiate—through protests, demonstrations, rallies, petitions, and other forms of nonviolence.\textsuperscript{17}

In much the same way that the liberal reform impulse remained consistent across the decades, both generations witnessed calls for noninterventionism and conscientious objection to war—though in both generations, they represented minority voices. During World War II, thousands of Americans resisted or evaded the draft and thousands more sought deferments from combatant service. Many of these war opponents drew inspiration from veteran resisters of the previous war. In these ways, Boomers’ reactions to war in Vietnam were quite consistent with the actions of their parents’ generation. The fog of myth and faulty memory has conspired to obscure these connections.

Andrew, III, \textit{Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society} (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998); Kennedy, \textit{Freedom from Fear}.


\textsuperscript{17} Eagan, \textit{Class, Culture, and the Classroom}, 10-23, 40, 45-47, 57-71, 168, 223-32; Cohen, \textit{When the Old Left was Young}, 19-21, 33-44, 49-71, 91-102.
Liberal Reforms: New Deal, New Frontier, and the Great Society:

The world in which the Greatest Generation came of age was one of turmoil, deprivation, uncertainty, and global strife. After the boom years of the 1920s, the United States suffered during the 1930s as part of the global depression; an economic disaster created in part from the resolution of the World War I. During these turbulent years, the United States sought to reinforce and secure existing economic and political structures. This effort to buttress existing systems of capitalism and representative democracy led to a series of liberal reforms and stoked a sense of engaged citizenship amongst the young people of the era. Overall, President Roosevelt’s New Deal sought to offer security to various sectors of the nation. In two phases, the New Deal strove to head-off the decline begun in the late-1920s and, after having placed a floor under the economy, it sought to provide the infrastructure necessary for capitalism to continue to function. In this process, the Roosevelt administration brought many Americans into closer contact with the federal government than they had ever been before, expanding the ability of the surveillance state to see the vast majority of its population beyond that of the bureaucratic developments wrought in the Progressive Era.

The New Deal drew inspiration from a fundamental assumption that government has a role to play in the economy—as the employer of last resort, as a clearinghouse for consumer and business information, or as a regulatory agency. At its core, the New Deal rested on twin impulses of a willingness to experiment with various degrees of government intervention as well as an imperative need to maintain private enterprise. Efforts such as the Civil Works Administration (CWA), the Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) offered temporary
work-relief for millions of Americans; and by giving these individuals a paycheck, the state hoped they would become consumers in the private marketplace and thereby help jumpstart the overall economy. With the Social Security Act, New Dealers were able to remove from the labor pool millions of Americans (the very young and the very old) to allow for workers to have greater bargaining power over wages by moving toward making labor more scarce; the act also infused money into the economy through old-age pensions (though this largely did not impact the economy until the 1940s). The New Deal (in either phase) was unsuccessful in ending the Great Depression. This failure stemmed from its limited reach and insufficient infusion of money into the economy to generate private demand and restart the stalled engine of the private economy. Unfortunately, these programs did not fundamentally change the twin problems of excess labor driving down the wage scale and the corresponding lack of money necessary to prop up demand. Only the national mobilization for war provided the level of government spending and manpower manipulation necessary to address the severity of the economic downturn.\textsuperscript{18}

With war, or the potential for war, the government could justify greater control over the economy and labor allocations, while also infusing the necessary funds into a temporarily restricted economy—restricted both in terms of what producers could make and what merchants could charge for those products. Millions of able-bodied men left the ranks of the unemployed through voluntary military service or conscription and demand for the weapons of war, food, and equipment necessary to outfit these millions of men

generated new employment opportunities as manufacturers sought to fill growing government contracts. It was through massive government spending, in the name of national defense, which allowed the United States to move out of the Depression, achieve full employment, bring millions of new workers into the labor market, and stimulate a vast expansion in consumer spending.\textsuperscript{19}

One of the other key aspects of the New Deal was the effort to generate countervailing forces to overcome the strength of certain interest groups. Examples of this include the consumer advocacy councils the Roosevelt administration constructed that brought business and labor leaders together with consumer advocates to try to find ways to make the private market work for all Americans. The Wagner Act’s recognition of unions to collectively bargain represented another example of trying to balance the playing field. According to Lizabeth Cohen, industrial workers influenced the course of the New Deal as workers’ benefits acquired during the boom years of the 1920s through welfare capitalism disappeared during the economic collapse of the Depression. Workers had grown to expect these programs and benefits, and they overwhelmed local and ethnic relief organizations with their demands as the Depression worsened. When corporations and local agencies failed to meet the demands of workers, they turned to the federal government. In aiding labor, the New Deal helped to construct the countervailing forces necessary to sustain capitalism.\textsuperscript{20}


\textsuperscript{20} Cohen, \textit{Making a New Deal}, 5-9, 363-67.
Another important example of constructing countervailing forces was the public-private entity that brought low cost electricity to parts of the rural South and Appalachia, the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Massive public works built dams to generate electricity then sold to rural Americans at rates that were affordable and reflected the cost of production rather than for pursuit of higher profit margins. The electrification of rural areas offered new markets for electric goods but its planners also hoped the project would help close the supposed gap between modern America and the backward regions of Appalachia. The TVA was an example of the New Deal targeting a specific region for public aid, a trend that would reemerge in the 1960s.

While some New Deal programs provided needed relief to Appalachians, many policies served to exacerbate existing regional weaknesses. Relief and work-relief programs like the WPA and CCC provided a needed cash flow into the mountains and Appalachian counties accounted for some of the largest federal expenditures in these programs. Further, the 1935 Wagner Act allowed the United Mine Workers to grow and agitate for improved wages and conditions for many in the coalfields (especially, after World War II). However, the conservation and agricultural policies of the New Deal often hurt the small and semi-subsistence farmers of the region. In the end, the New Deal was unable to address the underlying inequalities within Appalachian agriculture and the

region’s coal mining industry, conditions that grew worse following a temporary boom during World War II.²²

The level of government spending did not decrease after World War II; rather, it expanded. The prosperity of the postwar period grew with significant government help, especially defense spending for the Cold War and the government’s efforts to promote a new type of consumption-based American identity. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, consumption defined the American Dream; however, not everyone was able to participate. The frictions caused by defining the good life in materialist terms and the inability of many Americans to achieve this outcome threatened to burst into flames of unrest. In the mid-1960s, both the Kennedy and Johnson administrations pursued liberal reforms geared toward reducing these antagonisms.²³

John F. Kennedy ran for the presidency in 1960, charging the nation with a mission to see the future as a “New Frontier.” In his nomination acceptance speech, Kennedy laid out a vision of the need to address the “unconquered pockets of ignorance and prejudice [and] unanswered questions of poverty and surplus.”²⁴ Kennedy’s vision of reform drew heavily from the works of John Kenneth Galbraith and Arthur M.


²³ During the eight years of the Eisenhower administration, much of the basic liberal structure of the New Deal remained intact and some historians and political scientists, including Byron E. Shafer, argue that these years should be “understood as an extension of the political world of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal.” See, Byron E. Shafer, “The Two Majorities and the Puzzle of Modern American Politics,” in Byron E. Shafer and Anthony J. Badger, editors, Contesting Democracy: Substance and Structure in American Political History, 1775-2000 (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 225-37.

Schlesinger, Jr., who argued that in an age of affluence the government should help ensure a better quality of life for its citizens as well as expand economic opportunity. In this way, Kennedy saw his effort as a means by which to build upon and expand the New Deal’s liberal infrastructure, especially into areas like Appalachia where he had seen firsthand the crushing effects of poverty when he toured West Virginia during the primaries. His first legislative success, the Area Redevelopment Administration targeted specifically those areas of poverty he spoke of in his inaugural address: Native American reservations, the rural South, Appalachia, and central cities. Other examples of Kennedy’s efforts include adjusting minimum wage standards and whom these regulations covered, supporting the seven-decade old call for “equal pay for equal work” for women, and expanding public sector collective bargaining rights.

Other efforts begun by Kennedy remained lingering in Congress in November 1963 when an assassin’s bullet ended the young president’s life. Upon assuming the office of the presidency, Lyndon Johnson sought to push the flagging bills through Congress and began to craft his own reform agenda. Johnson had long roots in liberal reform, getting his start in the National Youth Administration established under the New Deal. The new president’s vision of the so-called “Great Society” was not one of equal outcomes but equal opportunities for all Americans—embodied in the War on Poverty, the push for Medicare and Medicaid, and, especially, in his championing of Head Start and student loan programs to increase access to education.


26 Bernstein, Promises Kept, 192-217.

Appearing in an age of supposed affluence, Johnson’s efforts were coupled with reassurances to the middle class that their successes over the previous two decades would not be threatened by the retooling the Great Society called for, rather the middle class would provide the ideal standard for which programs would strive. Like much of the New Deal, Johnson’s Great Society interwove top-down expert driven reform with grassroots organizing. Moreover, where the New Deal offered a way to ameliorate an immediate crisis, the Great Society sought to improve quality of life by making the postwar American Dream a little closer to reality for many, as such Johnson’s efforts touched on issues Roosevelt actively tried to avoid, including civil rights. Roosevelt attempted to evade questions of racial discrimination fearing that such actions may alienate important Southern leaders of his party; in fact, only when confronted with the possibility of a mass march on Washington, D.C., in 1941, well after the bulk of New Deal programs had run their course, did he agree to establish the Fair Employment Practices Committee. Thus, the New Deal made only minimal, if any, efforts to prevent discrimination in labor unions and pursued agricultural policies that aided landowners but harmed sharecroppers, who were disproportionately black. By trying to avert Southern resistance to his policies, Roosevelt left millions of Americans out of the New Deal. With the Civil Rights Act of

28 Capp, The Great Society, 2-8; Andrew, Lyndon Johnson and the Great Society, 4-14; Dallek, Flawed Giant, 112-20, 221-26.

1964, initially Kennedy, but then Johnson, sought to open not just merely jobs to blacks, but managerial and professional career paths. Historian Nancy MacLean argued that it was blacks on the ground who made the act work, because they seized the opportunity it afforded and forced employers to adhere to the new law. Thus, local action in the 1960s, like local action in the 1930s, made reforms realities. In this way, MacLean echoes Lizabeth Cohen’s New Deal arguments.

Johnson, like Kennedy, placed a great deal of emphasis on liberal reforms targeting what some identified as pockets of poverty, such as Appalachia. In early May 1964, President Johnson made brief remarks in Athens, Ohio, where he stressed the important role college students would play in the effort to eradicate poverty. Johnson stated this struggle would stand as “the glory of your generation,” and went on to say, “there is in front of you young people today the promise of a greater tomorrow,” that could only be achieved through their willingness to take up the burden of expanding opportunity to their fellow citizens. On May 22, 1964, Johnson delivered the commencement address at the University of Michigan. In this speech, the president sounded similar notes as he had struck in Athens at the beginning of the month when he laid out the meaning of the Great Society to his Ann Arbor audience:

The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time. But that is just the beginning. The Great Society is a place where every child can find knowledge to enrich his mind and to enlarge his talents. … It is a place where


men are more concerned with the quality of their goals than the quantity of their goods. But most of all, the Great Society is not a safe harbor, a resting place, a final objective, a finished work. It is a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor.  

The themes Johnson stressed reminded Americans of the hope, optimism, and sense of mission that accompanied Kennedy’s call for the New Frontier four years earlier. As a commencement address, it called on the young people assembled to go out and build a better country, a better world. Johnson believed that this better society would provide a greater quality of life for all Americans and extend the opportunity for material success to any person willing to work regardless of race, class, or gender.

Both the Athens and Ann Arbor speeches echoed Johnson’s January 1964 State of the Union Address. In that speech Johnson argued poverty was a root cause for many of the evils that threatened American society and that no single piece of legislation would solve the problems of poverty and injustice in America but only a concerted effort, stating:

Very often a lack of jobs and money is not the cause of poverty, but the symptom. The cause may lie deeper in our failure to give our fellow citizens a fair chance to develop their own capacities, in a lack of education and training, in a lack of medical care and housing, in a lack of decent communities in which to live and bring up their children. … Our aim is not only to relieve the symptoms of poverty, but to cure it and, above all, to prevent it.  

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These speeches all ring with an optimism in America’s future that would seem out of place only a few years later as the war in Vietnam began to raise serious questions about American ideals and values.\textsuperscript{34}

In his 1964 State of the Union address, Johnson also specifically targeted Appalachia as a site for his War on Poverty, again building on both the New Deal and the Kennedy administration’s efforts. In 1961, Kennedy initiated the Area Redevelopment Administration (ARA) as a way to address what seemed like the anomalous regional poverty that remained in the United States despite widespread prosperity that had emerged in the decade and a half since the Second World War. Americans in the Sixties struggled to understand the root cause of poverty in a land supposedly overflowing in abundance. Several theories existed, one posited a cultural construction that reinforced the bad behaviors leading to poverty; while others saw deviation from the supposedly normative white, middle-class familial structure of two-parent households as the cause; still others saw poverty as a race issue. Johnson saw multiple causes for poverty, thus explaining his belief that no single policy could solve the problem. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 created the Community Action Program (CAP), which sought to empower the poor politically, by organizing into local units that could serve as a countervailing force to that of local business and political elites. Through CAP and the

\textsuperscript{34} While a declensionist narrative of the Sixties has served for decades as the central framework for understanding the period and has allowed for the construction of a value-laden popular image of a “good” versus “bad” Sixties, simply suggesting a change in rhetorical language from one part of the decade to another should not be misconstrued as validating or perpetuating that narrative framework.

Appalachian Redevelopment Act of 1965, the Johnson administration built on the steps taken by the Kennedy administration to improve the lives of people residing in the vast region stretching from Central Pennsylvania to Northern Alabama. An overarching Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) served as a top-down administrative coordinator for antipoverty programs in the region. Like the rest of his Great Society programs, Johnson saw the effort to address poverty in Appalachia as a way to bring people into contact with the opportunities for success and, thereby, to not just equal but surpass the impact of previous liberal reform efforts under the New Deal.

World War II and the Vietnam War:

How the Depression Generation responded to war in the 1930s and 1940s provides another site of comparison with the Baby Boom Generation. World War II was not “the last good war,” a war embraced by the whole of American society. By-and-large, popular opinion ran stridently against war throughout the late-1930s and into 1940. Anti-interventionists dominated Congress and spoke loudly through the outlets of public opinion—newspapers and news magazines in particular. Americans favored neutrality, because of their memories of World War I; many believed that munitions manufacturers and politicians drew the United States into the Great War when American interests were not directly threatened. Even as portions of Europe, Africa, and Asia fell to Axis Powers through the 1930s, Americans did not want to entangle themselves in a foreign war.

Thousands rejected, evaded, or resisted the 1940 Burke-Wadsworth conscription law. Some formed families; others sought deferments or exemptions from military service, while a small minority actively refused to participate with conscription at all.

During the 1930s, while the United States Congress passed a series of neutrality acts, thousands of American men swore a modified version of the Oxford Oath, refusing military service unless the enemy invaded the nation. The radical and anti-militarist positions of so many young men frightened many leaders in the United States. In response to the growing antiwar sentiment and political activism at the University of Pittsburgh, Chancellor John G. Bowman initiated a student loyalty oath requiring students to pledge their fidelity to not just the laws of the United States but also the regulations of the University.

When war seemed on the horizon, many thousands of American men sought any and all ways to avoid military service. The image of patriotic Americans storming recruitment offices to volunteer to fight for the American cause in World War II is more rhetoric than reality. When the Burke-Wadsworth Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 established the first peacetime draft in American history, millions of Americans

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36 On February 9, 1933, the Oxford Union debating society of Oxford University in England voted 275 to 173 to adopt a pledge to never again support “King and Country” in war. When the pledge came to the United States the references to the monarchy were, obviously, dropped but the sentiment remained the same. Students at Brown University constructed a widely circulated version with six central tenets, including the futility of war as a means of international peace and the refusal to train or serve in the military unless invasion directly threatened America or its interests. See, Mulford Q. Sibley and Philip E. Jacob, *Conscription of Conscience: The American State and the Conscientious Objector, 1940-1947* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1952), 28; Eagan, *Class, Culture, and the Classroom*, 57-71; Charles DeBenedetti, “Peace History, in the American Manner,” *The History Teacher* 18, 1 (November 1984): 91-92; Lawrence S. Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1933-1983* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1984), 4-7; Cohen, *When the Old Left was Young*, 79-83.

feared that totalitarianism (either fascist or communist, or both) was around the corner for the United States. Large numbers of college-aged men who signed the Oxford Oath over the previous decade refused to accept induction in 1940, arguing the government could not compel citizens to fight in wars they deemed unjust. Although, following the Pearl Harbor attack many of these men accepted military service with the logic that the Japanese attack amounted to the same thing as an invasion and therefore enlistment was consistent with their previous pledge. Hundreds of other young men simply refused to participate with the Selective Service System; some because they did not want to be drafted, others because they believed the entire system was immoral (if not illegal). In all, authorities arrested and jailed roughly six thousand men for refusing to accept conscription during World War II. While the number represents a small proportion of draft age men during the war, that these men felt such a strong conviction against conscription during World War II, the last “good war,” suggests a need to reevaluate both the popular and academic understandings of the war.\(^{38}\) Noncompliance with conscription as America drew closer to entering World War II largely stemmed from religious convictions, though there were many individuals who opposed the war on political

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grounds. This political opposition to the war runs counter to the popular imagination of World War II service by Americans, and suggests a connection to a much longer tradition of political dissent that reached forward into the Vietnam War era.

Beyond open resistance to the draft, the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 provided a number of exemptions that millions of Americans attempted to exploit. Policymakers used earlier conscription laws, including from World War I, as examples, although they made several changes to the 1940 law to make it more effective. Further, where the World War I conscription law suffered from a weak surveillance system that made it relatively easy for millions of men to slip through the draft without registering, the 1940 act had the benefit of an expanded bureaucracy and the ability of the federal government to “see” the vast majority of its citizenry. For many men seeking deferments in World War I the basis for their claim was that of dependency, someone (e.g., wife, child, elderly parent, etc.) needed their support and protection and leaving would jeopardize the well-being of this dependent. Despite the regularity of dependency claims during World War I, the majority of these efforts failed to ensure deferments or exemptions. The 1940 conscription act made the condition of fatherhood (i.e., dependency) one that virtually guaranteed deferment, in practice if not by the letter of the law. Given this relatively painless way to avoid military service, thousands of men married and rushed to start families.\(^{40}\) Ironically, the Depression Generation would chide


members of the Baby Boom Generation (whose numbers swelled due to some men’s effort to avoid the draft) for their supposedly un-American attempts to avoid military service.\(^4^1\)

Though both World War II and the war in Vietnam saw similar efforts at resistance that suggests Americans in both wars did not see them as “good” wars, the conflicts had little else in common. World War II was indeed a global conflict which drew the United States in as one of several allies, comprised from every continent, whereas the U.S. convinced only a handful of allied nations from Southeast Asia and Oceania to join its war in Vietnam—including Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand, who are often overlooked in both the history and memory of the war.\(^4^2\) In the 1960s, there was no threat that Vietnam would grow to overtake its neighbors as Japan had or exterminate six million people in the name of ethnic cleansing, as had the Nazis. The Vietnamese had not attacked American soil nor did their leaders espouse a vision of the future in which the Vietnamese dominated the world as racial and economic superiors. However, in the minds of some Americans, Vietnam was a proxy for the Soviet Union, or a more generalized monolithic Communism, and within the calculus of the zero-sum game of the domino theory, victory for Communist forces in Vietnam threatened the very existence of the United States. In fact, it was the supposed lessons of World War II that led to containment as the cornerstone of American foreign policy,

\(^{4^1}\) The spikes in marriage and birth rates in the 1940s proved anomalous to the general trends of the twentieth century and would have important implications for the next sixty years. See, May, *Homeward Bound*, xi-xvii; Goldberg, *America in the Forties*, 98.

thereby making Vietnam a necessary war—the fear that appeasement would only embolden American enemies.43

World War II supposedly saw the total mobilization of society and the economy to support the war effort. However, projections of a unified home front obscured the realities of American domestic life. Despite the best efforts of government agencies’ poster campaigns and images found in American cinema that spoke of the need to sacrifice, thousands of Americans hindered the war effort by pursuing self-interest over sacrificing for the nation, by participating in the black market or through absenteeism. No matter how many times Captain America slugged Adolf Hitler in the face or other superheroes fought alongside the Allies in the pages of comic books, Americans had not fully invested themselves in the war.44

The myth of the Greatest Generation, the supposed generation of giants willingly and faithfully suffering for the greater good of society, crumbles under the weight of the reality of their wartime experiences on the home front. When confronted with wartime rationing, an obvious example of patriotic suffering, countless Americans engaged in a thriving black market rather than play by the rules or sacrifice. The massive mobilization for war created new jobs and with them, a certain level of new prosperity built on forced savings, in some cases, and prohibitions on producing certain types of consumer


44 A February 1940 issue of the popular Sub-Mariner comic showed Captain America punching Hitler and over the next few months and years the war became a constant backdrop or plot device for storylines. See, David Hajdu, *The Ten-Cent Plague: The Great Comic-Book Scare and How It Changed America* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2008), 55, 86-87.
durables. These restrictions represented mere speed bumps on the reinvigorated highway of consumption created during the war years. With new wealth, Americans wanted to purchase some of the things denied them during the Depression—spending on non-durables and services jumped as a result of war wages. In some cases, as people experienced having disposable income for the first time in a decade they engaged in illegal activities, with little concern for how their consumption may affect supplies potentially necessary for the war effort. Furthermore, just as the war created a marriage and baby boom, as some attempted to evade the draft and others married due to societal and cultural pressures, these changes also generated an adultery and divorce boom. Countless American soldiers received “Dear John” letters or heard second-hand of their wives (or girlfriends) engaged in potentially adulterous relationships.\textsuperscript{45} Sexual desires and self-aggrandizement were just as rampant among those who faced World War II as among their children facing war in Vietnam. Thus, the reactions to the war in Vietnam show surprising consistency with World War II—a large number of Americans questioned the need for war, some refused to comply fully with the conscription system, and others pursued self-interest over sacrifice for the supposed good of the national war effort.

Some of this antiwar sentiment in the Sixties resulted from how the Johnson administration framed the war for the American people. President Roosevelt had presented World War II as a struggle for survival requiring total commitment by all Americans. However, President Johnson offered a paradoxical image of the war in

Vietnam as simultaneously a small and inconsequential police action as well as an existential crisis that threatened the very foundation of American society. The jumbled messages left Americans to try to make sense of conflicting ideas that suggested their very way of life was at stake because of the creeping hand of Communism yet they did not need to alter their daily lives substantially to accommodate the war effort.\textsuperscript{46} Given such inconsistency in messaging, it only seems natural that opposition to American involvement in Vietnam—seizing on the war’s seemingly inconsequential necessity and therefore questionable morality—would grow over time. A problem further exacerbated by the use of body counts during the Vietnam conflict as a measure of success as opposed to the acquisition of territory, as World War II had. However, even the consistent use of total war imagery and existential rhetoric during World War II did not fully unify the American populace behind the necessity of the war effort or their need to sacrifice for its success.

Just as war opponents during World War II looked to resisters and peace activists of World War I, the opposition to the war in Vietnam also drew on antecedents of resistance, sometimes quite directly. Much as revisionist interpretations of World War I influenced students in the 1930s with their accusations that the government colluded with weapons manufacturers to draw the United States into war in 1917, students of the Vietnam War era adopted revisionist critiques of American policies and actions. These interpretations argued the United States was an imperial power and had been so throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and they also placed economics at the

center of America’s foreign policy decision-making in both the World War II and throughout the Cold War.\footnote{47} Furthermore, opponents to the Vietnam War era draft often turned to pacifists from World War II for guidance and inspiration. Similarly, World War II veterans provided important inspirational and physical leadership to the civil rights movement of the Sixties as had veterans of World War I to efforts in the 1930s and 1940s.\footnote{48} Many of the antiwar organizations formed in the Sixties existed to mobilize students as a class against college administrators and national political authority much as the student groups of the 1930s had done previously. In both cases, the efforts at college student mobilization rested on appeals to their duties and obligations as citizens. In the end, the greatest difference between opposition to the World War II and that of Vietnam was the sheer magnitude of the latter—in some ways, a result of the baby boom generated in part by those seeking to avoid World War II.

The popular imagination has created a sense of nearly complete disunity between the Greatest and Baby Boom Generations. However, from liberal reform movements to their reactions to war, these two generations shared much in common. Boomers sought to expand on the structures created by the earlier generation and looked to its members for


guidance and inspiration. Just as World War II strained the internal cohesion of the Old Left, Vietnam threatened to tear asunder the New Left. The generation gap seen in the Sixties grew from a conflict between parents unwilling to see their children as adults and young people rejecting their parents’ continued authority over them as they emerged into adulthood. Over the decades, the popular imagination has overemphasized the differences between the two generations and obscured their similarities.

The Cold War, Youth Culture, and the Baby Boomers:
The generation that sought economic security through the New Deal and existential security through World War II, retained their concerns for national security in the postwar period, but also increased their focus on a dream deferred, prosperity. The postwar years reimagined the so-called “American Dream” as a white, suburban paradise of consumer bliss. The idyllic image of this dream included a nuclear family living in a suburban ranch house stacked from floor to ceiling with the latest consumer necessities like washing machines and radios and, at least, one car in the garage. This generation settled into an unsure but relatively optimistic postwar life and hoped their worst days were behind them.49 The scholarship on Appalachia during the early Cold War years (1945-1960) does not fully explore how these national trends played out regionally. Thus,

scholars leave readers to assume that these trends existed within the region but how and their exact impact is hard to determine.\footnote{For a partial exploration of the Cold War in Appalachia, see: Jerry Bruce Thomas, \textit{An Appalachian Reawakening: West Virginia and the Perils of the Machine Age, 1945-1972} (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Press, 2010).}

Despite contemporary, politically driven mythmaking, postwar prosperity was the result of neither the triumph of unfettered individuals nor the unregulated private economy. Rather, postwar prosperity rested on continued massive government spending, especially on defense—a formula that had helped draw the United States out of the Depression.\footnote{Stephanie Coontz, \textit{The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap} (New York: Basic Books, 2000), xi-xix; Marcus, \textit{Happy Days and Wonder Years}, 1-4, 204.} Coupled with massive federal expenditures was the political promotion of consumption as a weapon in the burgeoning Cold War with Communist Russia. The American government promoted, encouraged, and facilitated mass consumption by its citizens as part of its propaganda war against the Soviets. The government’s efforts sought to highlight the relative strengths and weaknesses of Capitalism and Communism, generate internal unrest in Soviet-controlled regions, and ensure continued domestic support for the American capitalist model.\footnote{Cohen, \textit{A Consumers’ Republic}, 113-27, 134}

Various sources of Cold War culture conveyed the values of the era. From television and movies to music and magazines, even in comic books, young people confronted images and ideas that defined good citizenship, responsibility, and equality. Control over these cultural productions and the messages they conveyed became a central concern as America’s propaganda war with the Soviet Union escalated in the 1950s. The result was the development of a youth culture that generally accepted middle-class
assumptions of American classlessness and egalitarian tolerance as normative. When some of these young people saw an American reality failing to meet these ideals, they sought various ways to remedy these inconsistencies. Regardless, a Baby Boom youth culture existed prior to the politicization and polarization of the 1960s.

Baby Boomers grew up in the new suburban subdivisions of Cold War America in part due to the vast reach of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944. The G.I. Bill, as the act became known, provided money for schooling and to start a business, but equally important, it allowed veterans to buy a home through its loan program. The G.I. Bill represented one of the largest pieces of social welfare legislation ever undertaken by the United States government. While current political remembering of the postwar period attempts to obscure the massive government spending of the G.I. Bill as one of the key factors in ensuring a return to prosperity following World War II, Americans at the time initially recognized the importance of government spending to generating affluence. However, the general attitude toward this form of government spending differed from other welfare programs as the American public saw servicemen as “deserving” of government aid.53 As the nation turned toward a promotion of the individual and self-reliance as values, many began to forget intentionally that their homes, businesses, or education came from large government spending. Further, the McCarthyist fear-mongering of the 1950s helped detach this mental connection between prosperity and social welfare in the American imagination, making the G.I. Bill less of a model for

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future government welfare programs and more of a dividend paid for military services rendered.\textsuperscript{54}

Once unleashed, the politics of fear, which President Truman used to declare American support for Greece and Turkey and institute the Marshall Plan as ways to deter communism soon became an untamable beast that terrorized the American populace for the better part of the next forty years. Pundits and politicians told the American people to be vigilant and to maintain a heightened state of awareness to the potential saboteurs and provocateurs who sought to poison the well of American capitalist democracy. Politicians increasingly felt pressure to prove their “toughness” on Communism or risk losing power; the result was a compulsion to speak in hyperbolic, aggressive, and, even, jingoistic language and to engage in a reckless game of brinksmanship that threatened global nuclear annihilation.\textsuperscript{55} As the philosophical barriers between Nazi Fascism and Soviet Communism blurred in the public discourse into a unitary “totalitarianism,” some feared that American politicians would fail to learn the supposed lessons from Munich and would appease Soviet plots for global domination.\textsuperscript{56}


\textsuperscript{55} Robert Dean argued that an aggressive masculinity, forged in the boarding schools that served as breeding grounds for American leaders of the early Cold War, framed views of appropriate actions in the realm of foreign relations. The idea that one must show toughness and resolve, born in these relationships of their youth, remained an active component of their worldviews as decision-makers in the 1950s and 1960s. Failure to act appropriately was to beemasculated. Thus, a cult-like fascination with a virile masculinity helped to define the problem at the heart of the Second World War—appeasement was the antithesis of the appropriate masculine response. In this way, failure to oppose Communism stridently equaled appeasement, and thereby, through the transitive property, equaled emasculation. See, Robert D. Dean, \textit{Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy} (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 3-7.

\textsuperscript{56} Thomas G. Patterson, \textit{Meeting the Communist Threat: Truman and Reagan} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 3-17; Leffler, \textit{The Specter of Communism}, 56-63; Anderson, \textit{The Movement and
Strident anticommunism became the cudgel to bludgeon the American public into accepting the constructed status quo. The culture of security developed during economic crisis and global war of the 1930s and 1940s coalesced around fears of atomic tragedies and Soviet conquest by the 1950s. These fears made Americans wary of exploring the existing divisions in society and motivated the construction of universal images of an ideal normative; the desire to present a unified front allowed anticommunists to denounce as un-American anything that threatened to shatter these fragile projections. Thus, having friends and strangers alike perceive one as living up to these supposedly universal middle-class images became an important motivation for many to fall in line and accept the status quo.57 Consensus politics meant that efforts to expand the social safety net, ensure greater racial or gender equality, or create further regulations on business would spark anti-Communist denunciations. Conservatives attacked civil rights activists, labor leaders, and, generally, those who professed a political orientation left-of-center as Communists, fellow travelers, or dupes who would lead to the final collapse of the American democratic-capitalist world.58 The Communist boogeyman created and


nurtured by the McCarthyist hysteria of the early-1950s proved hard to kill, especially since it proved adaptable to so many circumstances.

The Cold War and the ever-present threat of a nuclear exchange deeply influenced how Americans lived—from the homes they lived in to the ways they traveled to work, from how they prepared their food to what subjects schools taught—and the new culture they envisioned rested on hope, fear, and security. Begun a few years after the conclusion of World War II, the Cold War remained a threat to peace and security as the newborn children of returning servicemen (and draft avoiders) reached military age themselves. Atomic power, in both the form of energy and weapons, provided a great deal of hope and anxiety. Scientists became celebrities, new space-age gadgets entered the home, and fears of nuclear annihilation loomed in the postwar atomic age. To manage these anxieties, some American turned to other scientists who created a variety of new pharmaceutical remedies and promised “better living through chemistry.”  

The Cold War era rested on simplistic binary constructions that politics and culture then reified as natural and inherent, as seen in the period’s emphasis on religion and religiosity. American policymakers decried the Soviet Union as secular atheists because of Marx’s attack on religion; thus, the United States became the bastion of free religious expression. It was during the mid-1950s that American officials inserted “under

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10-15; Borstelmann, The Cold War and the Color Line, 3-4, 221-26; Nikhil Pal Singh, Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 6-8; Wilson, Communities Left Behind, xiv.

God” into the Pledge of Allegiance and added “In God We Trust” to the currency as outward manifestations of this religiosity. Good Americans demonstrated their patriotism through weekly attendance of religious services, lack of attendance could signal one’s non-conformist and possibly subversive tendency to an ever-vigilant community.

Attending church became a standard, routinized part of the average American’s life, in the same way one went to school or work each weekday. For many in Cold War America, religious activity had become largely transactional, like going to the movies or out to dinner, regular attendance of weekly services and rote recital of quasi-religious phrases purchased the perception of patriotism. For others, especially in the civil rights movement, religion served as guide and inspiration; they called on their fellow Americans to live up to and act upon their Judeo-Christian values, that only through such action could they find spiritual fulfillment. In the Sixties, many young people, especially, though not exclusively, among the New Left, rejected the transactional and seemingly shallow nature of Cold War American religion in favor of a religious activism that seemed to promise spiritual fulfillment. It was not just leftists and liberals who found a political connection to the growing religiosity in America during the Cold War, a growing evangelical movement fused Christian teachings with anticommunism and other conservative political philosophy to give rise eventually in American politics to a religious right.  

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Raised in the Depression Generation’s white suburban American Dream of security in an age of anxiety, the Baby Boom Generation developed and members of this generation would come to question much of the world around it. In this way, there is an distinctive difference between what one may call the “Baby Boom Generation,” which began to coalesce in the 1950s and encompassed the majority of American youths, and the “Sixties Generation,” which, especially in popular political and academic discourses, has come to suggest the politicized (specifically liberal to radical) youth culture of the Vietnam War era. The politicized radicals and New Left of the Sixties Generation dismissed as fiction the notion of American tolerance and peacefulness and accepted revisionist interpretations of the postwar world in which the United States emerged less as the guarantor of freedom and democracy and rather a hypocritical nation unable to live up to its ideals. However, before the Sixties Generation developed this biting critique of the world wrought by their parents, a generational cohesion that was apolitical developed. While young people on the political left and political right would come to see no unity in the charged atmosphere of the Sixties, they did share some commonalities, most of which were cultural.61

Fearing and Free: A Spiritual History of America’s Cold War (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).


The concept of the Baby Boom Generation emerged while the phenomenon was still unfolding. In part, this was a recognition of the influence of World War II on the nation’s birthrate—during the war and in the immediate postwar period when many soldiers returned home. America appeared to be awash in babies, young families littered the landscape occupying the new suburban subdivisions of ranch houses. Child-rearing advice flowed from all directions and the stores brimmed with the newest trends, gadgets, and necessities for the babies of today to grow into the citizens of tomorrow. However, not all Americans who wanted to could participate in this middle-class, white, suburban bliss that pumped around the nation through television programming and advertisements. Regardless, from birth, those around them conceived Baby Boomers as part of a new era in American history.

As Boomers grew, the conception of a generational coherency grew as well, inculcated among them from various sources: political, economic, and cultural. Political leaders and authority figures seemed almost incapable of controlling the impulse to refer to the youth of the 1950s (and 1960s) as the “future leaders of the nation.” They believed that these children needed guidance to achieve the proper love of country and respect for morality and “the American way” in order to assure security in the continuing Cold
War. In fact, Beth Bailey argued that the idea of fostering civic values in young people as “future citizens” was one of the main purposes of Cold War college life.

Through the 1950s, marketers increasingly focused on ways to target specific segments of the population such as young people. Research provided new insights into why consumers wanted to purchase specific items or, at least, how to advertise items as a way to meet the needs, conscious or not, of specific consumers. The emergence of television as a new medium facilitated this segmentation and offered an advantage over radio, which had already penetrated the middle-class household; consumers could see the product and the purported benefits from its consumption. Toy makers and producers of children’s food sponsored expanding numbers of programs meant to appeal to the young people who consumed their products. By better understanding market segmentation and creating programs and advertising that spoke to distinct groups rather than masses of people.

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supposedly uniform consumers, marketers helped to create, if only subconsciously, an idea of a shared identity—those who consume, or want to consume, a particular type or brand of product. In 1959, *Life* magazine ran a story claiming that “teen-agers act as hidden persuaders on their parents’ … buying habits” to the amount of $10 billion on things like food, beauty products, and entertainment.64 As children around the nation sat watching the same shows, they connected with each other in the shared cultural language and economic vision that suggested their wants and needs differed from their parents but were just as valid.65

Yet, a rampaging fear, tied to the McCarthyist scare and the culture of fear generated in the late-1940s and 1950s, was that the movies and entertainment targeting America’s youth were actually causing them to devolve and degenerate into delinquency. The fear that America’s youth were losing their social moorings, a fear stoked by sociologists like Fredric Werth and his book *Seduction of the Innocent* that argued comic books created juvenile delinquents, eventually led the United States Senate to investigate the origins of the problem. The Senate Judiciary Committee created a Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency in 1953, which held hearings around the country over the next few


The pervasiveness of advertising targeting young people as consumers can be seen in petitions registered to regulate such activities. In 1971, the Action for Children’s Television (ACT), a children’s advocacy group headquartered in Massachusetts, petitioned the Federal Trade Commission to prohibit the direct advertising of toys to young people via television. In their petition, ACT sites the marked increase in direct targeting of children as a market segment beginning in 1955. See, Action for Children’s Television, *Petition to Prohibit Advertisements for Toys on Children’s Television Programs, Before the Federal Trade Commission*, Washington, D.C., December 15, 1971.
years, including in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in an effort to root out the cause of teenage troublemaking. In the end, the committee, and other social critics alike, identified a permissive culture that glorified death, destruction, and mayhem in comic books and films combined with the threat to the supposed “traditional” family make-up caused by women increasingly working outside the home as the culprits for increasing delinquency. Therefore, to save America, authorities would need to clean up comic books and films and discourage women from abandoning their familial obligations.66

Oddly enough, television, another potential vice, served as a possible instrument to rectify the supposed social problems giving cause to delinquency. By 1955, two-thirds of American homes had at least a single television set, within five years that proportion would rise to nine-in-ten. Television infiltrated American homes reorienting the social space of the family and bringing national cultural norms within the walls of the vast sea of single-family homes.67 Positive, idealized images of stay-at-home mothers in white suburbia, where mayhem and violence simply did not exist, sought to generate a cultural wave to wash away the depravity clinging to American society.68


68 Television boomed in the wake of World War II and created a cultural change that Americans still confront today. Following President Roosevelt’s broadcast opening the 1939 New York World’s Fair, regular television broadcasts continued until 1942 when production restrictions meant no new receiver sets were forthcoming. In the immediate postwar years the few thousand television sets owned in the country were mostly clustered around New York City, though by 1950 regional broadcast networks linked the nation and television ownership was on the rise as print media increasingly acclaimed television as a vital component to the postwar good life. In its earliest days, television lacked regular programs, instead stations covered major happenings—sports and politics—and offered what Time magazine called a “window on history,” thereby allowing families to have near instantaneous access to the world from the comfort of their homes. In the immediate postwar years, television’s roughly twenty hours per week of nightly
network programming reached a wide swath of the population cutting across barriers of age, gender, race, and class in ways few other mediums could.69

By the mid-1960s, advertisers recognized both the near-ubiquitous nature of television and the strength of the youth market and created television specials aimed directly at America’s youth. The animated television Christmas specials of the mid-1960s, such as *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (1964), *A Charlie Brown Christmas* (1965), and *Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1966), used the backdrop of Christmas to issue social commentary, a practice that had roots in Charles Dickens’ 1843 *A Christmas Carol*. The three television tales offered simplistic stories in which the true meaning of Christmas washed away prejudices, doubts, and even contempt. However, encoded within each there are larger, socio-cultural concerns such as acceptance over discrimination, questions about mass consumption and consumerism, as well as suggesting appropriate gender roles.70 Teenagers who sat around their living rooms watching these Christmas specials when they originally aired in the mid-1960s would be, by decade’s end, populating college campuses around the nation or serving in the military around the world.

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Boomers grew up in a society that defined success and well-being in materialist terms, the accumulation of specific totems of middle class life. Owning a house, a car, a television set, and so on, served as the marker of entry into the middle class for adults; for kids, the consumption and the display of that consumption was also important to social status—at least, that is what marketers wanted kids to think. Seeing children as another way to pull in the revenue of their parents, companies began to develop items specifically for the new target market of teens and youth. Teenagers, almost universally white, became the protagonists of films and television series, and they became the agents through which corporations sold products to the new generation of American consumers.

One can find these larger trends regionally, too. In the case of Appalachia, though historiography of the region during the early Cold War years (1945-1960), would lead one to believe the Cold War bypassed it. Scholars have largely ignored or only tangentially addressed the above-discussed trends. If and when Appalachian scholars address issues such as suburbanization, urban sprawl, and highway development it is frequently to point to the region’s lack of urbanization or frustrations in constructing new highways as proposed by the 1956 National Interstate and Defense Highway Act due to the mountains’ difficult terrain. Discussions of domestic containment often appear couched in reference to unionization of the region’s miners and steelworkers. Few address, in any depth, the question of how Appalachians participated in the new consumer culture of the period, implying that the widespread poverty of the region left the citizens of the mountains incapable of such participation. Furthermore, while scholars continue to pull on the strings that wove together the military-industrial-academic complex, Appalachian universities and institutes remain unconnected to this tapestry.
Contemporary writers in the early 1960s offered interpretations of Appalachia’s Cold War experience that depicted the region as alienated from the larger trends of Cold War America, especially the perceived widespread affluence of the period. Works by Harry Caudill and Jack Weller in the early 1960s offered scathing attacks on the supposed colonial nature of Appalachian relations with the rest of the nation and lamented the culture of poverty foisted upon a once proud and independent people.\textsuperscript{71} In a February 1960 article for the \textit{Saturday Evening Post} entitled “The Strange Case of West Virginia,” reporter Roul Tunley depicted West Virginia—and thereby, the region of Appalachia—as America’s paradox. The article’s title, a play on Robert Louis Stevenson’s 1886 novel \textit{The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde}, suggested the deviant nature of the region; Appalachia was the brutish Mr. Hyde to modern America’s Dr. Jekyll.\textsuperscript{72} A survey undertaken by the Ford Foundation in the late-1950s and published in 1962 chronicled the substandard conditions in education, health services, and local government in the region while identifying a peculiar traditionalism and weaknesses in both coal mining and agriculture as the main reasons for the region’s deficiencies.\textsuperscript{73}

From contemporary writer and later historians a fairly consistent image of Cold War Appalachia emerged—one best encapsulated by the 1964 President’s Appalachian Regional Commission report’s statement that “Appalachia is a region apart.”\textsuperscript{74} In


\textsuperscript{74} President’s Appalachian Regional Commission, \textit{Appalachia: A Report By the President’s Appalachian Regional Commission, 1964} (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1964), xv.
accepting this framework, scholars have sought to explain Appalachian exceptionalism, in the process a self-replicating image of Appalachian victimhood emerged. Scholars have emphasized poverty, unions, and out-migration from the region as a way to highlight and explain Appalachia’s Cold War experience, often to the neglect of all other concepts. However, the wider trends of the Cold War era did not pass by Appalachia. A recent work by Jerry Bruce Thomas, *An Appalachian Reawakening*, offers some initial insights into how the region experienced the national trends highlighted. Though Thomas’ analysis of national trends is at times truncated and occasionally falls back on the conceptual frameworks of economic and labor history that have pervaded the field, his work offers a hopeful example for future scholarship as it removes the false notion that all Appalachians lived in some form of a Dickensian nightmare of poverty.\(^{75}\)

Baby Boomers who grew up in Appalachia did not live in an alien world devoid of the impulses and activities that affected the rest of their generation. If student activism during the Sixties was a response to the Cold War world they experienced, than the fact that northern Appalachian students engaged in similar activities as their national counterparts should suggest they were responding to similar stimuli. Thus, despite assumptions of Appalachian otherness and a dearth of scholarly studies that expand beyond poverty, unions, and migration during the period 1945 to 1960 in Appalachia, the student activism of the Sixties suggests a greater continuity with the national narrative.

In the end, the pursuit of security and middle class suburban visions of the good life provided in all regions of the country the social, political, and economic framework

\(^{75}\) Thomas, *An Appalachian Reawakening*. 

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for Baby Boomers’ early years. Increasingly, the young people of the 1950s and 1960s forged their own generational identity while they simultaneously became the target of various forces that helped shape that identity. A wide array of cultural outlets and constructions served to expand this nonpartisan identity. In the end, however, the images of this worldview would provide the basis for the politicization of the Sixties Generation.

Conclusion:

Often the popular imagination suggests that the youth rebellion of the Sixties lacked a coherent antecedent and existed purely as a rejection of the authority encapsulated in the handy phrase, “a generation gap.” However, in some ways, youth in the Sixties were reenacting (with their own interpretation) a play performed earlier by their parents’ generation. In calling into question America’s foreign policy goals and practices, resisting or evading conscription, seeking to ensure and enhance a liberal reform impulse, promoting civil rights, and engaging in a consumption-driven economy, Baby Boomers echoed the actions of the Depression Generation. Moreover, when one washes away the legends of the “Greatest Generation,” its members cease to exist as mythic figures and their humanity returns to them; and in doing so, one sees that even the Greatest Generation fails to meet the myths surrounding them.

Baby Boomers came into a world filled with their parents’ anxieties. The Depression Generation’s effort to achieve security led to consensus politics and social conformity, neither of which struck at the underlying tensions in American or global society. Television beamed images of white, suburban, middle-class bliss into American homes showing supposedly proper gender roles, suggesting appropriate outlets for youthful energies, and creating a nationally shared sense of American values, even in the
assumed alien region of Appalachia. Teenagers became the object of government studies and investigations, the target of advertisers, and, increasingly, subjects of Cold War political rhetoric. However, young people did not see themselves as stage props and gradually came to question the inconsistencies between the images and rhetoric invoked in the contemporary Cold War atmosphere and the reality of the world around them. The cognitive dissonance between the images and the reality of American life helped to politicize many within the Baby Boom Generation, giving rise to a distinct and separate Sixties Generation. In many ways, this separate, politicized group of young people were carrying on traditions of their parents—questioning authority, demanding greater rights, and objecting to war.

Many of the organizations and movements of the Sixties had direct or indirect connections with similar activities during the Depression and World War II. In some cases, the pacifists, draft resisters, civil and students’ rights advocates who had organized student movements in the 1930s and 1940s became official or unofficial leaders of the Sixties’ movements. Just as young peoples’ criticisms of militarism and interventionism during the 1930s grew from revisionist interpretations of World War I, New Left analyses of World War II and the origins of the Cold War inspired student activists during the Vietnam War era.

Thus, one needs to pull back the veil of memory engulfing both the Baby Boom and Depression Generations to understand better the experiences of the Sixties. In doing so, some of the uniqueness of the Sixties and the people who inhabited those years is replaced with a sense of continuity; the 1960s were not a dramatic break from American traditions but consistent with them in some ways. Baby Boomers envisioned themselves
as providing new answers to age-old questions, solving the problems created by the obsolete views of their parents. In this way, the young people of the Sixties were consistent with the pattern of American generations before them. Every generation defines anew the answers to questions of war and dissent, drawing inspiration from as well as rejecting the answers of previous generations. Thus, to understand better the decisions and actions of young people in the Sixties, one must recognize both the continuity and distinctiveness between the generations. While the questions, in general, carry on between each era the approaches, assumptions, and answers change significantly and are dependent on the context in which individuals understand them—in terms of both time and place.

Baby Boomers, like their parents before them, turned college campuses into platforms for the debate of important questions of the day. Throughout the nation, the Cold War raised questions about the nature of the university in American society, its relationship with the government, and the students’ role within its ever-expanding institutional structures and society at-large. Students at northern Appalachian universities confronted several converging factors that propelled many to political and social activism, including the cognitive dissonance created by the Cold War, an educational structure in flux, a generational call to take increased leadership, and the peculiar realities of Appalachia. Thus, the same questions of war and dissent, patriotism and citizenship, which the Greatest Generation answered within the context of economic depression and global war, confronted the Baby Boom Generation within an age of supposed affluence and limited war.
CHAPTER III

“BE TRUE TO YOUR SCHOOL”: 

THE CHANGING NATURE AND UNDERSTANDING OF UNIVERSITIES AND APPALACHIA BY THE 1960S

So be true to your school now
Just like you would to your girl or guy
Be true to your school now
And let your colors fly
Be true to your school
--“Be True to Your School,” The Beach Boys (1963)\(^1\)

Almost heaven, West Virginia
Blue ridge mountains, Shenandoah river
Life is old there, older than the trees
Younger than the mountains, growin’ like a breeze
--“Take Me Home, Country Roads,” John Denver (1971)\(^2\)

Introduction:

In the past twenty-five years, the historiography of student activism in the Sixties has shifted. The earliest academic works were participant memoirs from former white male activists in major chapters of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). These included

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works by Tom Hayden, Todd Gitlin, and Kirkpatrick Sale. These works also led to a narrative of the 1960s shaped by a framework that emphasized the rise and fall of mostly white New Left student activists. In recent years, scholars have expanded the historical gaze to other colleges and universities, by exploring student political and social activism in the Midwest, Great Plains, and South. However, one region left out of this discussion is Appalachia.

Examining student activism at universities in the region deepens our knowledge of the 1960s in two ways. First, it broadens our understanding of Appalachia more generally by moving beyond the standard tropes of poverty and backwardness. Second, by focusing on three universities—Ohio University, the University of Pittsburgh, and West Virginia University—one sees how students confronted questions of war and dissent, citizenship and patriotism, and through their actions and negotiations forged a new student-citizen identity. The student-citizen identity served as the basis for the cross-

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causal activism of students during the Sixties. Exploring its construction at these Appalachian universities helps to support and expand the growing historiography.

During the Sixties, millions of Baby Boomers flooded onto college campuses around the nation, several thousand to schools in northern Appalachia. College campuses became a central stage for the performance of political and social activism by American young people. Simultaneously, the campus environment was in transition as ever-increasing populations as well as expanding physical footprints and curricular offerings combined with a widening array of constituencies to form the “multiversity.” Further, the Cold War fueled the development of a military-industrial-academic complex. The changing spatial and administrative relationships of the Cold War American university became yet another impulse that stimulated student activism, as students increasingly conceived of themselves as citizens of both the nation and the university.

The dearth of scholarship on Appalachian students in the Sixties in part stems from a larger gap in Cold War Appalachian historiography and the popular conception of Appalachia as backward, apathetic, and outside the mainstream of American society. The weight of the existing historiography of Appalachia during the Sixties presents the region as a site of poverty programs and labor unrest (mostly related to coal mining). These historical works emphasize the ideas of development and dependency and usually present Appalachia as a region outsiders acted upon rather than populated with activism from within.² Further, when scholars choose to examine Appalachia, they largely focus on the

² Thomas Kiffmeyer’s Reformers to Radicals represents the sole deviation from this scholarly situation as he explores how poverty activism radicalized the young people of the Appalachian Volunteers. However, Kiffmeyer also continues the focus on central and southern Appalachia. Thomas Kiffmeyer, Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).
central and southern components of the region, ignoring Ohio, Pennsylvania, and northern West Virginia.

The scholarly trend blends with the popular and political images from the era. The perceived paradox of Appalachian poverty in the midst of American prosperity became a national cause célèbre during the 1960 West Virginia Democratic Presidential Primary. With the media reporting his almost every move, in the spring of 1960, John F. Kennedy crisscrossed the Mountain State getting a firsthand view of rural poverty before winning a decisive victory in the May 10 primary. The popular and intellectual narrative of Appalachia formed in the primary continued under Kennedy’s presidency and into Lyndon Johnson’s shaping the national political response. Reformers undertook several efforts to overcome the backwardness of the region and drag it into the modern world.\(^3\) Appalachia was a key region targeted for aid by the Area Redevelopment Administration that began in 1961. In 1963, Kennedy formed the President’s Appalachian Regional Commission to begin the process of creating a new agency devoted to the region. Following Kennedy’s death, the Commission continued under President Johnson and issued its report in 1964. The report explored the depths of Appalachian poverty, deprivation, and neglect as well as outlined the development programs initiated to address these issues. The report opened with the statement that “Appalachia is a region

\(^3\) While Appalachian poverty had penetrated the consciousness of experts and federal officials more than twenty years earlier during the New Deal, popular conceptions of the region’s plight as out of step with prosperous America did not emerge until post-1960. New Deal era visions of Appalachian poverty were couched in terms of the wider effects of the Great Depression. Further, while questions of area redevelopment persisted through the early Cold War years (1945 to 1960), the abject poverty of Appalachia and its backwardness did not largely puncture the popular consciousness. For a discussion of how experts and federal officials viewed the plight of Appalachia, see: Gregory S. Wilson, *Communities Left Behind: The Area Redevelopment Administration, 1945-1965* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2009).
apart,” further reinforcing the narrative of Appalachian “otherness” to the supposedly true America. Through an application of modernization policies similar to those used to stimulate development in the Third World, the Kennedy and Johnson administrations sought to eradicate this pocket of poverty. Then in 1965, Congress created the Appalachian Regional Commission, which continues to promote economic development in the region.

Scholars have accepted a framework of Appalachian detachment from the wider American society, suggesting the region was a place apart. However, Appalachia was not apart from but a part of the larger trends in the United States during the Sixties, especially when it came to student activism at college and universities. While there are many similarities with activism in other parts of the United States, regionalism does play a role in shaping the particular manifestation and outcome of this activism.

To correct and enhance the historical narrative, scholars need to place (northern) Appalachia and its student activists within an expanded historical context, one that recognizes the regional context as well as the changing nature of American higher education. By exploring how the nature of higher education in the post-World War II era and the effects of the Cold War on campus created the conditions for activism, historians can better situate and understand the experiences of the Sixties. To facilitate this historiographical expansion, scholarship on Appalachia, its component parts and its relationship with the larger American society, needs to move beyond the tropes of development and dependency. By investigating Ohio University, the University of

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Pittsburgh, and West Virginia University as case studies, one can link the Appalachian
town with the Cold War gown.

**American Universities during the Cold War & the Forging of Student Identity:**

Scholars, administrators, and the general population have long debated the purpose and
nature of the university in American life. Further, students have added their own voice to
the negotiations of what college should be and what it should do for those who attend. In
this sense, the Cold War years and the Sixties were not unique; however, the outcomes
and structures created during these years do suggest a deviation from pre-World War II
understandings of higher education.

The role of universities in society represents one of the enduring questions of
American higher education. From the colonial era to the twentieth century, the dominant
view in the United States held that the central role of college was to create and sustain an
American elite. However, industrialization and Populist-Progressive reform impulses in
the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries fostered curricular changes that meant
rather than only providing instruction in the liberal arts and sciences, colleges should and
would also provide the specialized technical and professional training necessary for
industrial society. By the middle decades of the twentieth century, World War II and the
Cold War shifted the debates again: the advent of the military-industrial-academic
complex altered the relationship of colleges with the government, students, and society.
Tensions emerged from the pressures and possibilities associated with the Cold War and
ballooning enrollments thanks to the G.I. Bill and the Baby Boom. By 1960, as the first
wave of the Baby Boomers entered college, enrollments totaled 3.5 million students
around the nation. Debates surrounding higher education in America were between those who saw the goal of college as career preparation and those who believed that the institution should foster an independent and general desire for learning.⁵

Not only was the larger purpose of the university a subject of debate, so too was the role of the student and student culture. Student activism of the 1960s was part of these shifting historical trends as well. Literary and debating societies created by students to hone skills necessary for their assigned recitations and examinations represented a central component of nineteenth century student life. In the wake of the Civil War, these forms of extracurricular activities lost their appeal as students turned to social fraternities (and sororities). The identifiable features of twentieth century collegiate life (defined by non-scholastic, social activities beyond the classroom) arose by the turn of the twentieth century.⁶ A growing constituency of students put less emphasis on curricular success, seeing classes as the price paid to enjoy the fun and games of an extended adolescence—and the building of bonds that would propel individuals into the successful ranks of America’s upper middle-to-upper class. As scholar of undergraduate cultures, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz noted a dichotomy emerged among students as they attempted to define the essential collegiate experience between those who advocated a curricularly

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defined collegiate experience ("careerists") and those who prized the juvenile extracurricular experiences ("insiders"). However, she argued a third student identity emerged during the twentieth century that of the "rebel"— one who simultaneously prized social success and learning, if not necessarily a concern with grades. These rebels directly opposed the cultural world of the supposed "insiders," creating an alternate definition of collegiate social life. 7 Thus, as the Sixties dawned a tripartite structure of student cultures existed on college campuses. Many of the changes identified during the early Cold War years have links to the G.I. Bill and the growing military-industrial-academic complex spawned by the Cold War.

In the wake of World War II, millions of veterans took advantage of education benefits under Title II of the Serviceman’s Readjustment Act of 1944 (or, G.I. Bill). Enrollments at colleges and universities doubled in only a few months leading to a number of logistical problems from housing, to classroom spaces, to finding qualified instructors. While the bulk of the student-veterans were white men, the G.I. Bill did offer a way to advanced education for women and minorities, though it did not act as a wedge to break down barriers of segregation. In the end, large class sizes, mechanically graded exams, graduate-student-led discussion sections, and a number of other innovations became standard procedures maintained even after the flood of World War II student-veterans receded from campuses. In accommodating the swell of student-veterans, many universities built new facilities and expanded faculty sizes, suggesting they intended to pursue a policy of recruitment that would prevent enrollments from dropping to prewar levels. Thus, the large physical footprint and distant professorate that were essential

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7 Horowitz, Campus Life, 15-19.
components of what some later labeled as the “multiversity” grew because of massive veteran enrollments facilitated by the G.I. Bill. Further, the many student services that one associated with Veterans Affairs became important components of an expanding university bureaucratic structure—guidance and career counseling as examples. The careerist impulse of many student-veterans, a large number of whom flocked to professional and vocational programs, did upset the balance of student cohorts threatening the campus power of insiders. However, veterans did not entirely reject fraternities, football, and fun, but they came to these on their own terms.8

The G.I. Bill also altered the relationship between institutions of higher education and the federal government, an alteration that would resonate in the development of the military-industrial-academic complex. Schools relied on federal funds to build the facilities necessary to accommodate the student-veterans at the same time the federal government sought to stimulate research beneficial for winning the Cold War. Large sums of money flowed into schools, which helped reinforce the expansionism stimulated by the G.I. Bill. By 1960, universities drew nearly $1.5 billion from the federal government, largely from the Department of Defense.9 Some administrators and political leaders expressed trepidation at linking university and military research agendas. One

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such critic was Senator J. William Fulbright (D-Arkansas), who denounced the military-industrial-academic complex as a corrupting influence on the mission of higher education. He argued that:

the highest function of higher education is what might be called the teaching of things in perspective, toward the purposes of enriching the life of the individual, cultivating the free and inquiring mind, and advancing the effort to bring reason, justice, and humanity into the relations of men and nations. … [W]hen a university becomes very closely oriented to the current needs of the government, it takes some of the atmosphere of a place of business while losing that of a place of learning … [and it becomes] nothing more than the servant of the party in power.  

Some defended expanded Defense Department research as a patriotic duty undertaken by American universities. The sense of government research as patriotic meant a need to be vigilant against the nations’ enemies that may try to steal or sabotage the precious research thus allowing the creeping hand of anti-Communist crusaders to penetrate into the college campus. During the early Cold War years, several hundred professors had their careers threatened or ruined by the intrusive efforts by college administrators and government agencies. The Second Red Scare at American colleges and universities stretched across the nation effecting elite, prestigious private institutions as well as small state colleges. Many were targeted less because of their actions in the classroom as to private political beliefs. Administrators who facilitated these purges often had little personal ideological difficulty with their faculty holding Communist or radical beliefs but feared standing in the way of the seemingly popular crusade could harm their school’s public image or threaten the flow of federal monies.

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11 Ellen W. Schrecker, No Ivory Tower: McCarthyism and the Universities (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Lionel S. Lewis, Cold War on Campus: A Study of the Politics of Organizational Control (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1988); Charles H. McCormick, This Nest of Vipers:
During a series of lectures in 1963, later published as The Uses of the University, Clark Kerr laid out a detailed analysis of the state of the modern American university created in part through the innovations adopted to respond to the influx of student-veterans and expanded federal funding opportunities. Kerr, the chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley and president of the University of California system at the time, argued that the modern American university did not represent one, unique campus culture but rather had multiple constituencies, functions, and centers of power and thus, represented a “multiversity.” Further, the expansion of many campuses’ physical footprint and curricular offerings over the previous decade created a greater physical and intellectual distance between students, faculty, and administrators, while adding a new constituency that of the Department of Defense or another federal funding agency.  

Divided campuses and conflicting notions of mission made college campuses ripe for unrest. The three general categories of students—insiders, careerists, and rebels—vied for preponderant power amongst the student population, while the university around them transformed into that of the multiversity. With increasing distance between student, faculty, and administrators, and as each sought to address various needs and constituencies, the social bonds that had once created a sense of a singular college community frayed leading to increased tension and animosity between the various

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12 Kerr, The Uses of the University, 15-22.
groups. On top of the internal divisions growing within universities one must add the pressures wrought by the Cold War, as the fear of Communist subversion led to investigations, dismissals, or forced resignations of faculty and administrators as well as large sums of federal monies flowing into university coffers to support research deemed necessary for national security. More and more claims were made of rightful access to the collegiate campus space that it became increasingly difficult to discern the mission of the university and the meaning of studenthood.

The multiversity concept in action created a level of anxiety amongst students, as they felt increasingly distant and disenfranchised while universities expanded their course offerings and physical footprints. The jolting transitions of the multiversity left students to try to define themselves, their roles, and their community within an increasingly faceless university society. In response to the diverse web of impulses and expectations that pulled students in myriad and contradictory directions, a contested student community developed. Students invented their own culture in which they imagined a united campus based on shared experiences, frustrations, and aspirations. For many students, the creation of a unified student body was an explicit and intended action; for others, the sense of shared “studentness” was incidental and, at times, seen as overly contrived. Though never fully unified, student communities emerged—as students of a

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14 Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, 31-34.
particular university or field of study, for instance, but also as a shared trans-campus identity that spanned the United States and, especially in the 1960s, the world.

Students conceived of themselves as connected, though they never met each other; they saw themselves as sharing basic experiences; they attempted to define themselves in dialectic opposition to faculty and administrators; and the campus newspapers served as the conduit that perpetuated this forged identity. The new identity of “student” built on existing ideas of a generational cohesion among young people. This generational identity was highly pronounced among the students in the Vietnam War era, since before they could remember the national imagination had conceived of them as a shared unit: “the Baby-Boom Generation.” Throughout their childhoods, multiple sources inundated them with ideas about their importance and an imagined unity developed. Youth became an essential target consumer market during the 1950s, and correspondingly, entertainment, recreation, and consumption altered to meet the demands (or to generate demand within) the younger generation.

Ultimately, the competing definitions of studenthood, created by the students, are important for understanding their political and social activism during the Vietnam War era. The shared experiences of going to class, studying, and doing homework generally linked all various student identities—insiders, careerists, and rebels—though even here there were some who considered themselves outsiders; not so much students, but simply one who took a class or classes. Often the distinctions of studentness came from what

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16 See, CHAPTER 2
happened outside the classroom: who one’s friends were, where one lived, in what extracurricular activities one participated. Someone living off campus who did not participate in any organizations or clubs may not have conceived of themselves as a member of the student body, though they fit a broad, administrative, definition of student.\(^\text{17}\)

These contested definitions of studentness saturated student newspapers as they reported on activities and events around campus. Homecoming and Greek Week events echoed with the assumed definitions of student as one associated with a fraternity or sorority, the insiders. The student government and campus-wide events, such as Homecoming Court, often divided the campus community into two factions: Greek and “independent.” The moniker “independent” represented an inherently biased term that lumped together vastly different sets of people (e.g., careerists and rebels) who may not necessarily have seen themselves as sharing anything in common beyond not being members of a Greek social society. The newspapers often encouraged students to attend sporting events and show their support for the school’s athletic teams, especially the football team and in doing so they set up the dichotomy of those who cheered on their school’s teams as true students whereas those who did not were false or weak students lacking in necessary school spirit.

In the early years of the 1960s, while most universities increasingly adapted the multiversity concept and expanded with the assistance of the military-industrial-academic

complex of the Cold War, students largely did not engage in social or political activism; or, more to the point, whatever activism students did engage in did not always find its ways into the campus newspapers. There were exceptions, of course—black students especially were active in places like North Carolina A&T, or Fisk University, where the student sit-in phase of the black freedom struggle was underway. By-and-large, the northern Appalachian student papers filled their pages with the latest on Greek social organizations and other social events during the first years of the Sixties.

The front pages were often awash in stories chronicling the events and experiences that supposedly tied the expanding northern Appalachian campus communities together, such as parades, dances, and extracurricular activities. These invented traditions and rites of passage served to initiate new students into the student community and existing members reaffirmed their connection all within the framework of “school spirit.” At OU, Pitt, and WVU, Homecoming represented one of the largest campus-wide events of the fall and drew together both returning alumni with current students as well as uniting upperclassmen and freshmen. Football played a pivotal role in helping to forge aspects of the student community, representing a ritual experience that identified all participants as members of the community. Football rituals happened early in the school year and served as points where supposedly all of the student body came

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together, subsuming their own distinct identities and pouring themselves into the larger vessel of “student” and university partisan.19

While football seemingly provided an opportunity for the entirety of the student body to unite both physically at the games or associated dances and mentally by creating a shared experience that individuals who may not have previously met each other could reminisce about, these events also helped highlight the fractures within the student community on northern Appalachian campuses. Participants in the games, dances, and parades saw those who did not attend as outsiders, as not part of the majority “student” identity, due to their lack of fraternization and shared memories. Also, during the same time as the football season, at these three schools, was the Greek rush period where perspective fraternity brothers and sorority sisters made efforts to become part of exclusive communities, a part of, yet distinct from, the larger student body. The Greek system provided its participants with an identity and sense of belonging more immediate

than the amorphous “student” identity, counteracting the sense of estrangement generated by the multiversity. The Greek community represented the most active sub-community on campus, or, at the very least, the most actively reported on sub-community in the WVU Daily Athenaeum, OU’s The Post, and The Pitt News. Front-page stories in these campus newspapers chronicled fraternity and sorority events during Greek Week, charity activities, and other Greek-centered activities.20

The Greek communities on northern Appalachian university campuses helped define the contours of student relations and student community. Greeks often had their own campus political parties for student government elections and they often received the bulk of nominations for Homecoming (and other campus-wide) royalty competitions. Those not in a fraternity or sorority were collectively labeled, “non-affiliated” or “independent,” establishing them as the “other,” and Greeks as the default, normative identity of students. A widely diverse group of people, independents at OU, Pitt, and

WVU, received only limited representation on governing councils or extracurricular boards, and while represented in campus-wide competitions like Homecoming Queen, they lacked the same cohesion as the Greeks who often easily defeated them.\(^{21}\) This process of labeling and the ability of the unified Greeks to run roughshod over independents built animosity that would help feed later more politically motivated conflicts.

While careerists took little time to engage with the extracurricular activities of collegiate life, much less concerned themselves with what the campus newspaper had to say about them, rebels often did focus on these things. For rebels they wanted to shift collegiate life from the supposed vacuous and frivolous experiences of Greek life and turn institutions like the student government and the student newspaper into organs of student activism. These rebels claimed authority as citizens of both the campus community and the United States, and, thereby, forged a new identity as the student-citizen. The student-citizen saw activism as not just a right but also an obligation. Their goal was to alter or improve the university as well as American society. However, in

these pursuits they often found themselves at odds with insiders and administrators who defended the status quo and careerists who showed little interest in such actions.

Thus, as Baby Boomers came of age in the Vietnam War era, they confronted an American society fraught with major and important transitions and they sought to define their place within and relationship to this changing society. Students, regardless of region or institution, faced the changing landscape of American universities. This was true at the three universities in this study. Places like these, in a region conceived of as detached from the wider American society were facing similar rumblings of change. They saw the formation of the same student-citizen identity that propelled activism at campuses around the nation during the Vietnam War era.

**Imagining (Northern) Appalachia:**

Appalachian students experienced the changing nature of the university during the Sixties and analyzing these developments not only deepens the understanding of activism and the 1960s more generally, but also expands the history of Appalachia in this period. The largely politicized 1960s image of Appalachia stood at the supposed crossroads of modernity and traditional America. During the Sixties, in large part because of the efforts and actions of federal government and local activists to raise the national consciousness of the region, a generalized set of ideas, images, and assumptions about Appalachia formed. The popular imagination defined what Appalachia was, where it was located, who lived there, and what one could or should do to and for the region. The key components of the Sixties’ imagined Appalachia were its supposed culture of poverty and its colonial relationship with absentee corporations. These assumptions continue to influence the historiography of the region, which emphasizes poverty and victimhood as
essential regional traits. The study of student activism at northern Appalachian universities challenges these assumptions and helps to complicate the existing narrative.

Perhaps the most influential source for Sixties images of Appalachia was Harry M. Caudill’s *Night Comes to the Cumberlands*. Published in 1963, Caudill’s work served to paint a depressing portrait of the region as a victim of malevolent corporations bent on natural and human resource exploitation. He described the mountaineers as stoic and tragic heroes locked in a virtually inescapable debt spiral. Caudill’s work inspired other accounts of the region’s deprivations and provided a guiding framework for federal efforts at regional development. Many Baby Boomers, even some from the region, who joined anti-poverty programs during the mid-1960s, cited Caudill’s work as helping to form their vision of Appalachia.

Formed in part as a response to the influence of the works of Caudill and others, in 1963 President Kennedy formed the President’s Appalachian Regional Commission (PARC). The Commission’s work continued after Kennedy’s death, and issued an influential report in 1964. Lyndon Johnson took up the charge of focusing federal aid on the region, and based on PARC’s report he pushed Congress to create the Appalachian Regional Commission in 1965. Hence, the report became the central node around which most imagining of the region developed over the past five decades. According to PARC, Appalachia was 165,000 square miles, 340 counties, and stretched across ten states from Pennsylvania to Alabama (since then the geographic definition of the region has expanded and become more complicated, see Figure 2.1 on page 122). Since the 1960s, most scholarly studies, as well as the focus of the popular imagination, centered on “the
southern mountains,” with the greatest emphasis on Kentucky and southern West Virginia.

The 1964 PARC report described Appalachia as isolated and underdeveloped, while a form of rugged individualism imbued the people. The commission believed only concerted efforts across the entire region would correct the supposed problems of Appalachia, therefore it imagined the region as a unified whole in its report. Overall,

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PARC argued that the region’s decentralized communities exacerbated the failure to diversify its economy beyond raw material extraction, attract and sustain small business, improve education, and regulate outflow migration; in short, the mountains that provided the resources for exploitation also hindered regional development.23

Imagining Appalachia as a region caught in the interwoven web of a “culture of poverty” and economic dependency reinforced stereotypes and limited solutions. For federal officials in the 1960s, if Appalachia’s problem was an unending cycle of poverty enforced by an intransigent culture of “Welfarism,” as Caudill called it, and capitalist exploitation of the region’s natural and human resources, the only solution was a process of modernization and development. This solution rested upon building schools to teach Appalachian residents “modern values,” expanding jobs other than coal mining to diversify the economy, and infrastructure necessary to connect the regional economy to the world “outside”; in other words, a domestic application of American policies in the Third World. Though some contemporary observers rejected the comparison of poor regions and poor nations, the 1964 PARC report called for an application of “that part of our international development program which fosters capital investment … into Federal programs that affect the regional development program for Appalachia.”24 Thinly veiled within this solution was a sense of Appalachian inferiority and backwardness amongst those coming into the region to lift up its residents, just as it was in American foreign relations. However, these programs did not address the underlying structural inequalities

23 PARC, Appalachia, 19-21.

and shortcomings—they addressed the symptoms but not the illness—and therefore failed. When failure occurred, the culture of poverty became the convenient explanation; officials could claim the culture was too entrenched in the Appalachian psyche for their efforts to overcome it effectively.

Although northern Appalachia’s characteristics stand as relatively representative of the larger region, scholars have focused little attention on the subregion. The bulk of the historiography focuses on Kentucky or southern Appalachia, increasingly touching more on West Virginia, but largely ignoring its connections with northern Appalachia. John F. Kennedy’s campaign trips through West Virginia during the 1960 Democratic primaries opened his, and much of the nation’s, eyes to the situation in that state and Appalachia; though, it was Caudill’s Night Comes to the Cumberlands that further defined the region and set the scholarly gaze upon eastern Kentucky. Simultaneously, the popular imagination constructed Appalachia as a Southern region, reinforced by regional movements and organizations such as the Council of the Southern Mountains, a community action agency headquartered at Berea College in Kentucky, which had begun its existence in 1913 as the Southern Mountain Workers Conference. Such

25 At the Fifth Annual Meeting of the Society of Appalachian Historians in May 2014, only two specifically addressed northern Appalachia. Overall, the papers presented continued to focus in the same well-worn areas of Appalachian scholarship: the Civil War and Reconstruction, economic development and environmental issues, folk culture, and the War on Poverty (which was also the keynote discussion).


organizations penetrated into West Virginia but could go no farther north because of the centuries-old division; the Mason-Dixon Line continued to serve as an imagined and symbolic border. Thus, even though intellectually one may have recognized Pennsylvania, Ohio, or even New York as part of Appalachia at that time, the popular imagination erased these states from its construction of the region because they were not Southern. This false division continues to pervade Appalachian historiography.

The PARC conceptualization of 1964 depicted the region as a united whole. After the formation of the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in 1965, this view of unified Appalachia disintegrated quickly. The various constituent states adapted ARC policies to meet local realities; however, it was not until 1975 that ARC codified these distinctions by writing them into the budget and issuing a newly sub-divided map—creating northern, central, and southern subregions. The northern subregion constituted the 120 designated counties from New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Maryland, and most of West Virginia. These counties represented over one third of the total number of ARC-defined Appalachian counties and were home to approximately 9 million people, or roughly 50 percent of the total Appalachian population in the 1960s. When taken together, the counties of northern Appalachia generally reflect the Appalachian urban-rural population divide. While the subregion was more urban, industrialized, and prosperous than the other subregions in part due to the benefits of an extensive railroad network, northern Appalachia faced the same devastating effects wrought by post-World War II economic dislocation, especially as the highway boom slowed rail traffic. The

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deterioration of the railroads, decaying industry, and the mechanization of extraction-based labor sapped northern Appalachia’s economic vitality resulting in the same struggles appearing in northern Appalachia as existed throughout the central and southern subregions of Appalachia.

Recognizing the fluidity and subjectivity of all regional definitions, the politically derived economic-environmental definition within the 1964 PARC report seems to provide a starting point from which to explore the actions of university students in northern Appalachia during the Sixties. Though flawed in its assumptions and prescriptions, the PARC definition of Appalachia, combined with the work of Caudill, offered the framework for understanding the region for many during the period. The invented popular imagination, both inside and outside the region, seemed to accept the general framework of the PARC-defined Appalachia and that the mountains that provided natural resources for the region also served as the impediment to prosperity. By using this construction of the region, which largely emphasizes central and southern Appalachia, the similarities of the northern subregion come into fuller relief.

In the final analysis, Appalachia lacks a singular definition beyond its obvious connection to the mountains because it represents an invented region and therefore adheres only to the arbitrary limits of the one imagining it. Despite the invented and subjective nature of any definition of Appalachia, a generally agreed-upon geographic

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boundary exists through the efforts of ARC, activists, and scholars. However, the majority of scholarship focuses on only a small portion of the larger, generally agreed-upon region. While researchers and politicians recognize Appalachia as extending north of the Mason-Dixon Line, proportionally little work has sought to explore this northern subregion. In connecting northern Appalachia with the mainstream of Appalachian historiography, one finds a parallel for integrating Appalachia into the wider scope of American history. By understanding how the subregion conforms to and challenges the assumed ideas of the larger region one sees how a region interacts with supposedly national trends and ideals.

Northern Appalachian Universities:

The universities chosen for this study were not immune to the transitions and upheavals affecting higher education and college life in the early Cold War years nor the socio-economic realities of Appalachia. Ohio University, the University of Pittsburgh, and West Virginia University all drew students from eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania, and northern West Virginia. During the Sixties, all three schools faced major challenges and conflicts between increasing numbers of students and definitions of studentness, as well as expanding numbers of constituencies and questions regarding the very mission of their institution. In the end, Appalachian universities were very much like their counterparts around the nation; though, their individual histories make them unique onto themselves.

In his groundbreaking work, *Campus Wars*, Kenneth Heineman selected four non-elite state universities, as a way to highlight that student activism was not limited to elite public and private colleges or to cities on the coasts. However, Heineman’s selection process resulted in a comparison of four disparate universities with little in common with
which to link the schools—they were neither all urban nor rural; some were land grant universities, while others not; they did not share a similar student body size or make-up. In short, what tied the four schools of Heineman’s study together was that they were non-elite state universities, generally in the Great Lakes region, and an individual living in and commuting from Pittsburgh (where Heineman initially started his project as a dissertation) could easily access their archives. Heineman sought no deeper connection between the schools because as a first major attempt to explore campus activism beyond the traditionally defined sites of investigation he need not argue for wider connection between his chosen schools. To make his argument effectively, he needed only to argue that such levels of student activism existed across the country and at schools that shared only the most minimal of connections.

In the wake of Heineman’s work, monographs, articles, and chapters have explored single schools or communities, but few have attempted a wider regional view. *Campus Wars* highlighted the difficulties in exploring multiple town and gown interactions in a single work, especially without establishing some semblance of a connection between the institutions or communities under investigation. Had Heineman sought more than just to argue that non-elite state universities were sites of student activism equally as valid as nationally prominent universities and events, he may have formulated some type of connection between the four schools of his study. In the end, Heineman made no argument about a regional cohesion between his schools because his argument was not about the region nor even so much about the schools themselves. Rather his most important argument was that scholars needed to expand their horizons beyond the Universities of California, Wisconsin, and Michigan, and beyond the cities of
New York, Boston, and San Francisco. The trend of Sixties historiography in general has expanded as a result to encompass new actors, regions, and events.

By looking at the schools in northern Appalachia, one gets a sense of why Heineman’s call for expansion was crucial for understanding the period of the Sixties. Appalachia, so long considered a place out of step with the rest of the United States, especially in the Sixties, proves that there was in fact a wider national sense of unrest, unease, and concern. The students at the three northern Appalachian schools explored here faced the same questions and frustrations as their counterparts around the nation, thereby helping to erase some of the sense of Appalachian aloofness. However, they also show that while Appalachia fully engaged with national events and impulses, the region had its own internal concerns that affected students.

One could hardly dispute that either OU, located in Ohio’s southeastern foothills, or WVU exist within Appalachia, however Pitt raises some questions. While many in the Steel City may not have (nor may not today) considered themselves within Appalachia, by most commonly accepted definitions of Appalachia—political, social, economic, or environmental—Allegheny County and its county seat, Pittsburgh, are most definitely Appalachian. Some may chafe at the idea of such a large urban center existing within the realms of Appalachia; however, such objections seem to rest in popular misconceptions of a universally poor and rural Appalachia. Pittsburgh represents the largest of all Appalachian cities, yet its urban nature does not negate its geographic, cultural, or economic connections to the region. Based on the current ARC definitions of Appalachia, (see Figure 2.1 on page 122) Appalachian counties surround the city of Pittsburgh in all directions for no less than eighty miles. Pittsburgh is an Appalachian city.
Young people in eastern Ohio, western Pennsylvania, and northern West Virginia shared more than the larger generational connection. Many shared a blue-collar ethos; some of their families worked in the steel mills and coalmines of the region. Drawn from similar communities with similar backgrounds and united, if initially only subconsciously, by a lingering notion of generational connection, the students entering northern Appalachian universities in the Sixties embodied the experiences of many throughout the nation during this tumultuous decade.

The universities of northern Appalachia have different origin stories; however, during the 1960s their students would wrestle with the same problems and issues. Whether they began their institutional lives as public or private schools by the mid-1960s all of the northern Appalachian universities explored here were public universities and embroiled in the dramatic changes of the decade. Each school experienced large building projects and overflowing student enrollments. The very nature of the university and its role in society were open questions at these schools as were how best to define students and their roles on campus and in society.

Ohio University:

As the Ohio Territory was being shepherded to statehood in the first decade of the nineteenth century, it was also in the process of establishing a university in the recently settled town of Athens. Initially known as the American Western University, the college in Athens was renamed Ohio University in celebration and commemoration of the new state it resided in and opened in October 1808 with three enrolled students. From these
inauspicious origins, Ohio University would grow to over thirteen thousand student across several different campuses by 1962.\textsuperscript{29}

Despite a temporary closure in the mid-1840s due to low enrollment, Ohio University, its students and faculty, and the city of Athens have participated in many of the major events and debates of American history over the past two hundred years. In 1828, barely twenty years after it opened its doors, OU graduated its first black student, John Newton Templeton (it would be another ninety years for the first black female graduate of OU). Several of the University’s trustees served as conductors on the Underground Railroad and during the Civil War students, as well as faculty, volunteered for service in the Union Army, some even defended Athens during Confederate General John Hunt Morgan’s 1863 raid into Ohio. Though the University had three black members of the board of trustees between the 1870s and 1910s, the University adopted policies in the first decades of the twentieth century that limited the inflow of black students from southern states and offered only lip service to efforts to address discrimination in the Athens community. Not until the 1960s did the University hire its first black faculty member, E. Curmie Price.\textsuperscript{30}

Though OU lost its bid for funding under the Morrill Land Grant College Act (the state used the monies to establish what became the Ohio State University in Columbus), the University continued to expand in both physical footprint and course offerings eventually adding a normal school at the turn of the twentieth century. During these years


student activities expanded dramatically as well. Greek social organizations for both men and women formed, a variety of student publications emerged, and organized university athletics began. Although baseball and football teams routinely played during the 1890s and the student body adopted green and white as official school colors in 1896, the sports teams did not adopt the bobcat as their nickname and mascot until 1925. Ohio University students served in the military during both world wars while the University established facilities and curriculum to train soldiers. During World War I, the students demanded the creation of compulsory military training, though an effort in the 1930s to create a voluntary ROTC program drew stiff resistance from peace-minded students. Following World War II, the student population swelled with enrollments more than doubling between 1945 and 1946, with the bulk coming from veterans using their G.I. Bill benefits. The result was to force the University to find innovative ways to house and teach the new mass of students; in the end, Quonset huts littered the campus often serving double purposes as classrooms and living space.31

By the 1950s, Ohio University stood deceptively calm in the bucolic setting of the rolling hills of Athens, Ohio. In a 1954 history of the University, the author noted the “peaceful and somewhat sequestered tranquility” of Athens and hoped that the coming changes wrought by industrial development would not rob Ohio University of the quiet serenity “in which the learning process thrives.” According to this 1950s vision of academia in Athens, “at no time since the founding of the university have relations among the students, the faculty, the administrators, and the trustees been more cordial.”32

31 Hoover, The History of Ohio University, 126, 196-97, 225-37; Hollow, Ohio University, 1804-2004, 45, 55-76, 91-93, 111-14, 132-46, 149.

32 Hoover, The History of Ohio University, 250-51.
The 1958-1960 Student Bulletin echoed this rosy assessment by stating, “Ohio University is a friendly university. The faculty and administration strive to give students an education and to make life as pleasant for them as possible while they are doing it.”

Perhaps this was an overly optimistic (and paternalistic) view of these relationships; regardless, within a decade the relations between these various constituencies would become strained in a way that may not have existed since the University’s founding.

By the early 1960s, Ohio University sat on the edge of the new multiversity concept of higher education. The University and its thousands of predominately white students were guided through the many conflicts ahead by its new, young, and energetic president—Vernon Alden. Not even forty when he became president in 1962, Alden exuded a sense of optimism reflective of President Kennedy’s New Frontier and was hopeful that he could help OU blaze new trails into a better future. By 1964, Alden would become a key player in President Johnson’s War on Poverty, suggesting the importance of OU to the larger plan for regional and national development and modernization.

University of Pittsburgh:

In 1787, as disgruntled Americans met in Philadelphia to draft a new Constitution for the fledgling nation, on the other end of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the school that would become the University of Pittsburgh was coming into existence. Initially


established as a secondary school, servicing the 7,000-person city of Pittsburgh, the Pittsburgh Academy would become the non-denominational Western University of Pennsylvania (WUP) by 1819. The University, temporarily, suspended operations as a result of a series of fires in the mid-to-late 1840s; however, by the mid-1850s, the WUP trustees sought to reestablish the school in downtown Pittsburgh, a city that had reached a population of nearly 100,000. In 1882, fire again struck the University forcing it to move from its downtown buildings to a temporary residence across the Allegheny River (in the then separate city of Allegheny) for fourteen years. Eventually, the University moved to its current campus in the Oakland section of Pittsburgh in 1909 where it eventually adopted the name the University of Pittsburgh and chose the panther as its mascot.35

Even as a private university, the early decades of the twentieth century saw a steady growth in the size of Pitt—in terms of acreage, student population, and course offerings. In 1898, WUP had an enrollment of nearly 700 students, which would balloon to several thousand in a quarter century. These years also saw the birth of a football tradition at the University that after several losing seasons eventually saw three national championships in the 1910s, twenty-seven consecutive winning seasons from 1913 to 1939, and four Rose Bowl visits, all before World War II. The large steel and industrial magnates of the city provided large sums of money to fund the University’s growing athletics programs as well as its endowment and in return, the University added greater emphasis on science, engineering, and technology. World War I provided a spark for University growth, as over 1,300 officer trainees flooded the campus as part of the

Student Army Training Corps necessitating the construction of seven wooden barracks which would remain a part of the University campus for the better part of a decade as the increasing student population required new dormitories and classrooms. During the mid-1920s the University planned and constructed the most iconic building of the campus, the forty-two story tall Cathedral of Learning, creating the largest educational structure in the United States. In 1931, the Cathedral of Learning opened for classes when the student population of the University reached its pre-World War II peak of over 14,000 students.\(^{36}\)

During World War II and the subsequent Cold War, Pitt opened its doors to the military. The Cathedral of Learning became a temporary dormitory for many enrolled in Pitt’s Army Specialist Training Program (ASTP) and Civil Affairs Training School at the University of Pittsburgh (CATSUP) during World War II. In all, the University trained over seven thousand Army and Navy personnel and saw several thousand students, faculty, staff, and alumni serve in the war—including over 250 women. However, the connection between the University and the military did not dissipate with the end of hostilities in 1945. Thousands of vets flooded into Pitt in the wake of the war, by 1947 more than half of Pitt’s 25,700 students were veterans on the G.I. Bill. Pitt became a major research university by the mid-twentieth century providing facilities for a number of important projects including research on the polio vaccine. As a private institution, Pitt had limited access to state funds but by the early 1960s, it was among the top twenty schools receiving federal funds for research and development.\(^{37}\)


When 41-year-old Edward H. Litchfield arrived at Pitt in 1955 as its twelfth Chancellor, he immediately sought to elevate the University’s prestige and grow its physical footprint. Litchfield won national praise for his response to Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev during the premier’s September 1959 visit to the University, when Litchfield stated, “the search for truth is our mutual and constant objective. … the winner in such a competition will not be your country, or ours, but all mankind.” To achieve such success Litchfield undertook an ambitious building project and curricular expansion that he believed a growing economy would help provide the necessary support for and into which local elites would be willing to invest. By the early 1960s, despite the large sums of federal research dollars, Pitt was on the brink of financial collapse. In the end, the Board of Trustees decided to turn, in part, to the Pennsylvania legislature; transitioning Pitt from a private university to a state-related institution. However, administrators did not want to become fully a state university for fear that one day the state may refuse to provide adequate funding. This change to a state-related status meant that by the end of the 1960s with an opening of the University to wider numbers of people who would not previously been able to attend such as the sons and daughters of the city’s steelworkers; the student population of the University almost perfectly mirrored the city population.38

By the 1960s, Pitt students had a long history of political activism and dissent. During the Depression, students protested wrongful imprisonments of labor activists, the institution of loyalty oaths, and the activities of General Douglas MacArthur. However,

what drew the greatest level of student outrage was the dismissal of popular professor Ralph E. Turner in 1934 for his political support of a radicalization of the New Deal programs of Franklin D. Roosevelt. The University’s handling of the Turner affair and its early initiation of anticommmunist loyalty oaths foreshadowed to some extent its later reaction to the troubles of Professor Robert Colodny in 1960-61. Despite his four years of service in the Pacific Theater during World War II, Colodny’s opponents cited his service in the Abraham Lincoln Brigade during the Spanish Civil War (in 1937), his support for the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, and his leadership role in the Pittsburgh chapter of the Committee for a SANE Nuclear Policy as evidence of his Communist subversion and for his removal from the faculty. Students, and eventually Chancellor Litchfield, rallied around Colodny and helped defend the well-liked professor from the last gasps of McCarthyist attacks on higher education.³⁹

West Virginia University:

West Virginia University came into existence in 1868 as a land-grant university under the Morrill Act of 1862. Several existing Morgantown academies and institutes provided the initial nucleus of the University and the campus remained all male until 1889. As a land-grant institution, WVU housed a corps of cadets since its inception; however, during the First World War, the University began a separate Student Army Training Corps (the forerunner of the Reserved Officer Training Corps).⁴⁰

³⁹ Alberts, 144-56, 292-69.

⁴⁰ There appears to be no singular institutional history of West Virginia University, though several authors have pieced together some aspects; for examples, see: James Dawson, WVU: An Early Portrait (Morgantown, WV: 1971), 2-3, 12; Barbara J. Howe, Tales from the Tower: If Woodburn Hall Could Speak (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University Eberley College of Arts and Sciences, 1997), 2-7; J. William Douglas, The School of Physical Education at West Virginia University: An Historical Perspective, 1891-1999 (Morgantown, WV: West Virginia University School of Physical Education, 2000), 13, 21. The
Football also served as the basis for several of the major traditions and rituals of WVU society. In 1895, four years after their disastrous debut against Washington and Jefferson College (losing 71-0), WVU won the inaugural match against the Western University of Pennsylvania initiating a long-lived rivalry between the two institutions. It was during a football game in 1936 that the University officially debuted the Mountaineer as the school’s mascot (though the first version of this character played more on the image of the contemporary hayseed mountainfolk of Appalachia than the later version which suggested an imagined, rugged pioneer of a heroic age). The Homecoming game became a central component of campus life with the inaugural singing of the *alma mater* in 1938 and the first selection of Homecoming Queen in 1939, the game became the occasion for a parade and dance. Further, as a way to indoctrinate freshmen into WVU society they were required to wear a beanie cap for the first few weeks of the semester, until the Homecoming game.41

By the beginning of the 1960s, WVU was home to over 7,500 students; significantly, that number nearly doubled by the decade’s end. The students who populated WVU came from throughout the state and the region. A large number of these students were the first in their family to attend college; many took part-time jobs to pay

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Dawson source provides no information on a publisher. It is a series of images with interspersed, unsourced text. It appears that someone or some group associated with the University published the short pamphlet; it may have been part of a class project as the pamphlet describes Dawson as a WVU graduate.

for expenses as well as carrying a full-time load of courses. Like most post-secondary institutions, WVU claimed the right of in loco parentis and sought to oversee the morality of the young people under its charge. The administration set dress codes, established guidelines for social functions that limited unsupervised male-female interactions, and enforced curfews for women living on campus. However, no matter how watchful the administration eye, it could not see or prevent all infractions, and actions such as panty raids became staples of campus life. By-and-large, fraternities and sororities, which first appeared in the 1890s, dominated the campus social scene, as well as campus politics by the 1960s. The black student population on campus was very small, estimated at no more than 100 students in 1967; however, the administration engaged in efforts to recruit and retain increasing numbers of black students. Women at WVU, subjected to panty raids and restrictive regulations, participated in the various student activities including governance; however, it would take until 1974 for the students to elect a woman to the position of student body president.42

West Virginia University in the early Cold War years, 1945 to 1960, experienced similar expansions and upheavals as their northern Appalachian counterparts. By 1948, with the assistance of the G.I. Bill enrollments jumped over 6,500 nearly doubling prewar figures, by the end of the Sixties, the number would double again. The expanding enrollments meant a need for new facilities to house and educate the new masses, so the University acquired new property for this development. The University’s footprint grew

42 Dawson, WVU, 16; Howe, Tales from the Tower, 26-31; Douglas, The School of Physical Education at West Virginia University, 38-39, 55-57; “Enrollment Tally Hits Another Record High: President ‘Gratified’ At Enrollment Gains,” Daily Athenaeum, September 14, 1967; Memo, “Student Social Regulations,” [unknown author, presumably Officer of Student Life], January 11, 1971, A&M 2833, WVU Office of Student Life Collection, West Virginia and Regional History Collection, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia [hereafter referred to as WVRHC].
so large that by the early 1970s the University created a Personal Rapid Transit (monorail) system to ease student movement. The University sought to gain access to federal research funds; however, state regulations complicated these efforts, though professors did undertake research beneficial to the coal industry. Student throughout the 1950s and into the early 1960s not only participated in football traditions and panty raids but also questioned the necessity of compulsory ROTC and segregated housing, setting the stage for later activism.43

Conclusion:

The Appalachian Regional Commission declared that Appalachia was an anomaly, somehow out of touch with the rest of the United States. Many Americans accepted (and continue to accept) this vision of the region. The eternal hillbillies with their eccentric beliefs and stubborn adherence to antiquated practices became the standard vision of Appalachians by the middle of the twentieth century; it was an image that fueled the poverty programs of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations. However, Appalachia was not wholly a foreign land alienated fully from the larger trends of mid-century American culture and society. Though the historiography of the period 1945 to 1960 still needs a substantial boost in exploring the connectivity of Appalachia to the wider national trends, it seems wrong to accept at face value the notion of discontinuity.

Many scholars and government agencies have sought to define Appalachia, yet its mountainous geography appears to be one of the few unifying factors. Its boundaries are

porous and amorphous; a fluctuating set of criteria, none of which fully captures the entirety of the region, define its borders. The Appalachian Regional Commission has proposed a definition of the region that, for lack of a better definition, suffices—the wide swath of communities existing within the mountainous region stretching from New York to Alabama. Its central characteristics are the proliferation of natural resources such as timber and coal, and the exploitation of those resources by absentee corporations.

Even within this imagined region, there are internal variations and deviations. Most often in the popular imagination, the word “Appalachia” evokes one of two specific localities: West Virginia or Kentucky. While nearly two-thirds of the counties of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania are Appalachian, Pennsylvania only infrequently enters the popular imagination as “Appalachia.” Within the scholarly historiography, the emphasis on Kentucky and southern West Virginia perpetuates this popular imagining. For example, while Pittsburgh is virtually the same latitude as Weirton, West Virginia, and exists within the same mountains, the latter is without question a part of Appalachia, while the former seems to exist outside of Appalachian scholarship. Thus, it seems that to understand better the region and to better place it within its larger national context, scholars must pay a greater attention to northern Appalachian communities.

During the period 1945 to 1960, the United States faced many important socio-cultural, economic, and political changes. The impact of suburbanization, mass consumption, mass media, challenges to supposed norms of relations in terms of race, class, and gender, domestic containment and rampant anti-Communism, and the transitions in higher education that gave rise to the multiversity were all felt throughout the nation and played out in Appalachia as well. Scholars of the Cold War and
Appalachian historians have only begun to scratch the surface in exploring this period in any depth beyond the familiar economic and labor approaches that emphasize poverty, unions, and migration. Scholars must undertake much more work to integrate fully the histories of Appalachia and the early Cold War years.

The changing nature of American higher education by the mid-twentieth century is yet another impulse reverberating through northern Appalachia. The development of the multiversity and the concomitant alterations in relationships between the various constituent parts of the expanding university offered another site for the expression of unrest during the tumultuous Sixties. Young people had to define their roles not only as students in a changing educational environment but also as citizens in a rapidly altering America.

Students at northern Appalachian universities in the Sixties faced a wide array of impulses that drove activism. As members of the Baby Boom Generation, they shared a generational connection developed in response to the Cold War world within which they were born. The Cold War not only affected political, economic, and social relations it altered the state of higher education within the nation. Appalachian youth were not immune to the wider, national trends of the Cold War and the Sixties; rather, they were full participants in defining their encounters with the Sixties.
CHAPTER IV

“A TIME OF WAR, A TIME OF PEACE”:

STUDENT IDENTITY AND ACTIVISM ON CONFLICTED CAMPUSES, 1964-1967

A time of love, a time of hate
A time of war, a time of peace
A time you may embrace
A time to refrain from embracing
To everything—turn, turn, turn
There is a season—turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under Heaven
--“Turn! Turn! Turn!” The Byrds (1965)¹

The eastern world it is exploding
Violence flarin’, bullets loadin’
You’re old enough to kill but not for votin’
You don’t believe in war but what’s that gun you’re totin’?
And even the Jordan River has bodies floatin’
But you tell me
Over and over and over again my friend
Ah, you don’t believe
We’re on the eve of destruction
--“Eve of Destruction,” Barry McGuire (1965)²

Introduction:

In September 1964, freshmen (members of the class of 1968) at West Virginia University listened as the University President, Paul A. Miller, explained the role of the university in

¹ Pete Seeger, “Turn! Turn! Turn!” The Byrds, Turn! Turn! Turn! Columbia, 1965.

American society and the ways the college experience would affect them over and beyond the next four years. Miller argued that education was the key to citizenship and warned students against the traditional distractions of collegiate life—including Greek any educational endeavor. In the end, Miller argued students were not in college for a good time, nor to get a degree or simply to prepare for a career; grades, while important, did not matter as much as the pursuit of knowledge, stating, “The college diploma measures the serving of time but it is never a measure of learning.” He said the goal for students was to build the skills of lifelong learners, to challenge themselves and to become their own advocates for their development as citizens. Universities, such as WVU, afforded opportunities to learn about one’s world beyond the limitations of the classroom, but these opportunities only had value if students sought them out. Miller concluded by saying that the future was in the hands of the students and that they had the right and the obligation to make sure they were prepared to assume these leadership roles, and if the University was not living up to their needs to act to improve the University, thereby improving society. Miller implored students, “Don’t be tame. Don’t be silent. If you are, the University will grow complacent.”

In future years, students would take Miller’s message to heart and, as student-citizens, act in ways beyond perhaps how he envisioned they should. Though they often recognized that their limited ability to act could not in itself end all discrimination, stop the war in Vietnam, or erase the last vestiges of poverty, students felt compelled to act and accepted that through their actions they helped generate what Robert F. Kennedy termed “tiny ripples of hope” that would

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amplify off each other and “build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.”

Student activism at northern Appalachian universities between 1964 and 1967 focused on several political and social issues, but grew from a central sense that students, as Miller argued, had an obligation to act and to improve their community. Whether it was the in loco parentis policies of the university, racial discrimination, poverty, or the war in Vietnam, students made direct and tangible links between what was happening on campus with what was going on in the country and the world. As the Students for a Democratic Society’s Port Huron Statement made clear, “That student life is more intellectual, and perhaps more comfortable, does not obscure the fact that the fundamental qualities of life on the campus reflect the habits of society at large.” This New Left call to action would go further to argue that the university and students represent crucial social actors with which to forge a movement to break down the racist and classist Cold War consensus that had used fear and economic manipulation to retain power. The principles of participatory democracy called for students to take greater control over the governance of their lives on campus and in so doing create a model for expanded citizen participation in the governance of society. However, it was not just New Left students who engaged in political and social activism, rather all students, had to come to terms with changing definitions of studentness caused by the confluence of mass

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education, the military-industrial complex, and a widening challenge to the Cold War political consensus. However, it was New Left and liberal students who predominately made up the “rebel” subgroup defined by Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, and it was rebels who seemed to embrace most fully the student-citizen identity.4

The period 1964 to 1967 represents a transitional period for student political and social activism as students sought to expand their power and influence over the decision-making structures of the university and society. Students around the nation and in northern Appalachia moved from supposedly acceptable modes of political expression, such as mock political conventions, and relatively passive participation in the political process, characterized by listening to, not participating in, lectures or debates by experts, to increasingly active, student-directed engagement with political and social issues, such as bleed-ins, silent protests, and marches. In part, this transition stemmed from the growing centrality of the war in Vietnam in the lives of students and a sense of urgency about the war (through the institution of the draft) that many did not feel with regards to other issues. While sociologist Doug McAdam has shown, and the experiences of northern Appalachian students bear out, the important link between civil rights activism and wider social and political activism, the war in Vietnam, by 1967, became the dominant concern for student activists.5

Throughout the period 1964 to 1967, one of the recurring themes that became essential to later activism, was the interconnectivity of socio-economic, political, and

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cultural factors—that the college existence of a student directly related to the wider world and vice versa. In other words, the college campus was not isolated from its local community or the nation-at-large, but vitally connected. In this way, as students challenged *in loco parentis* policies, they sought to challenge the sense of estrangement and isolation generated by the perceived dehumanizing conformity of American society. This empowerment to address campus issues directly correlated to the impulse to construct empowered poor and minority communities able to serve as their own advocates in the halls of power of the nation. The multiversity, like American society itself, had become so vast that students felt lost amongst the masses. Increasingly, students engaged in activism to force others to confront their individuality and through this personal liberation, they hoped to forge new communities based on the centrality of the individual. In his work on student activists in Texas, Doug Rossinow argued, “student dissenters leaned on the legitimacy enjoyed by universities as havens of free thought” for the construction of an authentic and radical response to the depersonalization of Cold War American society. Thus, the student unrest that would define the entirety of the Vietnam War era, including at northern Appalachian universities, grew from this desire to forge new connections of the individual with society and that a sense of obligation inherent in the meaning of student and citizen drove this impulse.

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The student-citizen identity represents the melding of two community associations within the individual of the student, that of citizen of the university and citizen of the nation. The rights, privileges, duties, and obligations of citizenship in one community are intimately and directly tied to those of the other. In 1964, the majority of students lacked the ability to vote, the ability to participate in the decision-making process of the nation, so too they felt that they lacked an adequate voice in the decision-making apparatus of the university. In an effort to build an empowered community able to influence the national community, students sought to foster a parallel, empowered student community to influence the university. Some saw victories in the university as more likely and therefore as necessary steps in wider enfranchisement. By-and-large, the student-citizen identity rested on an active participation in the political process and drew inspiration from New Left conceptions of participatory democracy, as well as liberal notions of countervailing forces—though the language and rhetoric seems to have drawn more from the former rather than the latter. The student-citizen identity was not simply another name for the New Left, though the New Left fully embraced this identity.

Students all along the political spectrum began to accept, on some level, components of the student-citizen identity; although, predominately, it was individuals to the political left who took up this identity with the greatest zeal.

As social and political movements grew outside the university community, student-citizens found new outlets for their expressions of citizenship. Engaging in civil rights or antipoverty activism provided a bridge to other forms of activism seeing the goals as the same—the expansion of the political process and the social sphere to more and more people. In 1964, few students espoused a student-citizen identity, calling for
greater control over the decisions that affected their daily lives. By 1967, large numbers of students had come to embrace this identity on some level. The debates became not whether students should have a part to play in decision-making but how large the role should be and how to determine those who would play it. Increasingly, students were calling on their classmates to get off the sidelines and get involved, seeing earlier, less active forms of student engagement as too weak of an expression of engaged citizenship. Throughout the period 1964 to 1967, the language became one of students as legitimate stakeholders whose views and opinions shared as much weight as (perhaps, even more than) any other constituency in the university. Moreover, students argued that if they were members of one community—the university—they were equally members of the other—the nation.

All of this was happening within a contested definition of studentness. While the vastness of the multiversity served to isolate students within a sea of unidentifiable others, it also generated multiple attempts to respond to the realities of mass education. Some, “the insiders,” attempted to hold fast to the status quo, a college identity rooted in extracurricular social functions with coursework seemingly incidental to college life. Others, “the careerists,” eschewed the jocularity of extracurricular activities in favor of devoting the bulk of their energies to academic pursuits, seeing college as coursework that prepared one for future careers. A third response to the multiversity came in the form of “the rebels,” those who saw their role as expanding their knowledge and understanding through learning inspired by both inside and beyond the classroom walls. By-and-large, it was the insiders and the rebels who sparred over the meaning of student and citizen while careerists did their best to keep their head down (in this way suggesting, perhaps, a vision
of unengaged citizenship). The insiders most often controlled the student governments—the means of legitimate and accepted student “power” on campus—and were the central focus of student newspaper reporting by the early-1960s.

Stories of social events did not disappear from the campus newspapers in the 1960s despite the growing participation in social and political activism. Rather, from 1964 to 1967 as political and social activism earned more coverage, student newspapers grew in size to accommodate these new features. Articles, editorials, and letters to the editor reveal the emerging consciousness, intellectual world, and activities of various student activists and their constructions of student identity. These sources make clear the cross-causal development of student activism that had developed by seeing the same names and groups appearing in connection with different events and ideas. The newspapers served as vital organs for the communication of campus issues and concerns, drawing together students (of all varieties) from across the campus to engage and discuss the widening array of issues of importance to the student community. However, the newspapers do offer only a biased entry into the world of the students as editorial restrictions (self-imposed and those of advisors or administrators) meant that not all events were covered nor were all opinions presented. Regardless, these papers offer, on some level, the voice of the students as they debated amongst themselves the meanings of student and citizen within American society. Further, as antiwar activism scholar Charles DeBenedetti noted in reference to antiwar dissent, “its components were not primarily

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7 In this way, the campus newspapers served as the engine for the construction of an imagined university community, in the way Benedict Anderson described the function of print capitalism. See, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1991).
membership organizations,” meaning that archival evidence may not exist for these largely ephemeral and transitory groups.8

The question of where, when, and why student activism developed across college and university campuses continues to occupy historians of the Sixties. As shown earlier, while the first narratives of the New Left and white student activism focused on elite institutions, recently scholars such as Rusty Monhollon, Mary Ann Wynkoop, and Andrew Grose have shown how much broader leftist student activism was.9 Traditionally, the Free Speech Movement at Berkeley in the fall of 1964 served as the starting point. Doug McAdam’s Freedom Summer offered an alternative vision locating the origin of white, northern student activism in the Mississippi Freedom Project in the summer of 1964. He specifically noted how participation affected leaders of the Free Speech Movement, such as Mario Savio, by generating a confidence through what scholar Doug Rossinow would call “authenticity” of experience.10 While McAdam fell victim to the same problem as those who cite the Free Speech Movement as the germinal moment, that of simultaneously limiting and overgeneralizing student activism, McAdam’s work does point the way to a key element in the origins and development of northern, white student activism—the interconnectedness of various social and political movements and ideas. While McAdam highlighted the influence of Freedom Summer,


for some northern Appalachian students the entry point was antipoverty activism. Noting these different initiators helps historians see that the movement was broader, and its beginnings much looser than any single event, however significant it was.

While there were fits and starts, episodes of activism and concern prior to 1964, that year represents a coalescing of socio-political factors on northern Appalachian campuses, such as calls for changes in women’s hours, civil rights efforts including Freedom Summer, American involvement in Vietnam, and the presidential election that fall. However, the biggest triggers for student political and social activism in the region stemmed from 1965, including, but not limited to, events in and around Selma, Alabama, and the landing of U.S. combat troops in Vietnam in March. Anti-poverty activism, growing from 1964 through 1967, also provided a unique entry into social and political activism for northern Appalachian students. Showing the development of student activism in northern Appalachia adds to the recent scholarship by exploring the cross-causal origins of campus activism, how the students sought to connect campus with the wider local and, in some cases, national community, and the interconnection of student identities to visions of citizenship creating a more actively defined student-citizen identity. The period 1964 to 1967 saw significant changes in the way students at northern Appalachian universities engaged with social and political issues, seeing the concerns of the day as interconnected and challenging traditional, passive visions of citizenship for more active definitions, questioning not only the status quo of the university but of American society, and thereby forging a dual identity as students and citizens.

The cross-causal connections of campus activism McAdam highlighted were strong and evident throughout northern Appalachian universities during the period 1964
to 1967. Initially during this period, students at northern Appalachian universities did not hold events or activities related to larger socio-political issues, but were often simply discussing national trends or passively participating in accepted modes of political expression, such as attending lectures or writing about their opinions (with no sense of a plan of action that they or other students could engage in) in letters to the editor. However, over time, discussion (or awareness raising) led to greater action and this transition appears in the period 1964 to 1967. This movement from simply discussing issues to actively engaging—direct action protests, marches, and attendance of national rallies—resulted from envisioning the role of student and citizen as one actively engaged. The conflicted nature of what it meant to be a student, questions about the role of the university in American society, and an increasing dissatisfaction over the restraint of individuality within mass education and mass society helped propel students into greater levels of engagement. The presumed quiet and conservative campuses of northern Appalachia faced similar challenges as other college communities around the country and exploring how they engaged with these questions helps historians see that just because a campus did not have large, disruptive protests did not make them isolated from the impulses of the Sixties. The Sixties experience of protest did not skip over Appalachia nor was the region so hopelessly lost in its own isolation or poverty that it was incapable or unable to share in these national trends, contrary to the image generated by the near silence of existing scholarship. The debates over patriotism and citizenship, war and dissent that emerged on college campuses during the Sixties reflected the fractures within both campus and American society.
Campus Policies:

In the years since the end of World War II, college campuses had seen little in the way of disruptive student activism for larger national and international issues despite the rapid changes brought to the universities by the Cold War, its expanding military-industrial-academic complex, and the development of the multiversity. A relatively quiescent status quo emerged based, in part, on what scholar Beth Bailey identified as the cultural sense of respectability and the dominant mid-century view of American higher education as initiating individuals into the middle-class ethos. College administrators saw their role as preparing good citizens with the proper middle-class, moral values. Thus, the *in loco parentis* doctrine, the idea that college administrators stood in for parents in terms of ensuring specific moral or ethical behavior through governing such things as the hours female students kept and dormitory visitation regulations creating a paternalistic relationship with students, gave them the latitude to police the social mores of the young people at their institutions. The creation of good moral character and a respect for the status quo became important components of Cold War universities. Even when “insiders” played pranks or broke rules it was seen as non-threatening to the larger stability of society but rather adolescent antics that one would grow out of as they matured into the role of citizen. The insiders’ de-emphasis of grades in favor extracurricular activities, like Greek social organizations, therefore, did not challenge the overarching system. The universities seemed to accept Greek social societies as a mechanism for acculturating new students and maintaining university traditions, given the Greek reticence to challenge social norms. Greeks became the dominant force in campus politics, controlling student governments and serving as a central focus of campus newspapers.
Their activities reinforced a parent-child antagonism fortified by *in loco parentis* but did not threaten to disrupt the order of university society.\(^{11}\) However, by the mid-1960s, groups of students had begun to challenge policies enacted by the universities to maintain and perpetuate that status quo, often using the same language of citizenship and responsibility used by administrators to reinforce the system.

By 1967, one can clearly see the formation of a student conception of dual citizenship, that as a citizen of the university and of the nation. In an opinion editorial for OU’s *The Post*, Richard Pesin argued that the role of the university was to develop leaders who could speak for their communities—campus and beyond. Pesin argued (in the gendered language of his time):

> Students here, like student across the nation, are dedicated to getting the grade, because society has set that as the most sought-after goal. Without grades it is difficult to make it into the world of security after graduation. But education has not be developing enough leaders. … But to be a leader, one must do something. A student must have the responsibility to develop his own abilities to organize and create. … But most education is lecture-oriented, text directed. Courses are isolated from one another. Developments in politics, economics, and the arts are treated separately in different courses. And everything is taught in the classroom. But the true laboratory for the leader cannot be the classroom at all times. For a real and contemporary experience, the opportunity to work with the real and the contemporary must be present. … Students who involved themselves in the community action programs in the vicinity are learning to become leaders.\(^{12}\)

Thus, according to Pesin, the state of education created false divisions between the multiple impulses that affect individuals on a daily basis and through this compartmentalization individuals were unable to see the intricate interconnections. The

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emphasis on the classroom as the sole site of education on campus deprived students of important educational opportunities and stunted their development, especially as leaders. Pesin was making an argument not just for the recalibration of education but also for the rise of the rebel student to replace both the insider and the careerist as the dominant student identity.

The struggle against *in loco parentis* policies at northern Appalachian universities in the mid-1960s focused on questions of women’s hours, ROTC, and the rights of workers on campus. The attacks made on campus policies, such as dormitory rules and visitations, known as parietals, came through the sanctioned challenges of student government, the campus newspapers, and the circulation of petitions. There were virtually no disruptive demonstrations held during the years 1964 to 1967 over the issues related to *in loco parentis*. However, by 1966, the likelihood of disturbances had increased with student debates of ROTC and in 1967 a labor strike at OU proved quite disruptive, made more so by student participation. There was, not surprisingly, no singular student position on parietals, ROTC, or other campus policies, but rather a wide spectrum of opinion ranging from full-throated support to utter disdain; however, most students who entered the fray over *in loco parentis* used similar language, that of respectability, citizenship, and security.

The role of women on campus and in American society was a hotly debated topic by the mid-1960s and northern Appalachia was not immune to these issues. Scholars such as Elaine Tyler May, Stephanie Coontz, and Beth Bailey have argued that the postwar emphasis on female domesticity came under increasing scrutiny and the mechanisms for the distribution of these cultural modes of behavior—such as university’s parietals
policies—became targets for reform. Further, the general tensions between youth and adults intermixed with a growing sense of political awareness amongst American youth to make the challenge to *in loco parentis* more than simple youthful rebellion but a call to societal change. Students argued they were adult enough to make their own decisions free from paternalistic administrators. Thus, the actions of northern Appalachian students to resist and change their campuses’ parietals policies support Bailey’s argument that “Those who disputed the doctrines of *in loco parentis*, however, polite, were engaged in revolution.”

In 1964, while making a wider tour of the United States in support of her book, *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan made appearances at Pitt and WVU, which sparked wider debates on these campuses about the role of women in society. At WVU, in the same article that informed students of Friedan’s impending lecture about the need to challenge the myths and accepted truths surrounding the subordination of female identity to husbands or families, the author also informed female students, with seemingly no sense of irony, that they take care to sign out appropriately with their house-mothers so as not to be penalized if the discussion ran later than curfew. Nearly two months after Friedan’s lecture at Pitt, an opinion editorial challenging several of her

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14 Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*, 82.


basic arguments and linking the issue of women’s identity to the campus movement against *in loco parentis* appeared in *The Pitt News* under the dubious title, “A Forced Equality.” The author of the piece, Nancy Fuchs, argued that the University’s parental role toward women was, if not wholly appropriate, at least acceptable. Fuchs argued that the type of liberation Friedan advocated was neither the goal nor the desire of all women; many women, Fuchs included, preferred a future role as housewife and mother with no need for an independent life beyond these things. “If men resent the modern woman’s attempt to set herself up as their equal, how much more so does a woman resent being forced into a position she does not want—that of equality with men. … I appreciate the opportunity of receiving a good education, but I resent being forced to accept it.” Fuchs concluded by saying she did not want to move to “complete equality … I prefer to stand still,” therein suggesting that she saw nothing amiss with restrictive women’s hours.\(^\text{17}\)

When and how students, especially female students, could come and go represented one way the university exercised *in loco parentis*, but administrators could also demonstrate authority by limiting housing options and restricting other activities of students. In a letter to the editor of Ohio University’s *The Post*, Stu Sharpe noted a “double standard” in the University’s dealing with students—that the University declared students adults but treated them like children. Sharpe attacked the University’s housing policies as well as, indirectly, women’s hours, suggesting that the regulations did not help students prepare to enter the larger society upon graduation, but rather suspended them in a prolonged stage of adolescence.\(^\text{18}\) Sharpe’s arguments and language of responsibility


reflects similar arguments made one year later at the University of Kansas, which historian Beth Bailey discusses at length in *Sex in the Heartland*. Bailey argued that administrators and society-at-large saw higher education as a conduit through which students, as future citizens, were inculcated with “the values of responsibility, maturity, and citizenship,” and that students appropriated this language in their challenge of *in loco parentis*.¹⁹

Later letters, including by Ned Whelan, echoed Sharpe’s criticisms. Whelan argued that, “Everyday, another liberty is usurped from us,” and went on to articulate a rebel student interpretation that saw a direct connection between the rights of students on campus and the rights of citizens within the nation, drawing links to the call for solidarity amongst students as a class, through both Marx and the Declaration of Independence. Whelan lamented that many of his fellow students were not concerned with learning but with earning a degree, and that the University seemed determined to stamp out any deviation from this path, noting, “There is no right to question whether the regulation is valid—just punishment for violation.” Whelan argued such authoritarian policies ran counter to the notion of citizenship in America and thereby the University. He insisted that as citizens, students had a right to have their voices heard in University decision-making.²⁰

Not all critiques of the University were as blatantly political as Whelan’s, some preferred humor and satire to challenge administration policies. In a letter published on February 25, four co-eds offered a tongue-in-cheek evaluation of the University’s *in loco

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¹⁹ Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland*, 82-102.

*parentis* policies and linked the issue to the notion of student responsibility that Sharpe and Whelan spoke of with the question of women’s hours, saying “As coeds, we feel secure in the protection given us through the generous hours system formulated by our benevolent administration. … We are not old enough to know how to behave.”21 In all three cases, the authors’ arguments seem to reflect the accepted view of college as a time when respectable citizenship was inculcated and asked that students be given the opportunity to exercise the responsibility they were developing; in other words, their criticisms do not reflect radical political views but rather a logical outgrowth of mainstream views of higher education and citizenship. In addressing what they saw as a possible contradiction between the statements and actions of the University—that students were adults but treated like children—the students at OU were highlighting an issue that would become a central component of student activism for the next decade. Further, their demands for redress of these grievances stood on the grounds of the rights and privileges of adult citizens, that if not enclosed in the bubble of the college campus, these policies would not be a part of their lives. The arguments reveal a burgeoning notion of the student as a peculiar identity and yet somehow intimately linked with the idea of citizenship.22


The challenge to universities’ parietals policies continued throughout 1966 as students continued to redefine their relationship to the university community and their vision of citizenship. Some students argued that rather than divide themselves up along petty differences—over fashion or music tastes—students needed to come together and recognize what they had in common. Further, students found allies amongst the faculty, and some education scholars, who questioned whether any university could effectively take on a parental role to thousands of young people. Editorials and letters to the editor complained about the supposedly archaic rules regarding women’s dress and discipline and repeated the same logic as in previous years—the university claimed students were adults but treated them like children. Students leveled part of this criticism at the campus women’s governance organization, usually the Allied Women Students (AWS), for being too ineffective in advocating for change or for being too zealous in maintaining the status quo. One editorial opined, “If AWS is going to send college women to their rooms as though they are children, it may as well start administering spankings, too.” Resident assistants at OU created a petition calling for an end to women’s hours though rather than confront officials with the petition and demand action, the students passed the petition up through sanctioned channels and publicly stated they were unconvinced that any real changes would be forthcoming while praising themselves for having confronted the issue in a responsible manner. In the end, while students were concerned about in loco parentis and the power the university exerted over them, the focus of activism was not directly at campus concerns but on national and international affairs sapping some of the strength from the movements to change parietals policies.23

Throughout the period 1964 to 1967, students increasingly linked the questions of students’ rights and challenges to in loco parentis to wider political and social concerns, progressively losing distinct coverage in the campus newspapers. This conflation appears as early as March 1964 when The Post ran an editorial imploring OU students to take action to affect changes in their society, especially at the University, rather than simply talk about the issues. The editorial admitted that it was important to discuss the issues, but change would not come from talking, “action speaks more effectively.” The editorial concluded by suggesting that activism was worth it: “It’s worth it if our University grows with the times as well as on the drawing board. It’s worth it if every student gets from his education as much in the way of a learning experience as is possible. It’s worth it if we can leave Ohio proud of ourselves for taking a stand and proud of the University for listening.”

The plea was nonpartisan and suggested that students could find a sense of fulfillment and pride that was missing from their current lives and that through actively engaging with their society they were enhancing their education and breaking down the barriers of isolation within modern American society. The call to action made no specific policy prescriptions, only that students should not shy away from taking an active role in


their community, such as participating in the 1964 presidential election—at least, to the extent that young people without a right to vote could participate.

The largest political activity on the campuses of northern Appalachia during 1964 revolved around the impending presidential election. Several campuses held mock Republican Conventions, part of a larger nationwide phenomenon, which served as approved arenas for political expression. Students only held mock Republican conventions, not surprising given the openness of the race for the GOP nomination and President Johnson’s nearly assured nomination by the Democrats. Students served as delegates, heard campaign speeches, and voted in an orderly (as orderly as a convention can be) fashion, selecting presidential and vice presidential nominees. Interestingly enough, none of the northern Appalachian schools selected Barry Goldwater as the standard-bearer for the Republican Party, a trend consistent with the nationwide state mock conventions. Rather, students supported more moderate to liberal candidates such as Nelson Rockefeller, Henry Cabot Lodge, William Scranton, and George Romney. The organizers of the conventions stressed that they hoped to raise political awareness, but also a recognition for the process of electoral politics. The conventions suggested a limited interpretation of political expression and certainly did not support the chaotic participatory democracy already at the root of organizations such as Students of a Democratic Society or the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. While they could attend political rallies or debates, for many students, too young to vote in the upcoming election, these mock conventions served as their only direct connection to the political process.  

Throughout the fall, the approaching presidential election continued to be the major political concern on campus as the two major candidates crisscrossed northern Appalachia making stops in Athens, Morgantown, and Pittsburgh, with their surrogates making several more appearances. The student papers were alive with election coverage, discussing the candidates’ positions on a variety of issues of concern to students. Although students attended rallies and speeches held by the candidates or their respective parties there was little other political participation, aside from an occasional letter to the editor. Students occasionally invited a surrogate from one of the candidates to speak, but they did not hold their own rallies or demonstrations to try to encourage direct participation in the political process—things that would become an essential component of Sixties political activism. Rather, in 1964, students made claims to citizenship through adhering to the respectable and responsible modes of political expression deemed acceptable by the wider society.26

A longstanding issue brought up prior to the 1960s, but gaining renewed traction in the growing debate over students’ citizenship and the role of the university in American society by mid-decade was that of the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps.\footnote{Challenges to ROTC and its place in the university can be found during the 1930s as part of both pacifist and isolationist traditions of the period. See, Thomas N. Hoover, \textit{The History of Ohio University} (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1954), 225-26; George W. Knepper, \textit{New Lamps for Old: One Hundred Years of Urban Higher Education at The University of Akron} (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 1970), 229-32; Eileen Eagan, \textit{Class, Culture, and the Classroom: The Student Peace Movement of the 1930s} (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1981), 33, 57-61; Robert C. Alberts, \textit{Pitt: The Story of the University of Pittsburgh, 1787-1987} (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1986), 147-48; Robert Cohen, \textit{When the Old Left was Young: Student Radicals and America’s First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 79-84.} Although obviously a question of American militarism, students framed the mid-1960s ROTC debates on northern Appalachian campuses within notions of the role of the university in American society and whether ROTC fulfilled that mission. Connected, often as an auxiliary argument, was the link between ROTC and the American war effort. For example, during the summer of 1966, Pitt’s Students for Peace (SFP) engaged in activities targeting the University’s ROTC program. Barely a year old at Pitt, SFP had gotten into a tussle with the administration three months earlier over the distribution of literature to incoming freshmen and its supposed links to “subversive organizations” like Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). Students for Peace distributed literature about the upcoming International Days of Protest (in March 1966) at a freshmen preview.
weekend which some felt violated a series of rules against organizations recruiting pre-
freshmen. Members of SFP argued that asking potential students to attend a rally
coordinated by groups at multiple local colleges was not a recruitment effort. When
Helen P. Rush, Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, contacted SFP, the person answering
the telephone identified the office as both SFP and SDS. The University had not officially
recognized SDS as a student organization on the Pitt campus. The result was a
questioning of whether SFP was simply a front for the unofficial SDS chapter. In the end,
SFP received a minor punishment for its actions and administrators found no improper
connection in the shared office space with SDS as the administration recognized SFP as a
separate organization from SDS.28

The issue SFP raised during the summer of 1966 targeted the supposedly special
position afforded ROTC on campus; they argued that military education was antithetical

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28 Ruth Levikoff, “Students for Peace, PLUS Formed on Univ. Campus,” The Pitt News, April 5,
1965; Alan Disler, “Students for Peace Violate Pitt Preview Solicitation Regulations,” The Pitt News,
“Students for Peace Group Retain Campus Recognition,” The Pitt News, March 25, 1965; Bill Weber and

In September 1965, a group of students initiated the New Student Left (NSL) organization at Pitt
to serve as a coordinating body for various student organizations with similar goals. The group brought
together representatives from the Hill Education Project and civil rights groups as well as antiwar groups
and members of a Pittsburgh city chapter of the W.E.B. DuBois Club. While the NSL never sought, nor
received, official sanction by the University, it did represent the existence of a growing liberal-to-radical
core of students at Pitt and in the Pittsburgh area. And while neither SFP nor SDS were mentioned in the
article describing the formation of NSL, it seems that both of these organizations would have had some
connection to or have been born from the NSL. See, Alex D’Ippolito, “Liberals Form New Organization,”
The Pitt News, September 20, 1965. Student groups like NSL left virtually no archival trace and become
visible to historians only through the historical record of the student newspapers.

Both OU and WVU had chapters of SDS (official or not) or other New Left-leaning organization
Athenaeum, November 2, 1965; “Students Begin Chapter of ‘Democratic Society’,” The Post, March 3,
1966; Tom Price, “SDS May Not Be Formed Here,” The Post, March 7, 1966; “Local S.D.S. Chapter to
Join National Society,” The Post, September 26, 1966; Joe Forrester, Letter to the Editor, The Post,
September 27, 1966; Robert S. Newton, “The New Left,” The Post, October 19, 1966; Ohio Chapter of
Students for a Democratic Society, Letter to the Editor, The Post, November 16, 1966; Julian Martin, Rich
Anderson, Harry Shaw, Linda Helmstetter, Jane Sullivan, Letter to the Editor, Daily Athenaeum, February
16, 1967.
to the mission of the University. Unlike any other program at the University, ROTC had
the right to solicit students during orientation, which SFP felt was inappropriate at best.
Frank Couvares, Treasurer of SFP, argued that the role of the university was to help
students “form opinions, to articulate them, and to defend and advocate them,” especially
regarding such things as America’s war in Vietnam. However, Couvares argued that
ROTC’s mission was military indoctrination not the promotion of free thought necessary
for citizenship.29 Students for Peace wondered aloud how it could be that the University
argued that students were too immature to make informed decisions about housing or
what hours to keep but mature enough to learn the lessons of war, such a contradiction
meant either parietals or ROTC had to go because they could not coexist logically. Much
more anti-ROTC activism would come as the nation’s involvement in Vietnam consumed
more attention. For now, though, one sees a growing sense among some at Pitt of a
student-citizen identity; however, a wide range of campus issues helped forge this notion
of student-citizenship.

The campus issue at OU that sparked the greatest discussion of student roles as
citizens of the University and the nation occurred in spring 1967 when a question of
union rights, amongst non-academic employees at the University, entangled students. In
early March, the University administration refused to accept a request for employees to
have union dues deducted from their paychecks launching a series of protests stretching
nearly ten days. From the earliest stages of this dispute, students participated, and in so

Questions ROTC,” The Pitt News, June 16, 1966; Frank Couvares, “ROTC in Perspective,” The Pitt News,
June 16, 1966; “Students for Peace Attack Rushes Decision on ROTC,” The Pitt News, June 20, 1966;
Robert Zavos, “SFP Cite Literature Censorship,” The Pitt News, June 27, 1966; Dan Booker, “ROTC in
doing suggested a greater connection between students and labor, in some circumstances, than perhaps the assumed narrative of the period would suggest. For some, the question of labor rights was an obviously personal issue having relatives in various unions as miners, teamsters, and industrial workers. Ohio University’s student government passed resolutions supporting the strikers and calling on the University administration to recognize the employee union, they organized efforts to collect funds for striking workers, and they even coordinated efforts to bring coffee and donuts to picketers. Many students, of their own accord, marched the picket lines and signed statements of solidarity, some walked away from their work-study jobs to symbolize their support.30

Student government president Daniel DeNicola argued that students had a role to play in the union debate not only as members of the University community but also as responsible citizens of the United States. DeNicola had become the first independent president of OU’s student government challenging the status quo power of Greek organizations on campus and the union issue represented another challenge to entrenched power.31

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After a sustained weeklong campaign by non-academic workers and students, the administration moved up Spring Break and sought avenues for ending the standoff. By the third day of the strike, March 8, University President Vernon R. Alden advised students that if they and the workers persisted it may force the University to close resulting in a loss of their student activities fees and he threatened that the University would confer no academic credit for the partial session. However, the threat backfired. Rather than causing students to stop their efforts, they pushed harder attempting to call the administration’s bluff. Campus rallies and a march drew upwards of four thousand students. Ultimately, the administration decided to move the spring recess two weeks earlier to relieve pressure caused by the striking workers and their student allies. In the end, the University gave into the employees’ demands, recognized their union (the first college union in the state of Ohio), and returned workers to their positions without prejudice. Some students questioned whether the actions of the student government during the strike had served to harm its position relative to the student body and the administration, while others—especially, Daniel DeNicola—argued that the student government’s relevance and authority were at an all-time high. If nothing else, the events of March 1967 proved to some in the administration and student body that OU


students were not completely apathetic or without the ability to cause campus-wide disturbances.

In early April, *The Post* published a letter from student John T. Nixon that expressed a strong conviction that OU students had already forged a student-citizen identity even if they did not march in massive protests across the college green. Nixon argued that the “depersonalization” wrought by America’s conformist culture and the isolation generated by mass education in the form of the multiversity had led students to “reject this whole life as it really is—phony.” Nixon went on to argue (in the gendered language of the period):

> The university is seen as a microcosm of society, which the student views before he enters it, a culture characterized by impersonality in business, in living arrangements, even in social life—a culture in which nobody dares to be himself, and everybody wears a mask for fear he may be found to be in deviation at some point from conformity. … Part, indeed, of the adult restiveness in the face of student revolt is surely based on the disturbing accuracy with which the younger generation has unmasked the pretentiousness and insecurity of the older. … So, the wheel comes full circle, with the university being part of the establishment students reject. He sees too many trustees and administrators and faculty members working hand in glove with a society dedicated to human destruction and the denial of the meaning of personhood. … he sees the university training him to be an uncomplaining middle class person, adjusted to all the proper middle class mores, doing nothing to jar the well-oiled machinery called the Great Society.  

Nixon identified the struggle of students with a generational tension but mostly with a conformist establishment unwilling to allow young people to pursue their individuality, much as the Port Huron Statement had five years earlier. He argued that as students and citizens, young people had an obligation to challenge the stilted vision of personhood created by American society, as it existed. He further questioned the role of the university

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in American society—whether it existed to generate technicians or to create thinkers. In total, Nixon presented the underlying issue at the center of much student protest and activism during the Vietnam War era, a discomfort with and desire to change the nature of American society from one that fears individuality to one that embraces the eclectic nature of humanity. For Nixon, education was not indoctrination but a gateway to the many possibilities of human endeavors. In the end, Nixon argued that students could not wait until they were older to try to affect change, by then they would be part of the system; thus, change could only come from the youth of America.

**Civil Rights:**

Since the mid-1990s, historians of the civil rights era have sought to contextualize the black freedom struggle within the Cold War framework, de-center the King-centric narrative, and emphasize the role played at the grassroots, local level. Scholars such as John Dittmer, Mary Dudziak, and Nancy MacLean have been at the forefront of these efforts. Moving beyond the focus on attacks on Southern Jim Crow, scholars such as Martha Biondi and Matthew Countryman have also begun to move their focus into the North and how civil rights activism addressed *de facto* segregation. Increasingly, historians such as Michael Friedland and Simon Hall have explored the cross-causal nature of civil rights activism, especially in terms of antiwar efforts, and attempted to understand the relationship of northern, white college students to the wider movement for civil rights and black power.  

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Before the Freedom Summer campaign of 1964, despite increasing calls for action, students at northern Appalachian universities still largely remained tangentially connected to the expanding direct actions evolving around them. This distance appears in how students engaged with the movement for civil rights at OU and Pitt in the spring of 1964. Students went to performances and lectures by activists and leaders in the freedom struggle, such as John Lewis, president of SNCC, comedian Dick Gregory, and the Freedom Singers. They listened to the impassioned calls for action and the dire warnings of potential violence in the summer ahead. Yet, few took any action to confront racism and discrimination in their communities, and only a handful would later join the Freedom Summer campaign. One of the few instances of active student involvement in the civil rights movement came when members of WVU’s YWCA traveled to North Carolina during their Easter Break to help register black voters. As spring moved into summer, the focus of the campus newspapers was still largely on the Greek social groups and other


extracurricular fun, not social or political activism. Yet, students and faculty called on fellow members of the campus community to get involved in summer civil rights projects.\textsuperscript{38}

The city of Pittsburgh had a strong civil rights movement by the early 1960s, yet, for the most part students did not directly participate in local civil rights activism. Joe W. Trotter, Eric Ledell Smith, Jared N. Day, and Ralph Proctor have provided several recent studies of Pittsburgh’s civil rights activism highlighting the struggles against \textit{de facto} segregation within the city.\textsuperscript{39} However, it appears that students at Pitt largely did not involve themselves in these efforts until closer to the end of the decade. Although, \textit{The Pitt News} did report on, and a small handful of students seem to have supported, a local community action program in the Oakland neighborhood surrounding Pitt in late-1963. Participation in the Hill Education Program, a tutoring program aimed at disadvantaged black elementary and secondary students in the Hill District near campus, represented perhaps the largest off-campus civil rights activism Pitt students engaged in during the period 1964 to 1967. By-and-large, while the students made intellectual and rhetorical connections to the wider civil rights movement, they appear, in these middle years of the 1960s, to have focused their activism toward campus when it did happen, or by traveling


to sites of national importance such as Freedom Summer in 1964 or Selma, Alabama, in 1965.  

Although not certain, there appears to have been around half a dozen northern Appalachian students to participate in Freedom Summer. From Ohio University, Bonnie Guy, Jan Lipzin, and David Prince went south after training. Several white youths attacked Prince while he photographed a rally in Selma, Alabama. Bonnie Guy was a member of the local chapter of the Student Peace Union; it is unknown whether Lipzin or Prince were members.  

Guy sent several letters to *The Post* over the course of the summer detailing the work she was involved in and the realities of repression in Mississippi. Guy’s letters highlighted the radicalization process McAdam spoke of in his work, *Freedom Summer*; however, Guy was already a member of a politically active

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41 The OU chapter of Student Peace Union (SPU) was part of a larger national organization created in 1959 by Ken Calkins and held a broader anti-militarism focus than later Vietnam-centered antiwar organizations. The chapter at OU had been in existence for at least one year by the time members engaged in a limited discussion of militarism in American society, especially in higher education, via the editorial page of *The Post* in January 1964. However, SPU at OU was not limited to issues of militarism, it (and its members) also engaged in civil rights activism. See, SPU, Flyer, undated [presumably on or prior to November 4, 1963], Civil Rights Folder, CSA, OU; Student Peace Union, Letter to the Editor, *The Post*, January 15, 1964; George Clark, Letter to the Editor, *The Post*, January 17, 1964; Bonnie Guy, Letter to the Editor, *The Post*, January 21, 1964; Maurice Isserman, *If I Had a Hammer...: The Death of the Old Left and the Birth of the New Left* (New York: Basic Books, 1987), 194-203.


In September, Vicki Epstein filed a report with *The Pitt News* about four Pitt students’ participation in Freedom Summer. However, no additional references or connections to Freedom Summer could be found. See, Vicki Epstein, “Local Civil Rights Volunteers Give ‘Report On Mississippi’,” *The Pitt News*, September 16, 1964.
and socially conscious group prior to her activities in Mississippi. It is not clear what Lipzin’s and Prince’s political backgrounds were by 1964. While undoubtedly the Freedom Summer project had a dramatic effect on its participants, it may be, if Guy’s experience is any guide, that those who volunteered in the first place, and who made it through the screening and training processes, represented a subset of activists most likely to have a predisposition toward radicalization. Thus, it may be less that Freedom Summer radicalized its participants than the summer project gave focus and direction to pre-existing inclinations. Regardless, it was not just students from elite colleges on the coasts that participated in Freedom Summer, and the skills, ideologies, and tactics developed in Mississippi’s steamy summer took root in the universities of northern Appalachia.

Following Freedom Summer, the student newspapers’ coverage of the civil rights movement and topics associated with the struggle for racial equality declined significantly, all but disappearing. One of the few exceptions came in November when Greek social organizations at both OU and WVU offered brief discussions on the question of integrating their associations; however, nothing really came from this momentary flare-up of national concerns at the campus level.43 Civil rights leaders did continue to visit northern Appalachia but by-and-large issues of civil rights became largely subsumed in discussions of the impending 1964 presidential election.44


Where only a handful of northern Appalachian students took part in Freedom Summer in 1964, the number of participants from the region who marched in the demonstrations in Selma, Alabama, after the events on the Edmund Pettus Bridge in March 1965 totaled over one hundred and fifty. Few of those heading south referenced Freedom Summer as a reason why they felt compelled to board buses and speed their way to Alabama; however, almost all argued some form of justification as citizens in a democracy or humanitarian duty. Where Freedom Summer, and the civil rights movement as a whole, had seemed to that point largely something that “others” engaged in, Selma became something to which the students of northern Appalachia saw themselves personally tied, perhaps due to the images of young people, like SNCC leader John Lewis, brutalized by police for engaging in a peaceful demonstration. Several students from WVU traveled to Alabama within only a few days of the attack at the Edmund Pettus Bridge and would remain in the state for the majority of the events that unfolded over the next two and a half weeks, participating in a number of small demonstrations and marches. Within a week of Bloody Sunday (March 7, 1965), over 130 students, faculty, and ministers from Pitt and several of the other colleges and universities in the city boarded buses and headed to Alabama to march in protest of segregation, repression, and injustice. During their activities in Alabama, the Pitt students experienced firsthand the confusion and discomfort of tear gas as well as the fear induced by savage police attacks. A few of the students returned to Pittsburgh with broken bones as souvenirs. Traveling to Alabama was not the only way that Pittsburgh students participated in the events of mid-March; over 800 individuals came out to be a part of march through the Oakland section of Pittsburgh in honor of the life of a Unitarian
Universalist minister from Boston, James Reeb, killed in Selma by white segregationists. Of the nearly two dozen OU students, faculty, and ministers who participated in the 25,000-person march into Montgomery on March 25, none experienced the violence or brutality of their Pittsburgh counterparts, though they did face down white intimidation as they made their way to the capital.45

Although less than two hundred of the several thousands of students that attended northern Appalachian universities made treks to Alabama for the marches and demonstrations in Selma and Montgomery, their efforts rippled through their respective student bodies in ways that Freedom Summer had not. Those who participated in the Alabama events came back and told their experiences to fellow students, sometimes in formal settings as a guest lecturer for a particular student organization. It was an unusual experience for some to sit as the expert amongst their colleagues, occupying a role

heretofore limited to professors or invited dignitaries. Selma had done for them what Freedom Summer had done for individuals such as Mario Savio: it provided an authentic experience that validated their devotion to activism and change while serving as a wellspring of strength one could tap into during future demonstrations and actions. Those who participated in the events of March 1965 in Alabama became sources of inspiration for many of their classmates. As summer approached, some students announced plans to participate in civil rights and antipoverty projects, and cited their fellow students’ willingness to put their lives on the line in Alabama as a reason for why they were now becoming active.

If Selma, not Freedom Summer, became the radicalizing experience for northern white Appalachian students, then McAdam’s thesis needs some revision. Given the greater level of participation by northern Appalachian students in the Alabama protests, those who did not participate could watch the news or read the paper and see (or, at least, imagine) their friends in Alabama being beaten and mangled by white police officers. The sheer number of northern students involved meant that when they returned to

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In early April, Dr. Richard Rubenstein from Pitt spoke to the Monongalia County chapter of the NAACP and WVU students about the experience he and approximately 135 Pittsburgh area students had during their Alabama adventures. He described the violence they faced connecting their experiences with those of WVU students who participated but had not confronted police violence. See, “Local NAACP Hears Rights March Story,” *Daily Athenaeum*, April 7, 1965.

campuses, they would spread their stories to a significantly wider range of classmates than could have ever been reached by the few hundred Freedom Summer activists drawn from a small sampling of student bodies. Though only 25,000 people participated in the Montgomery rally on March 25, that number does not count the hundreds and thousands of others who flooded into the state between March 7 and 24 who did not stay for, or were not able to make it to, the events in Montgomery. Selma was larger and more urgent, notwithstanding the violence that accompanied Freedom Summer. Further, Freedom Summer was a commitment of time and energy that many students were still unwilling or unable to make in 1964, whereas Selma was a shorter commitment that offered, seemingly, the same level of symbolic value.

Freedom Summer and the Selma marches seem to represent two different forms of citizenship activism. Freedom Summer sought to help build empowered black communities able to serve as their own advocates and claim a greater stake in the decision-making processes of the wider community. Its success derived from a willingness of participants to devote a great deal of time and energy to the process. Conversely, the Selma to Montgomery marches following Bloody Sunday were about an expression of frustration and meant to call attention to the plight of black citizens in Alabama. Their success rested in raising awareness to injustice and demonstrating to authority figures the depth of frustration through the mobilization of the largest numbers of participants possible. While marchers had to be willing to confront the potential of physical harm or arrest for their activities, as Freedom Summer workers had, the duration of this threat was significantly less. Thousands of people descended on Alabama in the two weeks after Bloody Sunday, staying a few days or possibly the full two weeks, and
then returned to their daily lives content in the knowledge they had made their voice heard. The level of sustained commitment differed greatly between the community-organizing model of Freedom Summer and the mass demonstration model of Selma, and these two competing modes of citizenship engagement appeared in virtually all forms of social and political activism during the 1960s.

While a massive sustained rate of participation in southern civil rights activity was not something students could do once back on campus, there were continued debates and efforts to keep the momentum of Selma going. In November 1965, the Athens Civil Rights Action Committee (ACRAC), an organization made up of people from both the community and campus, announced a six day project over Christmas break in Winstonville, Mississippi, a small town in Bolivar County—a site of Freedom Summer activism. Fifteen students participated in the project to register voters and promote community action programs, recognizing that despite the passage of both the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts their host families faced economic and, possibly, physical, reprisals for participating in the civil rights project. In recounting their events, some drew parallels between their work in Mississippi and the anti-poverty activities in southeastern Ohio, linking both to the federal War on Poverty.48

At roughly the same time as OU students planned their “Christmas in Mississippi” civil rights project, students at WVU engaged in a heated debate over the right of a fraternal society, the Kappa Alpha Order (KA), to continue their tradition of flying the

Confederate flag. The debate centered on the question of the flag’s symbolism—hatred or heritage. University officials were quick to say they were not calling KA or its members racists, but that others had done despicable acts of racial violence in association with the flag such that the flag had become a negative symbol for some. Brent Diefenbach, KA president, announced via a letter to the editor that the Order would comply with the University policy but argued that this stance by the University represented the first step upon a slippery slope to the full abridgement of all students’ rights, a concern echoed by the Daily Athenaeum in an editorial the following day. The tone of the debate quickly moved from any connection to questions of race to the overstepping of the limits of legitimate power by the University and infringement on first amendment rights of expression. Reflecting the longstanding accommodationist narrative of the Civil War, as described by historian David Blight, the KA-supporting students argued the flag represented the honor and bravery of Confederate soldiers. Though one finds it oddly ironic that a fraternity with such strong Confederate ties would gain a large following in West Virginia—a state formed by pro-Unionists—this does highlight the power of post-Civil War memory construction, such as scholar Anne Marshall noted in Kentucky, as well as the constructed Appalachian identity as “Southern.” In the end, the close of the

semester ended the debate over the Confederate flag at WVU. The debate does highlight that the emerging student-citizen identity was not purely a liberal or left-wing phenomenon, as KA argued their rights as citizens were in jeopardy and they had to an obligation to speak out against abuses of power.

Calendar year 1966 saw only limited student engagement with civil rights in northern Appalachia. Students struggled to come to terms with the growing trend of “black power” and its implications for integration, coexistence, and racial harmony. Important leaders and figures of the civil rights movement like Carl Stokes, Stokely Carmichael, and Dr. King, came to the region to discuss racial issues. Occasional incidents of racial tension flared and students sought ways to address local race issues often pursuing the goal of integration. However, by-and-large, the year saw students discuss issues and only rare, sporadic incidents of activism. On the whole, the year 1966 saw little or no direct actions by members of the northern Appalachian campus communities on issues of civil rights, just as activism on campus concerns had faded, most likely in response to escalations in the war in Vietnam and attention drawn to changes in the selective service system during this year.50

By the spring of 1967, civil rights issues again gained some sustained activism on
campus. In February, in Morgantown, a group of students officially announced the
formation of an SDS chapter and initially set out to attack racial discrimination in the city
targeting local barbershops. Among those who announced the formation of the local
chapter was a junior, history major, Harry Shaw. Shaw had answered the call over the
previous summer to join Dr. King in continuing the March Against Fear after the
shooting of James Meredith. He also helped form Student Action Against Poverty
(SAAP) and participated in desegregation efforts in Morgantown. Shaw, who became the
local SDS chapter president, represented wholly the cross-causal origins of student

Not long after its official debut, WVU’s SDS had found its first cause—the desegregation of Morgantown’s
barbershops; however, an antiwar demonstration sidetracked this effort and led to a

A plethora of letters to the editor appeared in \textit{Daily Athenaeum} between March 15 and April 19
discussing various aspects of SDS, many critical and almost as many defending the actions of the group.
“true agenda” of SDS on WVU’s campus. For Shaw and SDSers, the emphasis on civil rights represented a natural outgrowth of their visions of both citizenship as defined by their university experiences and the mission of SDS as an agent of socio-political change.53

Poverty:
For some northern, white college students, their entry into social and political activism came through the summer freedom projects; however, for youths in Appalachia, the War on Poverty offered many a taste of community activism. Doug McAdam argued that participation in Freedom Summer was the catalyst that created the national activist network of white college students that precipitated the rise of disruptive student actions on college campuses in the North. However, for students in northern Appalachia participation in local poverty programs offered another way to integrate their campus and community activism. Recently, Thomas Kiffmeyer has explored the role of antipoverty activism in the 1960s arguing that participation in the Appalachian Volunteers radicalized many members as they came to realize poverty’s roots were too entrenched for the liberal reforms offered by the War on Poverty.54 As students made claims of rights as citizens, they also argued that all citizens had certain rights and standards of living that the people


must ensure and respect. Poverty and poverty activism became an important component of the Sixties experience for students of northern Appalachian universities.

In February 1964, the Action for Appalachian Youth (AAY) was formed in Charleston, West Virginia (Kanawha County), as part of both President Johnson’s poverty initiatives and as part of the President’s Committee on Juvenile Delinquency. The goal of AAY was to help at-risk youth gain the skills they needed to find gainful employment or stay in school. The WVU Center for Appalachian Studies and Development (known colloquially as the Appalachian Center) provided a forum through which some of the AAY programs developed to reach youth in urban areas, farm communities, and the more remote regions of Kanawha County. Over the summer, while half a dozen northern Appalachian students made their way to Mississippi, four WVU students went to Kanawha County, and as part of a 10-week program by the AAY, these students participated in a lecture series that included such speakers as Harry Caudill, author of Night Comes to the Cumberlands, and Michael Harrington, author of The Other America. The students also worked on a number of AAY projects that included creation of leadership programs to empower locals as well as rebuilding dilapidated playgrounds and other community areas. The program emphasized “self-help” through providing the training and tools necessary for the poor of Kanawha County to draw themselves and their communities out of poverty.55

Participation in AAY was relatively limited; the bulk of northern Appalachian students who became involved in poverty activism began by attending lectures and discussions or reading campus news coverage of the War on Poverty. While WVU students explored rural poverty, students at Pitt focused on urban poverty. While there are distinct and definite differences between urban and rural poverty, students throughout northern Appalachia identified a lack of good education as a key factor regardless of the locality of poverty. Thus, for these students the problem was largely the same and they would, in time, develop similar mechanisms for local student involvement—mostly in the form of tutoring programs for disadvantaged youths.

Campus news coverage of the War on Poverty was generally positive on all three campuses. It is not overly surprising that OU and WVU would hold such views, OU’s president Vernon R. Alden was instrumental in writing parts of the federal government’s poverty initiatives and WVU’s president Paul A. Miller had been the driving force behind WVU’s Appalachian Center, which sought to do much the same as the later Appalachian Regional Commission.56 Regardless, in all three cases, students fought the War on Poverty only as words on the pages of the student newspapers in the fall of 1964, much like the rest of student engagement during this period. However, students would begin to move into the field and work in poverty-stricken communities and begin to advocate on campus and within the community for the rights and dignity of the poor.

In the weeks after over 130 Pittsburgh area student traveled to Alabama in March 1965 to protest injustice, some students began to get involved in antipoverty activism. Two Pitt students traveled to Alice Lloyd Junior College in Pippa Passes, Kentucky, as part of a conference on Appalachian poverty that drew representatives from twenty northeastern universities. One of the students on the trip described their approach to Alice Lloyd Junior College, describing a decent into a drab Dickensian nightmare of cyclical poverty and intense ignorance. These students returned to Pitt and used their experiences in Kentucky to spark greater Pitt student involvement in poverty activism. In the following weeks, over a dozen fraternity members from Pitt took part in a joint VISTA-YMCA urban renewal project in the Homewood-Brushton district of Pittsburgh (a region of intense poverty within the city, also a community with a large black population).\(^57\)

While it may seem odd that fraternity brothers, the epitome of college insiders, would participate in antipoverty work, the supposed realm of rebels alone, it is not that stark of a deviation. Fraternities and sororities often engaged in charity efforts seeing it as part of the middle-class ethos they were attempting to inculcate within their members. Thus, for these fraternity brothers, a single day or weekend of service to the community satisfied their charity obligations and purchased their ability to participate in the extracurricular fun of campus life, it was not an effort to create or sustain an activist conception of citizenship duty.

The description in *The Pitt News* of the living conditions in the urban slum the fraternity brothers worked in mirrored the earlier nightmarish images of rural poverty and

its explanations were the same—ignorance and a culture of poverty. The visions of poverty promoted by liberal reformers and engrained in the ideology of the War on Poverty put the onus for change on the poor, that they needed to adopt middle class American values in order to build themselves up out of poverty. The self-help philosophy pitched by spokespersons like radio and television personality Betty Furness when trying to get students to volunteer for VISTA suggested America’s overall economic system was good, right, and effective, and that pockets of poverty represented an aberration. The solution was not large systemic change but patchwork programs, supposedly meant to empower the poor. As Thomas Kiffmeyer has argued, the failures of antipoverty programs in the mid-1960s came from these faulty assumptions and resulted in a radicalization of poverty workers. In Pittsburgh in 1965, the tone was self-congratulatory, as if they had won a battle in the wider War on Poverty because they had helped to paint an apartment or distributed some flyers. However, students seem to have quickly forgotten this brief antipoverty flare up of antipoverty work in the rapidly shifting socio-political landscape of the mid-1960s.58

In 1966, OU students participated in antipoverty programs in eastern and southern Ohio. In April, nearly thirty students worked on projects in Youngstown, Ohio, over two hundred miles to the north and east, and in November, a handful of students traveled over 80 miles south and west to participate in a community action program in Portsmouth.

Ohio. Both the War on Poverty and the civil rights movement inspired the efforts in Youngstown and Portsmouth in that they sought to help build the empowered communities necessary to overcome the culture of poverty and become advocates for their own success similar to the efforts of Freedom Summer in 1964. Energized by speeches like that of Harry Caudill who came to OU in April 1966, the students went out to these impoverished areas with a goal of helping local residents empower themselves to participate, some for the first time, in the political process. Through community organizing and education programs, the students sought to help the poor of Portsmouth and Youngstown become active citizens. Over the winter break, OU students participated in antipoverty work in Ohio and Kentucky. Many students emerged from these various activities over the course of the year forever altered. Some expressed a deep desire to return to these poverty-stricken communities, some even considered leaving school to continue their activism, because they saw for the first time what it meant to be a citizen in an active sense.59

However, it was not just OU students who participated in antipoverty work through student-led organizations. Students at WVU and Pitt also formed organizations

and tutoring programs and headed into the hollows and slums. In Pittsburgh, the Hill
Education Project (HEP) served an urban population with the same function as OU’s
Southeastern Ohio Opportunities Program (SOOP) or WVU’s Student Action Against
Poverty (SAAP). For the most part these groups offered tutoring programs for
disadvantaged youths, emphasizing acceptance of the liberal notion that education
represented the path out of poverty. In all cases, students who participated in these groups
also became members in other organizations, focusing on issues of campus and
community concern including civil rights and the war in Vietnam, some even joined or
formed local chapters of Students for a Democratic Society.60 The actions of these
poverty warriors were more in line with the community-centered activism of Freedom
Summer than the mass demonstrations of Selma, Alabama, and adopted by the antiwar
movement.

Antiwar:

In 1964, students were only marginally concerned with the question of war in Southeast
Asia. Yet the war in Vietnam grew to become the dominant political concern and the
issue through which students filtered virtually all other issues by 1967. Scholars continue

60 “HEP Aims To Lower Drop-Out Rate,” The Pitt News, January 22, 1964; Joni Hartman,
“University Student Volunteers Tutor Underprivileged Children,” The Post, October 25, 1965; Editorial,
“The Meaning of SOOP,” The Post, December 8, 1965; Clarence Page, “Tutoring Program Aids Area
“Volunteers Needed for SOOP,” The Post, February 8, 1967; “‘U’ Students Discuss Youngstown Poverty,”
Athenaeum, March 7, 1967; “SAAP Ends 1967 Activities with Free Sunday Supper,” Daily Athenaeum,
April 7, 1967; “SAAP May Increase Area Tutoring Work,” Daily Athenaeum, April 11, 1967; Letter, Mary
J. Kirklan to Harry Shaw, April 25, 1967, Shaw Papers, Harry F. Shaw, Jr. Personal Files series, Box 1,
Folder 2, ASC.

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to debate just what it was that propelled student antiwar activism. Some focus on national events, like SDS’s March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam in April 1965, while others emphasize local issues, such as the concern over parietals. However, at northern Appalachian universities it appears that a combination of internal pushes and external pulls helped the antiwar movement develop on their campuses. Initially, the rising interest in Vietnam in the fall of 1964, and for the next year, largely expressed itself in relatively passive means and through approved and sanctioned forms of political expression, such as listening to speeches made by experts (or faculty). However, announcements of changes to the selective service deferment system, late in 1965 and in 1966, began a transition towards greater levels of civil disobedience and direct action. While assuredly there were many who opposed the war for a variety of political, social, and moral reasons for whom changes in the draft laws did little to spark their concern, the growing opposition among many college students resulted from a much more immediate fear of dying in military service that from which their status as college students had previously insulated them. By 1967, demonstrations became more frequent, using the mass tactics of Selma to protest the war in Vietnam.

The summer of 1964 was important not just for the projects in Mississippi and Kanawha County, but also because of the incident(s) in the Gulf of Tonkin in August. In

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early August, two U.S. navy ships came under attack; some reports suggested there were two attacks by North Vietnamese forces. The U.S. Congress passed, in rapid fashion, the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution granting the President wide powers to protect American servicemen stationed in Southeast Asia. The Resolution opened the door for the wider expansion of American involvement in the war in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{62} However, for many students these events seem to have done very little to raise their awareness of the situation in Indochina. The lack of a large or vocal opposition to American involvement in Vietnam in the early fall of 1964 has much to do with the still relatively low number, only a few thousands, of “advisers” in place and no “combat” troops on the ground, and that draft calls had not been altered. In all, Vietnam did not really become an issue for many students in the fall of 1964 because it was presumably no different than many other smaller actions the United States had gotten involved in over the previous two decades, and the students’ lives were not being directly affected by the events of August, so they had little reason to pay closer attention. Vietnam was still too “new,” at least in the context of the fallout from the Gulf of Tonkin Incident, for opposition to be mobilized. However, what is striking is that the students held no forums or debates about the issues, whether on the right of Congress to cede so much authority to the President, if American interests were at stake in the region, or just what the United States was doing in Southeast Asia in the first place. The lack of such activities appears to have more to do with timing, the events of Tonkin Gulf occurred in early August, by the time school was back in

session, it was old news. What coverage the student newspapers gave to Vietnam in the fall of 1964 was largely interspersed with other foreign relations stories culled together from the various wire services. It seems that the presidential election, which had obvious war-related overtones, overshadowed specific antiwar activism at northern Appalachian universities.63

Campus antiwar activism remained relatively restrained during the 1964-1965 academic year. Students at northern Appalachian universities were still largely talking about the war, or occasionally hearing lectures about it, but they only infrequently engaged in any activities—rallies, demonstrations, petitions, etc.—related to these issues. On the whole, news coverage of Vietnam by campus papers was limited and reveals no real increase in student discussion or activism relative to the conflict in Vietnam throughout the fall of 1964. In October 1964, even as casualties in Vietnam peaked to their highest levels thus far, students held no rallies, demonstrations, or protests, only offering an occasional story in the student papers.64 Despite a summer that many would later describe as crucial in defining national and international issues for the years to come, students seemingly showed little concern for these issues beyond rehashed wire stories of distant events and focused more immediately on Homecoming and other campus social events.

Just as involvement with the black freedom struggle increased in 1965, so too did debate and demonstrations related to Vietnam. In February, members of OU’s Student

63 The near complete silence on the Gulf of Tonkin Incident and Resolution seems odd, especially given the depth of scholarly focus on the incident and resolution. However, it seems, due to the lack of coverage in the campus newspapers, students did not see these as issues of great concern.

Peace Union staged a protest march to call for an end to the bombing of North Vietnam, they also circulated a petition declaring a “conscious refusal to cooperate with the United States government in the prosecution of the war in Viet Nam,” sponsored by the Catholic Worker, the Committee for Non-Violent Action, and the War Resisters League. At Pitt, the bombings and growing likelihood of combat troops headed to Vietnam sparked a debate in The Pitt News. In a three-part series published prior to the landing of 3,500 American combat troops in Vietnam in early March, Irv Garfinkle blamed “myopic anticommunism” for America’s initial involvement in Vietnam and advocated immediate withdrawal. Garfinkle accepted the Cold War ideas of America’s global role and he believed continued involvement only weakened America’s strategic position. However, Garfinkle’s position drew criticism, chiefly from those who believed withdrawal could only symbolize appeasement and cowardice that would serve to embolden America’s enemies. In an opinion essay meant to challenge Garfinkle’s assumptions, Alex D’Ippolito launched into an anticommunist diatribe littered with tried-and-true slogans and catchphrases, including “better dead than red,” and “peace without freedom is slavery;” thus, withdrawal meant capitulation and the acceleration of a communist conspiracy to destroy the United States and its way of life. D’Ippolito advocated all-out war in Vietnam, with the very real potential of using nuclear weapons, as the only real option; otherwise, “the ghosts of a million brave soldiers” would haunt the United States.

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At virtually the same time that the Garfinkle-D’Ippolito debate raged in *The Pitt News*, similar discussions appeared in the campus papers at WVU and OU. At WVU, the debate was between two professors taking opposing, pro/con, positions on the war, both of whom the *Daily Athenaeum* claimed to be experts. Thus, where Pitt students engaged each other, WVU students highlighted the more passive form of politics—observing the debate of others rather than engaging in it themselves. At OU, *The Post* ran a story on a current student and Marine veteran who served in Vietnam, David Oman. Oman rejected the optimistic view of a potential American victory in Vietnam, stating, “The war in South Viet Nam is not a thing to be won.” He argued American prestige had already suffered greatly because of the war and that negotiation was the only alternative, noting that most Americans did not have a full grasp of the situation on the ground in Vietnam because of the obfuscations of military leaders. One week later, in a letter to the editor, Joe McKeever said that while Oman may be correct that negotiation was the only real alternative, America’s war effort must ensure the prevention of any Communist expansion in Southeast Asia.⁶⁷ The debates at Pitt, WVU, and OU demonstrate the growing concern amongst these students of the war and reflect an effort to take up the duties of a citizen and engage the question of war. Where Pitt and OU show a movement amongst the students to take on a slightly more active role in these debates, suggesting a more engaged vision of citizenship, students at WVU were still largely observers of these debates rather than participations.

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While there were no rallies or demonstration on campus, in mid-April 1965, OU students traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the “March on Washington to End the War in Vietnam.” Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) sponsored the rally in the nation’s capital, which represented one of their few outright antiwar actions preferring to focus their energies on a wider call for societal change. Interestingly, the fourteen OU students who traveled to the event did not want The Post to print their names “for fear of University reprisals,” suggesting that association with an SDS-sponsored event could make one a marked-individual. Overall, the participants praised the event as a way to raise national awareness to the need to end the war and refocus attention domestically, specifically to the issue of poverty.

The war debates in the campus newspapers and participation in the march by OU students showed the growing, if relatively small amount of activism against the Vietnam War. Garfinkle’s “antiwar” stance, such that one could call it that, was less the attack on American militarism and/or imperialism that would become the left’s position in the near future, but rather an argument of wrong war-wrong time which still supported the underlying assumptions and justifications of the use of American military power globally. Students were beginning to engage with Vietnam as they had started to with civil rights and poverty. Further, like earlier political engagement, the argument was that students needed to listen to experts before forming their own opinions. Within a few weeks of the


69 “Student War March Protests Viet Nam,” The Post, April 22, 1965.
Garfinkle-D'Ippolito debate at Pitt on the issue of Vietnam, students in the region and the nation participated in one of the largest events centered on the Vietnam to that time—a national teach-in.

As the spring semester drew to a close, students at Pitt held their first event related to Vietnam, the national teach-in with speakers from the Johnson administration presenting the official view as well as experts offering dissenting opinions. Broadcast to dozens of campuses around the nation simultaneously in mid-May, local debates and discussions followed the Washington-based portion of the teach-in, some of which went well into the early morning hours. While many would come to view the “teach-in” as purely an antiwar protest tactic, in 1965 it still served as a means by which experts expressed and debated multiple points of view; more often than not, students emerged just as supportive of the war as they had been when they entered.70

The teach-in, as begun at the University of Michigan in March 1965, reflected a wider, liberal notion that education was an essential component of citizenship. Both those who supported the war and U.S. policy as well as those who opposed it, believed anyone who held a different view did so out of ignorance. The entire concept of the teach-in emerged from a notion of civil debate within the prescribed political discourse. Students had long attended debate-discussions wherein two (or more) experts on a particular topic

would engage each other with the thought that the attending students would gain a deeper insight into the topic at hand. In addition, though, the Vietnam teach-ins did represent an effort by students to become more engaged in the political wranglings of this thorny issue, it still suggested a level of passivity as students witnessed the debate and asked questions of the experts after the fact. In the years to come, students would see themselves as the experts, as the individuals who should be on the stage rather than just in the audience.

In October and November 1965, pro- and anti-war factions held events highlighting the conflicted nature of campus as students attempted to sort out the roles of citizens in a democracy at war, some choosing support, others dissent. In October, Pittsburgh students held teach-ins and protests in coordination with the First International Days of Protest. The First International Days of Protest, October 15-16, 1965, represented the first major action coordinated by the National Coordinating Committee to End the War in Vietnam, a group formed in the summer of 1965 following the successful spring march on Washington, D.C.71 The Inter-University Committee for Debate on Foreign Policy sponsored a teach-in at Carnegie Institute of Technology drawing 150 student participants from across the city. At Pitt, Students for Peace (SFP) sponsored workshops and discussions on topics related to the morality of war and dissent and the proper roles of citizens in a democracy at war. They further organized events to travel to Pittsburgh area military recruiting stations to demonstrate and distribute literature.72 The picketing


and leafleting events represented a limited confrontational stance but suggested a direction for future activism, by going to the recruiters’ offices they were putting into practice the beliefs generated through untold hours of debates, and forcing passersby to confront the picketers’ concerns about the war and American militarism.

That same month, Pittsburgh students confronted their campus’ ambivalence toward the war in Vietnam as students debated the validity of draft resistance and participated in a mass rally supporting U.S. policy. *The Pitt News* published a letter from David Mitchell, a draft resister from New York, which unleashed a firestorm of negative responses. In many of the negative response letters, authors expressed a support for an abstract right of dissent—most often conceived as a component of American exceptionalism—however, these same authors argued that draft resistance was not legitimate dissent nor a proper activity in which a citizen should engage. Harvey F. Dahut and William G. McGeorge’s letter represented these tendencies when they stated:

thus relies heavily on the only available textual source for their thoughts and motivations, the campus newspapers.

David Mitchell, Letter to the Editor, *The Pitt News*, October 18, 1965. David Mitchell refused induction in May 1964; however, his trial did not occur until the fall of 1965. At roughly the same time, a man with a very similar name, David J. Miller, burned his draft card as part of a rally in New York City on October 15, 1965, in conjunction with the First International Days of Protest, his action has often been cited as the trigger for other draft card burnings and as the starting point for growing resistance to the draft. However, draft resistance, especially in the form of draft card burning, had existed before Miller’s brazen act. The first publicized case of draft card burning came in May 1964 when 12 men in New York City destroyed their draft cards as part of a counterdemonstration to on-going Armed Forces Day festivities. This action came on the heels of “We Won’t Go” pledges beginning to circulate college campuses and printed in local newspapers. See, Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?*, 51-58, 225; Stephen M. Kohn, *Jailed for Peace: The History of American Draft Law Violators, 1658-1985* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 76-79; George Q. Flynn, *The Draft, 1940-1973* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1993), 74-81; Small, *Antiwarriors*, 13, 32-33; Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 29.

One of the first instances of draft resistance in the city of Pittsburgh came when local youth, Thomas Rodd, announced his intentions to refuse to register for the Selective Service and staged a one-man sit-in at the federal building downtown hoping to be arrested so he could bring a legal case against conscription in late March 1964. See, “Rodd Moves Peace Sit-In,” *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, March 27, 1964. Rodd’s actions will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.
There is nothing wrong with protest. In fact, protest and criticism are fundamental parts of American democracy. These parts are safety valves for dissent and the means for change. But Mr. Mitchell and those like him are … attempting to tear down the foundation on which American government is built. … I would like to ask Mr. Mitchell and his retinue of “fine American men” whether they think themselves better than the soldiers who are neck-deep in mud, blood, and death?74

The letters argued draft resistance stood inherently at odds with American values, threatened American security, and challenged America’s exceptionalist heritage; thus, there was no honor nor patriotism in such actions, but simply the rejection of one’s obligations as a citizen. In one of the only letters The Pitt News published to offer a defense of Mitchell’s actions, Alex Frank argued that one must acknowledge and respect Mitchell’s strength of conviction even if one disagreed with his views. Frank concluded with the lament, “In time of crisis, reason is a stranger,” noting that Mitchell’s opponents “cling to their shibboleths and only bar the way to intelligent study and solution of social conflict.” In all, Frank saw patriotism in a citizen willing to criticize the government in time of war and in following one’s convictions to force a change in policy even in the face of public denunciation.75

While the debate over draft resistance played out in the pages of The Pitt News, Pittsburgh students engaged in pro-war demonstrations. Fifty members of the local Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) chapters staged a pro-administration picket at the federal building downtown and later YAF and similar organizations, such as Pitt’s Ad Hoc Committee to Express Support for Our Men in Vietnam, sent petitions of support to


President Johnson. In late-October, nearly 1,500 people participated in a rally on the Pitt campus to support the troops. Despite its positive mission, the tone of the speakers was aggressively negative as they attacked war opponents as un-American for engaging in dissent. In The Pitt News, the rally received a generally positive review with editorial praise for the demonstration and the “clean shaven majority” that came out “to show that not all students were draft-card burners.” Borrowing the framework of responsibility used in the arguments against in loco parentis, some praised the rally for setting the appropriate tone of respectability and patriotic citizenship. While many students shared these positive assessments of the rally, three female students wrote to the editors of The Pitt News to express their disgust and embarrassment “to be part of a student body which equates patriotism with jingoism.” According to the University’s 1966 yearbook:

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Duquesne University had a recognized YAF chapter by the fall of 1965, which formed sometime in academic year 1964-1965; however, records of the Duquesne Duke could not be found, nor other sources, to identify an exact date. However, a Conservative Society did exist prior to the formation of YAF, suggesting an existing conservative base on the campus. No official chapters of YAF appear to have existed at either Pitt or Carnegie Tech at this time, though both had active Young Republicans and other conservative-leaning student groups. Similarly, OU and WVU lacked official YAF chapters though ad hoc, unofficial conservative student groups popped up around the 1964 presidential election on various northern Appalachian campuses. Jim Cross, OU Young Republican president became the state chairman for YAF in 1965 despite the lack of a YAF chapter at OU. Further, it appears that as liberal-to-New Left activism grew, locally and nationally, between 1965 and 1967, conservative student organizations began to develop and Pitt, OU, and WVU all had functioning YAF chapters (or other officially recognized conservative groups) by 1968. See, Pat Phillips and Larry Bloom, “Conservative Shoots for GOP,” The Post, March 12, 1965; Mike Shane, “Radical Right Now Respectable,” Daily Athenaeum, January 12, 1966; John Avant, “Political Group Counteracts ‘Berkeley Image’,” The Post, March 23, 1966; Lou Gillick, “Publication Due Soon From OUSI,” The Post, December 2, 1966; Sherri O’Dell, “YAF’s Beliefs Include Victory Over Coexistence,” Daily Athenaeum, April 26, 1967; Ned Crews, “Stump-Speaker Stresses Need for Conservatives,” Daily Athenaeum, April 27, 1967.

It was a pep-rally presentation with gung-ho enthusiasm spurting out like cheers at a football game. … Those who sang along and cheered the speeches were characterized as patriots; the others they said were unpatriotic. Those who opposed the rally also sang along though. They respected their country for being a place where they could stand and protest the actions of fellow citizens.\textsuperscript{78}

The yearbook’s presentation highlighted the conflicted nature of campus and the contending definitions of patriotism that adjoined the debates over the proper role of a student and citizen in American society.

While students at Pitt debated patriotism, held pro-war rallies, and demonstrated at recruiters’ offices, students at OU organized a pro-war blood drive. \textit{The Post} had reported that around the country other schools were holding blood drives to show their support for U.S. policy in Vietnam and challenge the notion that all students shared the views of antiwar protesters at Berkeley. Within weeks, the OU student government had agreed to hold its own “bleed-in” in Athens just after the Thanksgiving break, to show OU’s support for the troops in Vietnam, and thereby support for the war. Some advised a delay and called for a poll of student opinion, to determine whether the majority did support the war and U.S. policy and if the bleed-in would thereby be representing the will of the OU student body. A group of students formed to try to convince others that if they gave blood they should do so not as a sign of support for the American war effort but out of humanitarian concern for those suffering on all sides of the conflict.\textsuperscript{79} In the end, 230


\textsuperscript{79} This group demonstrates the ephemeral nature of student activism, popping up here to organize around a specific event and then disappearing. This group left no archival sources for future historians, who are left with only passing references to the group in campus papers.
students donated blood, with more than half announcing that their donation was not in support of U.S. policy but in support of humanitarianism. The dissenters argued that as OU students and American citizens they saw it as appropriate to give blood so that it may be used however the Red Cross saw best.80

When finally conducted after the bleed-in and a special issue of The Post dedicated to Vietnam was circulated, the poll showed an overwhelming support for the war in Vietnam amongst the nearly 3,400 respondents. However, the poll, to which roughly one-third of OU students responded, also pointed out that several hundred students either opposed or had misgivings about U.S. policy in Vietnam. Just as Irv Garfinkle’s articles in The Pitt News had done in the spring, the poll reminds historical observers that one must not confuse a lack of participation in activities with total apathy. Students may have been keenly aware of and interested in what is happening in the realm of civil rights or the Vietnam War but simply did not attend meetings or other events due to lack of such events existing, or scheduling conflicts, poor publicity, or some other factor that drove down attendance figures. The bleed-in and its debates and the organization of an effort to challenge directly the stated goal of the event represented some of the first direct actions at OU on political or social issues. Here students put forward an event with an expressed political purpose and other students created their own

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demonstration against those purposes. There was no debate-discussion with experts in a
room somewhere that students passively sat through before asking their questions of the
experts. Rather, this was a direct action, like Selma. Students peacefully, yet directly,
acted on their political and social beliefs. Where in Selma they attended others’ rallies, in
the fall of 1965 in northern Appalachia, they created their own.

Just as U.S. involvement in Vietnam escalated in 1966, so, too did antiwar
activism. In mid-January, U.S. troop levels in Vietnam approached 190,000 and General
Lewis B. Hershey, director of the Selective Service System, announced that changes
would be forthcoming in the deferment structure that may allow the government to draft
some college students.81 By far the most talked about item in the campus newspapers at
OU, WVU, and Pitt in February 1966, even overshadowing Greek life, was the draft.
Vague statements from officials that deferments may be lost or redefined had many
students and university administrators concerned. If one’s draft status was going to be
dependent on grades and class rank, then the university would inevitably function as a
part of the federal government and the American war machine.82 Students struggled to
reconcile this idea with their existing notions of the proper role of the university in
American society. Until then, the university’s connection to the military-industrial
complex had been limited to research funds; these changes meant universities would be


in the control of human resources. The changes in student deferments in 1966 did more to
galvanize student activism in northern Appalachia in the mid-1960s than anything other
than perhaps the events in Selma, Alabama, the previous spring. However, for most
protesters the goal was limited—end the war or end the draft—not the systemic
reconstruction of American society; these limited goals provided a sufficient message for
massed action such as that learned in Alabama in the spring of 1965.

Vietnam served as the basis for a number of debates and lectures in February
1966. While the papers did not describe any of the debates as a “teach-in,” their general
structure and function seemed to place them within this framework: professors from the
various schools sparred over U.S. policy and students watched, offered occasional
questions to the professors, and hoped to learn something about the situation from what
they witnessed.83 Late in the month, OU hosted General Maxwell Taylor, former
ambassador to South Vietnam and former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who told
his audience that the debate regarding Vietnam “was over” and that the U.S. had to fight
to win there. While Taylor spoke, a small group of protesters sat silently outside to
symbolize how the University administration had silenced opposing views on Vietnam.84

83 Hobart Harris, “Professors Debate Importance and Goals of Dissent; Views Differ Concerning
the Vietnamese Conflict,” The Pitt News, February 7, 1966; “POST to Sponsor Vietnam Forum,” The Post,

84 “Gen. Taylor Will Talk on Crisis in Vietnam,” The Post, February 21, 1966; Joe Eszterhas,
“Tailoring Taylor,” The Post, February 21, 1966; “Student Groups to Protest While Taylor Talks,” The
Post, February 23, 1966; Joe Eszterhas, “Thursday Committee: The Challenge,” The Post, February 23,
1966; Joseph Grant Ledgerwood, Letter to the Editor, The Post, February 24, 1966; Richard Pesin, “Taylor
Wants Action Not Words,” The Post, February 25, 1966; Editorial, “Closed Debate, Says Who?” The Post,
February 25, 1966.
This action represented one of the first student anti-Vietnam demonstrations at OU and in its wake discussions began about the organizing of an SDS chapter in Athens.  

In the spring of 1966, while OU students silently protested General Taylor, Pitt students engaged in a series of Vietnam-related events each drawing over 300 participants. A forum sponsored by the Men’s Dormitory Council (MDC) and SFP saw students debate the question of American withdrawal from Vietnam. The second event sponsored by MDC was a discussion of conscription and changes to the deferment system led by Lt. Colonels John Hetzel and William Grimm of Pennsylvania’s Selective Service. Finally, in early May, students held “Fireproof Your Draft Card” events in which draft eligible men had their registration certificates laminated in plastic. Pete Janszen, local Young Republicans president, claimed the events represented a needed counter-image to “the recent draft card burnings and other unpatriotic demonstrations.” Supporters of the events, including local politicians, saw them as crucial to expressing support for the troops—though how potential draftees laminating draft cards did that went unexplained. The implicit understanding was that the support for the institutions of the state (such as the selective service) carried over to a general support for the entirety of the state; so perhaps the logic follows: if one respected this manifestation of the state, it suggests a support for the troops. Ultimately, with “fireproofing” framed as supporting


the troops, opposing the event (or non-participation) meant an attack on (or, at least, a lack of support for) the troops; thus, opposition was unpatriotic.

The academic year that began in the fall of 1966 and ended in spring 1967 saw students at northern Appalachian universities engage more fully with political and social issues forming, articulating, and advocating their views in ways they had not previously. From demonstrating against invited lecturers like the Vice President, to forums on Vietnam, to increased participation in civil rights and anti-poverty programs, the campuses were alive with activity. While these actions did not draw national attention, they demonstrated that activism was not limited to the coasts or mass rallies in the nation’s major cities. Further, it suggests that some students had begun to redefine the proper role of a citizen and infused a greater active component into their political expression. Yet the wrangling over dissent and patriotism did not cease but rather grew in intensity. Continuing changes to the Selective Service System offered another point of friction and anxiety as students questioned the role of the university with in the military-industrial-academic complex.

In September 1966, Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey came to WVU to speak and his lecture became the occasion for a limited attempt at student dissent against the war in Vietnam. A group of students solicited signatures on a petition expressing opposition to the war. Within a day of the antiwar student activity, a pro-war group emerged and counter-demonstrated, circulating its own petition supporting the current U.S. policy in Vietnam. The pro-war folks advertised their petition with a giant sign reading, “Register Your Patriotism Now.” In the ensuing debate in the Daily Athenaeum, some took issue with the pro-war group’s assumption that opposing the war was

In November, WVU student Jim Gilkerson wrote an impassioned call for students to exercise their freedom of speech and directly linked the campus with the wider community. Gilkerson’s call to action struck similar chords as the March 1964 editorial at OU that called on students to engage more fully with their community. As students and citizens, Gilkerson argued, young people could not be afraid to tackle difficult issues because of the “fear of what our peers will think … we are wasting our time on too many trivial things for FEAR of facing serious problems.” In Gilkerson’s estimation, it was not apathy that kept his classmates silent but timidity and that their silence bordered on the immoral.\footnote{Jim Gilkerson, “Freedom of Speech Must Be Exercised,” \textit{Daily Athenaeum}, November 15, 1966.}
At roughly the same time as Gilkerson was calling on WVU students to find their voice and engage with difficult issues, students in Pittsburgh were participating in a “speak-out,” drawing nearly 2,000 participants, and representing the largest peace action in Pittsburgh to that time. The speak-out entitled “The War Nobody Wants,” brought together members of the various college campuses and the community-at-large. The event was part of several activities planned to coincide with the National Days of Mobilization. Entitled a “speak-out,” students, who made up the bulk of the attendance, actually heard only a limited number of voices as they listened to local congressional candidates and religious leaders express support for calls to halt the bombing campaign against North Vietnam and defend dissent as a central component of the first amendment right to free speech. Faculty members from the local universities also participated in the forum discussing a range of topics from the legitimacy of dissent to economic repercussions of an escalated war. The three-hour event drew a counter-demonstration from members of YAF and a small contingent of veterans who marched carrying American flags as symbols of their patriotism and their explicit attempt to portray the event happening inside as unpatriotic.90

In early December 1966, students at OU organized a silent peace vigil as an exercise of free speech; through the sound of their silence protesters hoped to demonstrate to visiting lecturer Secretary of State Dean Rusk and their fellow students

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the deep convictions held against America’s war effort in Vietnam. The thought was that by standing silently in opposition protesters would force passersby to confront their own silence in the face of the war, in a similar way as WVU students had silently protested against Vice President Humphrey a few months earlier. Some of the OU students holding the vigil in opposition to Secretary Rusk had participated in the anti-poverty campaign in Portsmouth in early November, suggesting the growing cross-causal relationship of activism on campus. Using the language of respectability found in the debates over the University’s parietal policies, the editors of The Post praised the vigil as a responsible form of protest and called on Secretary Rusk to address several difficult questions regarding the administration’s war policy. In the end, Rusk faced no interruptions as he delivered his speech, but the editors of The Post found Rusk’s arguments stale and unconvincing. Like WVU at the beginning of the semester, OU became a site where students peacefully protested against administration policy directly targeting members of the administration.91

The peace vigil at OU, first initiated as a form of direct protest during the visit of Secretary Rusk, took on new life in 1967. Early in January, a student, Elaine Herald, announced her intention to hold a weekly peace vigil on campus. Each Wednesday from noon to 1 p.m., Herald and whatever students chose to join her would sit on the college green by the campus gate and provide a witness for peace. In a letter to the editor, Herald argued that “we cannot push our responsibility to this concept, this ideal, this problem aside,” rather one must devote one’s life to the meaning of peace and the noon

demonstration would serve as an affirmation of this dedication. This same phenomenon, Wednesday noontime peace vigils, also appeared at Pitt where a group of Quakers—students and faculty of the surrounding universities—stood in front of Stephen Foster Memorial Hall, near the corner of Forbes Avenue and Bigelow Boulevard (adjacent to the Cathedral of Learning), through all forms of inclement weather. Herald, a sophomore at OU, from the city of Pittsburgh, may have brought the idea with her to Athens from Pittsburgh, as she noted in her letter that her proposal was “not original” but “being done on other campuses in other communities,” suggesting a connection between southeastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania.  

Regardless of where it originated, a Wednesday noon silent peace vigil made a good deal of symbolic sense—asking people to take one hour in the middle of the day, in the middle of the week, in the middle of everything to silently reflect on the situation in Vietnam. The vigil was nonviolently confrontational and asked the observer to become a participant and evaluate their own individual connection to war and peace, it represented a version of protest not found in the mass rallies to this point and differed in orientation and goals from the community organizing also under way.

The peace vigils raised the question of appropriate forms of dissent, a topic often discussed on campus as students attempted to negotiate their roles as citizens in a democracy and they highlighted a concept at the heart of 1960s protests, the centrality of the individual. An editorial in The Post argued that antiwar sentiment was not limited to “the SDSers, beats, and Communists” but shared by the “silent majority” of respectable

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students. The editors went on to praise an effort by several student leaders around the nation who challenged the war and U.S. policy in a responsible and measured fashion—a letter written to the president. The editorial optimistically concluded, “the Government cannot disregard this latest dissent because the critics represent America’s future.” Like the peace vigil, affixing a signature to a letter was an individual statement of support for the sentiments of the protest and like the vigil it was non-violent, respectful, and nonthreatening to the established political framework. The vigil was an individual act, a single person attempting to change their world and forcing others to confront them as individuals. It was a reflection of the sense of dehumanizing conformity of the early Cold War years but it was not an act of civil disobedience or a challenge to legitimate authority or political processes. Even when large groups gathered in protest, one could best describe the occurrence as massed individual action. At the heart of the community organizing of anti-poverty and civil rights programs was the power of the individual, just as the central notion of participatory democracy was the value placed on the individual within the group. Thus, in this simple act of protest, Herald and her Quaker counterparts in Pittsburgh provided an essential component of Sixties activism.93 However, over time


as this nonviolent, respectable activism seemingly proved incapable of altering policy, individuals began to move toward civil disobedience and similar threats to the legitimate political process.

Until mid-February 1967, OU students had only demonstrated against lecturers who spoke in favor of the war on campus thereby directly protesting current U.S. policy in Vietnam. However, a staged demonstration against Dow Chemical Co. represented students’ first foray into a wider field of protest. Here several dozen students were protesting both the company’s production of napalm because of its brutal effects on the human body and the right of such a company to recruit students on campus. Serving as spokesman for the anti-Dow students, Joel Forrester stated, “We want students who might go to work for the company which supplies a weapon like napalm to know precisely what its use in Vietnam means.” Similarly, an editorial in The Post supporting the anti-Dow action stated, “We urge all Ohio students to consider not just the salary and security which goes along with a particular job but also what will be accomplished by doing that job.” Dow had come to OU before and students had not reacted this way, suggesting a marked shift in the student as activist. The anti-Dow protest, which drew condemnations from fellow students in the form of letters to the editor, was the first time a protest related to the war at OU did not target a political figure who had come to speak. It was not an effort to present another opinion not being offered but represented an effort to define the actions of the university. Here students were saying they had a right to determine who could and could not have access to the physical space of the university. It
was an exercise in empowerment and ownership; it suggested the melding of a student-citizen identity.94

In March 1967, the newly formed chapter of SDS at WVU entangled themselves in a month-long debate after picketing a student-created variety show organized to present student support for U.S. troops in Vietnam. The University’s News and Information Services promoted the event as a display of the WVU campus’ support for the American war effort much as the bleed-in at OU in 1965 had been presented as a statement of campus-wide support for the war. Though the organizers and participants in the Twin Towers Variety Show did not intend for viewers to see their performances as a pro-war stance nor did they seek to claim to speak for all WVU students, they refused to offer an official statement to that effect upsetting members of SDS. The members of SDS decided that in the absence of an official statement saying that not all WVU students support the war, SDS would protest the war at the performances—though SDS president Harry Shaw was adamant, and members of the variety show stated they understood, the protest was against the war not the show. The negative responses to the actions of SDS were swift and ferocious; the nuances of the SDS protests were lost almost immediately. While most who attacked SDS mouthed some generic statement of support for dissent they went on to attack the picketers for daring to use that right, as if exercising the American right to dissent was un-American. A Daily Athenaeum editorial in one sentence defended the right of dissent and in the

following asked, “who does SDS think it is that it can intimidate students into accepting its terms or else subject them to a demonstration?”

The few letter writers who challenged the stance SDS took on opposition to the war did so in breathless, emotionally charged calls for strident anticommunism or face the eradication of America. One letter writer argued, “SDS do not seek a democratic dialogue any more than does Ho Chi Minh” attempting to invalidate SDS’s right to dissent because of their supposed Communist inclinations. Another student argued that a seething hatred of America existed in Asia that, if not stopped in Vietnam, would result in war in Main Street, U.S.A., and that if SDS members could not see this they were blind. The author concluded with a disturbing image: “I only wish he [an SDS member] could be transplanted to any street in Peking during a Red Guard rally. There for a brief moment he might see this hate before an Oriental sword sliced through his neck. And then, in the ultimate demonstration, his head would be paraded through crowded alleys held high on a bloody stick.” In this image, the author captured the fears of domino theory, yellow peril, American exceptionalism, and Orientalism arguing that by members of WVU’s SDS picketing a talent show in Morgantown, all of America would collapse.

Nearly a full month after the initial protest the anti-SDS sentiment had not abated but had caused some, in their eagerness to join in the denunciation of SDS, to tie themselves into intellectual knots like the duo of authors who argued that the right to dissent “was bought

by every drop of blood that was ever spilled by the American fighting man anywhere at any time,” but those who exercise or condone the use of this hard-fought right “is unfit to call himself or be called an American.” As a result of the anti-SDS fervor, conservative students laid plans for the creation of a Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) chapter at WVU.96

In the month-long fracas, SDS president Harry Shaw repeatedly suffered personal attacks as a power-hungry demagogue; though, in the single letter response published by the Daily Athenaeum, Shaw offered no invective against those who personally maligned him, only a concern for correcting “inaccurate statements” made about the organization and its efforts. Shaw confirmed, “SDS members have been threatened with physical violence by some individuals” because of their protest and maintained “SDS was not trying to impose its views on anyone by the demonstrations.” Ultimately, Shaw’s letter suggested that SDS had acted in a responsible and respectable manner in an effort to raise awareness to both the war and to counter an image of university-wide support for the war effort. Through the spring of 1967, Shaw seemed to suffer willingly personal abuse if it meant getting the message out—that there were deep-seated problems in America and that students must be the ones to lead the way to new solutions.97


In Pittsburgh, students and faculty, in April 1967, participated in an “Angry Arts Against the War” event held as part of Vietnam Week and sponsored by the Pittsburgh Area Students for Peace. Prior to the event, the Pitt group SFP ran a nearly full-page advertisement that appeared in the *Pittsburgh Press* calling the war illegal and demanding an end to the bombing campaign signed by student and faculty from twenty local Pittsburgh colleges, universities, and high schools. The Angry Arts program featured poetry, art, music, and photograph displays on the theme, “They Made a Desert and Called It Peace.” Speaking to the nearly 1,500 participants who filled the Pitt Field House, Professors David Montgomery (Pitt) and Sidney Peck (Western Reserve University) analyzed America’s Vietnam policy and praised dissent as a way to counter the dehumanizing effect of war. Following the reading of an emotional letter from a GI who described the chaos and brutality of the war, several hundred individuals engaged in a candlelight march through the Oakland neighborhood, in which Pitt resided, as peaceful witness to the patriotic duty of citizens to dissent. The *Duquesne Duke*’s coverage of the march laid particular emphasis on the fact that participants were both students and adults, that they were “neatly” dressed, and that they marched in good order.

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On April 15, 1967, as part of the Spring Mobilization of peace activists, New York City and San Francisco hosted major rallies meant to be so large that the Johnson administration could not ignore or dismiss the antiwar movement. In the week prior to the demonstrations students and faculty around the nation participated in Vietnam Week events—locally organized and targeted activities, aimed to generate awareness and participation, such as Pittsburgh’s “Angry Arts” festival. The Ohio Valley Region Peace Conference distributed handbooks that advised local antiwar groups how to construct campus organizations and raise funds for the events.\(^9^9\) Students from northern Appalachian universities attended the New York rally after participating in local events the week prior.\(^1^0^0\)

Vietnam Week stands at the end of a long transition from student passive observation to direct action, while also at the threshold of a new chapter of student activism as demonstrations would grow larger and the claims of citizenship and patriotism made more forcefully. The years since 1964 had been “most unreal” but it was only the first step in the evolution of student political and social activism during the Sixties.

**Conclusion:**

Between 1964 and 1967, students at northern Appalachian universities became increasingly active in political and social movements. They moved from simply discussing the issues and listening to others lecture on various topics to actively


engaging. For northern Appalachian students at Pitt, OU, and WVU, the catalyst for this change was not Freedom Summer as Doug McAdam has argued, but the events in Selma, which gave many students their first taste of direct action, the changes in the draft system that ended college enrollment as a bulwark against conscription, and antipoverty work. Further, these three events highlight the cross-causal nature of Sixties student activism.

A November 1965 article in OU’s *The Post* offers a fitting description of these years. *The Post* editor Joe Eszterhas took issue with a recent editorial in the *Pittsburgh Press* that blamed a permissive, liberal society for creating the situation in which youthful radicals could arise. Eszterhas lamented that editorials like this were all too common, and argued:

> Our decade of college students has long been berated for its lack of activism. Now we find ourselves involving ourselves in serious issues, find ourselves playing a major role in issues like Civil Rights and Vietnam. And yet the same public which originally criticized us for lack of involvement is slashing into us, like the Pittsburgh PRESS, for the very involvement we are now demonstrating.

Eszterhas went on to argue that the reason for the backlash was that young people were challenging foundational ideas of the older generation, which the Depression Generation never intended for college students to challenge. He stated, “though we were supposed to think and act in college, we were supposed to think and act in predefined, preconceived ways.” Eszterhas’ critique spoke for his generation and concluded, “we have no need for elders who reject us simply because they disagree with us.”

By the spring of 1967 a dramatic change had occurred on campuses in northern Appalachia, no longer were students passively witnessing the political process they had become active in a wide range of socio-political issues, though mostly the war in

Vietnam. While student antiwar activism and wire service reports of major national and international events pushed the activities of Greek organizations off the front page, the reality remained that only a minority of students were activists and more student were concerned with things like Homecoming than with political involvement. Amongst the growing minority of activist students, there was little uniformity in tactics and strategies resulting from the wide range of goals they pursued. Some gravitated toward a model of community organizing and outreach aimed at attacking the structural problems of American society while others organized mass rallies to vocalize more immediate demands like ending the war or the draft. While the mass demonstrations may have made headlines, they were only one facet of student activism and when they died out other forms of engagement continued. But for now, as the spring of 1967 drew to a close students could say they had begun to find their voice and to act as their peers had admonished them to over the previous three years. They did not speak with one voice because the student identity was never monolithic, but they did increasingly share a sense that they had an obligation to speak and act as members of the campus and national communities.
CHAPTER V

“YOUNG PEOPLE SPEAKING THEIR MINDS”:

PEACE AND FREEDOM ON CAMPUS, 1967-1968

There’s battle lines being drawn
Nobody’s right if everybody’s wrong
Young people speaking their minds,
Getting so much resistance from behind.
It’s time we stop, hey, what’s that sound,
Everybody look what’s going down
--“For What It’s Worth,” Buffalo Springfield (1967)1

Well, come on all you big strong men
Uncle Sam needs your help again.
He’s got himself in a terrible jam
Way down yonder in Vietnam.
So put down your books and pick up a gun,
We’re gonna have a whole lotta fun.
--“I Feel Like I’m Fixin’ to Die Rag,” Country Joe & the Fish (1967)2

Introduction:

Scholars have written much about the period from October 1967 to December 1968, that it was the turning point, the high-water mark, the very definition of “the Sixties.”3 This


2 Joseph McDonald, “I Feel Like I’m Fixin’ to Die Rag,” Country Joe & the Fish, I-Feel-Like-I’m-Fixin’-to-Die, Vanguard VSD 79266, 1967.

chapter accepts a limited version of this thesis. Important changes happened on the campuses of northern Appalachian universities. Where the period 1964 to 1967 saw the rising tide of student activism and highlighted its cross-causal foundations, displayed an initial transition in style of activism from community-building to mass rallies, and initiated the formation of the student-citizen identity of the Sixties, the 18 months from the end of the summer 1967 to the end of December 1968 witnessed a series of events that, for many, defined the Sixties experience. In this period, much of the cross-causal framework of student activism became somewhat obscured, with notable exceptions of sporadic civil rights flare-ups and challenges to *in loco parentis*. This was a time almost exclusively devoted to the issues surrounding the Vietnam War from the draft to militarism in American society. Community-building projects, in civil rights and poverty activism seemed to disappear from the headlines, replaced by the near-constant drumbeat of resistance against the war. However, despite the dramatic shift in emphasis to a central issue of the war, the student-citizen identity and the conceptions of the proper role of the university in American society continued to define the context of the debate. Declarations of the rights of university citizenship served as the means through which students attempted to exert influence and control over the larger political process that they had little say in—especially, since most students were too young to vote in statewide or national elections.

In many ways, the events of 1967-1968 were a natural outgrowth of the previous three years of activism and tactical developments. The teach-in movement gave way to the mass demonstrations. The desire to discuss and debate issues turned into disruption and demands. The antiwar movement militarized, seeing its actions as a confrontation, a
war against war (or, at least, a war against the Vietnam War). The changes in the draft laws that removed enrollment in the university as a bulwark against conscription turned the war that had been distant and largely an academic abstraction for most college men into an immediate and personal concern. This immediacy, combined with a growing sense of frustration over their liminal space as not quite adults within the university context and not full citizens because they lacked the vote, resulted in outbursts of demonstrations. Increasingly students argued that they had a right to participate in the decision-making processes—within the nation and their campus communities.

Demonstrations, confrontations, and individual acts of resistance represented efforts to stake a claim to the decision-making process. They became the mechanism through which the disenfranchised made their voice heard within a political system that granted them no voice. Further, they argued that as citizens of the university community they had a right, guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution, to participate in the decisions made that effected their daily lives. It was an argument that required one to accept the idea that the university was a community in the same way that a municipality was—that Ohio University, the University of Pittsburgh, and West Virginia University were subordinate to the same laws and restrictions, rights and privileges as Athens, Pittsburgh, and Morgantown. If, and only if, this was true could the students realistically make an argument for representation in the true decision-making apparatus of the university, and that this representation needed to go further than university-sanctioned student governments. If the university was going to act as an agent of the state and the enforcer of morality, as it claimed the right to through its in loco parentis policies, then as citizens of the university and the state, the students had a vested interest in participating in the
decisions made by the university. The logic of the argument rested wholly on an abstract
assumption that the university operated under the same rules—the same concept of
consent of the governed—as civil society. While one may potentially have argued an 18-
year-old is not a stakeholder in the larger American society and therefore not deserving of
the right to vote, students declared there could be no similar objection to their stakeholder
status within the university. Further, once they had gained greater control over university
decision-making they could use this to justify expanding the franchise to 18 year-olds.
However, administrators and trustees did not generally share the assumption of the
university as American society in microcosm with parallel structures of government.
Despite whether or not it was an accurate vision of the relationship of students to the
university, many students accepted this vision and it became an integral part of the
student-citizen identity that helped to sustain and promote student political and social
activism.

During the period from August 1967 to December 1968, issues related to social
justice—civil rights and antipoverty—fell by the wayside as the emphasis became more
directly tied to the duties, obligations, and rights of citizenship mostly those related to the
questions of war and dissent. *In loco parentis* continued to provide a limited rallying
point for student activism, while at the same time student newspapers covered the issues
of civil rights and poverty significantly less. The student-citizen identity that had begun
to emerge in the three years prior became the central node for activism during these
eighteen months. Campus issues, sometimes intentionally and at other times
unintentionally, served as proxies for the student dissatisfaction with national policies
especially those related to the war in Vietnam. Students seemingly could not end the war
or the draft with their limited protests in Athens, Pittsburgh, or Morgantown, but they could affect things such as ROTC programs and campus recruitment by military and defense-industry employers. Student activists adopted a confrontational footing, called for disruption, and issued demands regarding the workings of the university by claiming a status as citizens of the university community, all of which served an allegorical function due to their liminal space within American society, which resulted from a lack of a political voice in the decision-making process. Thus, the arguments for student power derived from the student-citizen identity were about a larger effort to empower young people and represented a political ideal that individuals should have a say in the policies that directly affected their daily lives. If they could exert power and influence over the campus community, they believed they could establish a pattern that would lead to wider political participation.

Civil Rights/Poverty:

For much of the period from August 1967 to December 1968, the growing concerns over the draft and the war in Vietnam pushed issues of poverty and civil rights out of the student newspapers. Scholars of the civil rights movement have, in recent years, challenged the narrative that has painted this period as the transition from the nonviolent, direct action civil rights movement to the aggressive, militaristic Black Power movement, brought on by the death of Martin Luther King, Jr. They have also noted the increased disinterest seen amongst white liberals who had supported the King-brand of nonviolent activism as these activists shifted their attention to radical and revolutionary violence.¹

Northern Appalachian universities saw a degree of radicalization on issues of civil rights, though black populations on these campuses were always small. Organizations such as the Black Student Action Coordinating Committee at OU, the Black Action Society at Pitt, of the Black Unity Organization at WVU, formed to promote black consciousness, advocate for black educational and cultural opportunities, and demand redress of black grievances. At the same time, administrators formed committees and organizations to investigate discriminatory hiring and housing standards, as well as to promote black enrollment and address issues of discrimination within the wider community in which the university resided.² Further, while these issues and concerns received sporadic coverage in the campus papers, one of the largest single events regarding civil rights in this period was the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. The tragedy sparked a number of campus tributes and memorials in April 1968. Moreover, if civil rights failed to register with students, poverty activism seemingly dissolved entirely as a campus concern.

In April 1968, campuses around the nation reeled in horror at the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., and northern Appalachian campuses felt the same shockwaves. The campus newspapers afforded a great deal of column space, editorials, and even dedicated special issues to the assassination of King and to discuss the ramifications of his death. Students and administrators as well as local community members participated

in memorial services or engaged in acts of peaceful civil disobedience in honor of King’s legacy. However, in Pittsburgh, the city’s black community, like so many others around the nation, erupted into violence forcing the governor to declare a state of emergency and to send 1,500 National Guard troops and several thousand additional law enforcement personnel to the city. Despite the outburst of grief and unrest caused by King’s death, little in the way of civil rights activism seemed to change on campus.³

In 1968, black students at northern Appalachian universities issued various “demands” or generated lists of areas of concern and presented these declarations to university administrators in hopes of redressing their grievances. A one-page petition circulated at WVU in mid-April calling for an end to discrimination in housing and employment at the University and in Morgantown. The petition pledged signers “to work for an end to discrimination in Morgantown through use of all legal and non-violent means at our disposal.”⁴ At Pitt, the Black Action Society, a recently formed organization that claimed to speak for the campus black community of roughly 200 students on a campus of several thousands, issued a statement in late-June denouncing the failures of the University “to meet and understand the fundamental needs of Black people.” The statement contained a list of demands that they declared required immediate attention,


including: increased recruitment and retention efforts directed at black students, the
construction of black residence halls, the creation of a black-centered curriculum,
expanded black faculty, and increased power for black students in the decision-making
process of the University. In early December, an ad hoc group of a dozen or so black
students delivered a list of demands to OU president Vernon Alden and called for
immediate action, much as BAS had six-months earlier at Pitt. The demands at OU also
echoed the BAS demands of June. At OU, the concerned black students requested that the
University provide black residence halls, expand black curriculum, increase black
enrollment and retention, and enhance black student input into decision-making at the
University. At both OU and Pitt, black students claimed the right to issue such demands
as citizens of the University and of the United States. They claimed that for too long they
had existed as second-class citizens within both communities and improving their
condition in the University would serve to enhance their position within American
society.

The campus reaction to these demands varied with many claiming they would
serve only to further fracture the campus community. Many white students responded
with a degree of hesitancy to the demands issued by black students seeing them as
unnecessarily divisive. By-and-large, the greatest push back against these demands came
from fellow students as administrators at both institutions expressed a desire to work with

5 “Black Action Society Lists Demands to Administration,” The Pitt News, June 25, 1968; Bruce
June 28, 1968.

6 “Needs and Demands,” undated [presumably, December 2, 1968], Executive Vice President
James J Whalen Office Files, 1968-69, Box 2, Black Students Folder, Mahn Archives; Andrew Alexander,
“Black Demand List Handed to Alden,” The Post, December 3, 1968; Carol Towarnicky, “Racism’
Charge Directed at University Community,” The Post, December 4, 1968.
black students to achieve some, if limited, resolutions. One letter to the editor of *The Pitt News* argued “You cannot fight white racism with black racism,” and went on to state that the BAS demands only perpetuated the emphasis on race, as if people simply stopped talking about race the issues of discrimination would evaporate.\(^7\) Even the white student editors of the campus newspapers that had supported various radical positions during the 1968 presidential campaign balked at the demands, saying most were unfeasible, and thereby drawing the ire of black students.\(^8\) It was not that the editors or white students were necessarily unsympathetic to the issues confronted by their black classmates, just that they seemed to reject the tactics of using demands or saw some of the items called for as beyond the scope of what was possible at the University. Administrators expressed a degree of caution on most demands but fully rejected segregated black residence halls as not only unrealistic but a violation of non-discrimination policies of the University as well as state law.\(^9\) In the end, at both Pitt and OU most of the demands of black students went unanswered as 1968 faded into 1969 and would serve as fodder for later civil rights activism on campuses over the next few years.

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Coverage of poverty issues shrank significantly after the fall of 1967. Only infrequently did the campus papers refer to the student organizations, such as the Associated Student Volunteers (ASV), the Southeastern Ohio Opportunity Program (SOOP), the Student Action for Appalachian Progress (SAAP), or the Hill Education Project (HEP). Whereas in previous years the newspapers covered in detail the projects the students engaged in and called on students to join the poverty struggle, the irregular coverage of these groups and their issues now largely came by way of reminding students that these groups existed and that their community-based organizing and activism was continuing.\footnote{Beverly Loy Taylor, “HEP Holds Orientation,” \textit{The Pitt News}, October 2, 1967; Tom Hodson, “ASV Discusses Plans for Projects,” \textit{The Post}, October 4, 1967; “Tutoring Service Provided for Athens County Children,” \textit{The Post}, October 6, 1967; John Felton, “ASV Work May Halt for Lack of Funds,” \textit{The Post}, October 12, 1967; June Kronholz, “To Be Or Not to Be—Apathetic, That Is,” \textit{The Post}, October 13, 1967; “ASV’s Plan Novel ‘Live-In,’” \textit{The Post}, November 29, 1967; Jim Axelrod, “SOOP: To Give and Gain,” \textit{The Post}, January 10, 1968; “HEP Needs Pitt Students to Tutor Underprivileged,” \textit{The Pitt News}, January 12, 1968; Carol Towarnicky, “SOOP Tutor Program Aids Youth; Volunteers, Students Show Results,” \textit{The Post}, April 16, 1968; “SAAP Fights Poverty With Student Help,” \textit{Daily Athenaeum}, September 20, 1968; George Spicer, “SAAP Volunteers Help Disadvantaged,” \textit{Daily Athenaeum}, October 15, 1968; Nancy Nickell, “Poor and Students Linked by Program,” \textit{The Post}, October 23, 1968.}

Furthermore, where there had been debates and forums in previous years about the nature of poverty, especially in the Appalachian region, now there was largely silence. Dozens, in fact hundreds, of students continued to participate in projects sponsored by these groups, mostly in the form of tutoring and mentoring programs, but there appears to have been little of the radicalization amongst these antipoverty students as Thomas Kiffmeyer noted amongst with the Appalachian Volunteers.\footnote{Thomas Kiffmeyer has explored the radicalization of the Appalachian Volunteers and has shown that by the mid-1960s cooperation with local officials, tutoring programs, and renovation efforts became less desirable as students embraced radical calls for social justice. See, Thomas Kiffmeyer, \textit{ Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty} (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2008).} Given the cross-
causal nature of student activism, one may expect to see such radicalization expressed in areas beyond poverty activism, such as antiwar or students’ rights positions. As will be seen, while student activism in these areas persisted the rhetoric mobilized by-and-large was still more liberal than radical.

A handful of speakers or events between August 1967 and December 1968 connected the student bodies to issues of poverty in Appalachia or America, in general. In January 1968, Harry Caudill came to OU to speak on the issues facing Appalachia, specifically poverty. Caudill called on students to aid in the efforts to combat poverty in the region and to help change the negative national image of Appalachia and its people.12 A few months later, in the wake of Dr. King’s assassination, the Poor People’s March came through Pittsburgh and the University opened some of its residence hall rooms to the marchers. Students at Pitt, as well as surrounding Pittsburgh colleges, shared time and experiences with the marchers emerging from the encounter touched by the difficulties faced by many blacks in America.13 However, like the aftermath of Caudill’s OU speech, very little seemed to change concerning student engagement and participation with anti-poverty activism.

By-and-large, the issues of civil rights and poverty did not become less urgent during the period of late 1967 to the end of 1968, but newspaper coverage of and student


engagement with these issues changed. The ascendancy of the war in Vietnam as the chief political, social, and economic issue left less room for activist labor and consciousness on other issues. The demands made by black students represented a way to cut through the cacophony of noise created by the war. It seemed that anti-poverty activism could not move to such actions because of a lack of a shared poverty identity and sense that the university had an obligation to act, as black students had. Students found it difficult to mobilize individuals around a constructed identity of poverty, something most considered a transitory condition or a social negative that one could find little pride in or use as a basis for personal identity.

**Campus Policies:**

In academic year 1967-1968 and into the fall of 1968, campus parietal policies and *in loco parentis* continued to serve as points of tension throughout northern Appalachia. Though concerns over women’s hours and housing issues dwindled some from previous years, they occasionally popped up in conjunction with student calls for a greater voice in the decision-making processes of campus life. Student demands for greater power over their own lives manifested in various ways during these years. At OU, student government passed bills calling for increased student voice in the priorities of the campus and in selecting the next president of the University. There was also a riot driven initially by a possible labor strike and the breakdown of the legitimate channels of grievance redress. At WVU, students constructed and voted on a Code of Conduct, using its creation as a means for expressing their vision of student rights, one that saw a direct link between citizenship of the University and that of the nation and that connected seemingly
disparate forms of civic engagement through a shared vision of empowered and engaged
citizenship. These events highlight the continuing development of a cross-causally
defined student-citizen identity. They demonstrate that even as other issues, such as the
draft, crowded out attention and activism on some fronts the call for change and a greater
voice in campus affairs retained its intimate link to student conceptions of citizenship.

Concerns persisted over where students could live and the hours they kept.
Students had made a great deal of progress in the previous few years and the trajectory
continued toward liberalizing women’s hours and opening housing to black students.
Experiments in “no hours” halls, or for segments of the female student population,
proved successful and students took efforts to expand these to encompass more women.
Interestingly, few argued for total abolition of restricted hours, suggesting that freshmen
women should have greater limitations imposed upon them than any other class. In
terms of housing, students and administrators attempted to create new off-campus
housing standards that ensured black students did not face discrimination. These efforts
included not only new university policies but also advocating open housing laws in the
local communities; unfortunately, these laws often failed to materialize. For example, a
May 1968 referendum at OU to support calls for an open housing law in Athens drew a
great deal of student attention briefly to the subject as students wrangled over whether

14 Editorial, “Do Parents Care About Hours,” The Post, April 29, 1968; Melinda Swezey and Barb
The Post, September 25, 1968; Editorial, “Two Classes to Go,” The Post, September 26, 1968; Editorial,
“Coed Hours Seen as Necessary Evil,” Daily Athenaeum, October 11, 1968; Peggy Allen, “Curfews:
‘Who’s Going to Take Care of Me When I Graduate’,” Pitt News, October 14, 1968; “AWS Will
Present Findings to Harlow,” Daily Athenaeum, November 22, 1968; Editorial, “Do 2 a.m. Permissions
Mean More Problems?” Daily Athenaeum, November 22, 1968; John Felton, “No Official Action Planned
to End Sophomore Hours,” The Post, December 4, 1968.
such laws and policies were effective.\textsuperscript{15} In the end, the housing and hours efforts demonstrated student concerns with expanding their control over their lives—from where they lived to when they came and went. Students claimed these rights as citizens of the university and local communities. In a May 1968 editorial, \textit{The Post}, summed up why the student body had to act on these issues saying “An academic community, committed to human rights, cannot permit rights to be denied in its midst.”\textsuperscript{16}

The calls for greater student voice in the decisions of campuses came within the national context of student takeover events at places like Berkeley and Columbia making some wary that student unrest could lead to similar events in northern Appalachia. In an interview with writers for \textit{The Owl}, Pitt’s yearbook, Chancellor Wesley W. Posvar responded that Columbia- or Berkeley-style takeover events occur only when there was a “sense of frustration and loss of identity.” He went on to recognize peaceful dissent as “a normal part of the scene in a free and open University”; however, the chancellor was quick to add he would not accept obstructionist tactics.\textsuperscript{17} Chancellor Posvar’s statements


suggested that dissent against the government and its policies did not inherently make
one unpatriotic, but when the expression of one’s dissent prevented others from pursuing
their academic interests then one crossed the line of acceptable behavior. Thus, Posvar
acknowledged and supported the student-citizen identity while rejecting obstructionist
tactics as counterproductive to the full functioning of student citizenship. Protests were
part of the free expression of citizens in a democracy and as long as they acknowledged
the existing power relations of state and citizen, administrators should not only tolerate
but also encourage such actions. However, disruptive actions sought to challenge the
power structure and as such represented a threat that administrators must stop. As long as
the students did not threatened the overall power of the University or the administration,
their actions were acceptable, but if they challenged the power structure the
administration moved to end their protests.

In the spring of 1968, students at OU faced the possibility of another labor strike,
like the one that rocked the campus in March 1967, and again faced the threat of
University closure. The newly formed non-academic employees union, Local 1699 of the
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), announced
on May 8 that they were considering a strike in objection to University restructuring
efforts and the new regulations created for staffing supervisory positions. For over a
week, the press reported on the sparring of Local 1699 and University spokespersons
making a strike and possible closure seemingly inevitable. However, on the night of May
students had planned on the closure and were upset that they would be required to finish the last few weeks of the quarter. The following night saw over two thousand students flood onto the college green before marching on the President’s house. They chanted slogans—mostly calling for the University to close so they could go home—and moved en masse damaging University property as they went. The National Guard stood in reserve at the Athens fairgrounds as University security, local police, and the state highway patrol moved to gain control of the situation.\footnote{Bruce Jorgenson, “‘We Want Out’ Begins March,” The Post, May 20, 1968; Carol Towarnicky, “Building Damage, Injuries Result from Disturbances,” The Post, May 20, 1968; Margaret Kantz, Letter to the Editor, The Post, May 20, 1968; Andrew Alexander and John Felton, “Students Riots Cool as Troops Stand By,” The Post, May 21, 1968; “Disturbances Incites Campus Comment,” The Post, May 21, 1968; Bruce Jorgenson, “Second Night Difference,” The Post, May 21, 1968; Janet A. Smith, Letter to the Editor, The Post, May 21, 1968; Chonko, “After Action Report,” May 23, 1968, CSA, Athens Riot 1968 Folder [hereafter referred to as: Athens Riot 1968], OU.}

Though the May 1968 disturbances seemingly emerged out of frustrations over the University not closing, deeper underlying concerns bubbled up by the second night of protests. On the third night, May 21, over three thousand students attended a meeting in Memorial Auditorium and laid out their grievances. From these concerns, a list of approximately one hundred demands were constructed and presented to the administration. Concerns ranged from issues of fees, housing, and grades to demands for greater student control and input, an end to women’s hours and dress codes, and a call for expanded black curriculum. Students vowed to continue their protest until the administration listened to them, forcing the University to close if necessary.\footnote{“Demands,” May 21, 1968, CSA, OU; Andrew Alexander, “3000 Students List Grievances; Non-violence Urged; Meeting is Planned,” The Post, May 22, 1968; Editorial, “Again and Again,” The Post, May 22, 1968; “Disturbances Incite Campus Comment,” The Post, May 21, 1968; “Second Night Difference,” The Post, May 21, 1968; Janet A. Smith, Letter to the Editor, The Post, May 21, 1968; Carol Towarnicky, “Building Damage, Injuries Result from Disturbances,” The Post, May 20, 1968; Margaret Kantz, Letter to the Editor, The Post, May 20, 1968; Andrew Alexander and John Felton, “Students Riots Cool as Troops Stand By,” The Post, May 21, 1968; “Disturbances Incites Campus Comment,” The Post, May 21, 1968; Bruce Jorgenson, “Second Night Difference,” The Post, May 21, 1968; Janet A. Smith, Letter to the Editor, The Post, May 21, 1968; Chonko, “After Action Report,” May 23, 1968, CSA, Athens Riot 1968 Folder [hereafter referred to as: Athens Riot 1968], OU.}
perhaps learned the willingness to protest for principles from the example set the previous year in the formation of Local 1699, when striking workers would not allow the administration to push them aside no matter how bad things seemed. Furthermore, the administration had threatened closure before and had sent the students for an early Spring Break; it would surely not be a stretch to assume continued pressure could result in an early end to the academic session. In the end, the University remained open though President Alden asked, “Those persons who cannot make this commitment to Ohio University are requested to leave.”21 In this way, Alden was making an appeal to the student sense of university citizenship by asking them to affirm their allegiance to the University and saying any who challenged the University were not fit for citizenship.

These events highlight the growing student-citizen identity. The student protesters argued that they had a right to speak out and for the administration to bring them into the decision-making process. They resented that both the union and the University used them as pawns in their negotiations. While the initial disruption served as a manifestation for growing frustration of students, the mass meeting and construction of a list of grievances (no matter how trite or superfluous some of the complaints may have been) showed an effort by students to give a rational voice to their sentiments. The chants of “close it down” during the protests were as much from short-sighted desires to escape the quarter without taking exams as they were from a desire to see the University as it currently functioned cease and be reformed as more responsive to the students’ needs. As some


student leaders of the protest noted, “We are presenting the University with the chance to
deal with us rationally. If they turn us down, they will have to face us as part of the
mob.”22 In the minds of the students, their demands were meant to level the playing field,
to exert their influence over aspects of their daily lives and futures, to have a degree of
control that they generally felt was lacking from their lives as citizens of the University
and of the United States. Their actions represented a reaction to the fractures generated in
the University by the growing multiversity concept of higher education. These fissures
and frustrations were not limited to OU.

West Virginia University President James G. Harlow commented on the fractured
nature of the university community at a student government conference in September
1968. Harlow argued that the role of the university in American society had expanded
beyond purely instruction. Harlow’s arguments that “students are important but not the
only responsibility of the University,” reflected the recognition of the multiple
constituencies of the modern university within the military-industrial-university complex
of the Cold War. Further, Harlow argued “research and consultation” determined the
position of the university in American society and as such, WVU could not be an agent of
social or political change without threatening those ties.23 In this way, Harlow became the
very embodiment of the multiversity president Clark Kerr described in *The Uses of the
University*, as well as that of the liberal consensus the New Left sought to challenge.24 It
seems that Harlow was more willing to focus greater attention to the less fractured

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24 Clark Kerr, *The Uses of the University*, Fifth Edition (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University
research and consulting wings of university activities in part because these public and private contractors and constituencies provided greater revenue to the University than students.

The fractures in the student body at WVU became evident in the fall of 1968 when students voted on a new Code of Conduct. Drafted over two years, the Code sought to outline the expectations of student involvement in their own governance and provide a new judicial procedure. The Code represented a conservative to moderate set of ideas on the meaning of “student” and responsible engagement with the University. Opponents of the Code, led by the Committee for Student Rights, criticized the limitations on student power in the proposal though they did not advocate radical revolution. They argued that students should have a larger seat at the table and on equal terms with administrators. However, supporters of the Code argued that while students should have a seat at the table and a voice in decisions, the constant turnover of the student population prevented a coherent leadership from forming the therefore student control should be limited to specific areas. The debate over the Code suggested an agreement on the importance of the student as an individual the administration should not dictate to, but a deep divide over the ultimate goal for students. The New Left envisioned larger, long-range goals that would ultimately result in students—seen as an identity community akin to ethnic, religious, or gender identity communities—gaining equality. Those that supported the Code, who ranged politically from conservatives to centrists, argued students should aim

25 Like the OU student group that opposed the bleed-in in December 1965, the Committee for Student Rights represented a transitory organization that may have been quite active for a short time and perhaps exerted influence over student actions; however, it left no archival sources, making newspaper coverage the only textual source available to observe their actions.
for short-term and more easily attainable goals. For example, where code supporters argued that students should play some, limited role in disciplinary measures, New Left opponents of the Code argued for the liberation of the entire student judicial system from administration control. When the Code Committee brought their proposal to a referendum vote, students rejected it by a three percent margin. The Code fight generated no threats of violence, obstruction, take-over, or riots; in part, this was due to the New Left advocates winning but also because there was no contingent on campus calling for revolution in 1968.

The possibility for disruptive actions emerged again on OU’s campus in the fall of 1968 when OU President Vernon Alden announced he would soon step down and the Board of Trustees would organize a search for his replacement. For Student Body President, Dave Stivison, this represented an excellent example of when the administration should hear the student voice. However, the Board of Trustees established a five-member committee that offered students no input into the decision-making. Over the next few weeks Stivison made student representation in the decision-making process for the next president a major priority; he even threatened civil disobedience and campus disruptions, evoking the images of the previous May’s riots. Over time, the Board of

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Trustees offered concessions and eventually granted students a limited role in the presidential selection process. Many students, as well as faculty and even some alumni, attacked Stivison as power-hungry and self-aggrandizing. However, in a campus-wide referendum that drew the largest student voter turnout in OU history, an overwhelming majority voiced their support for his actions. When finally able to appoint student representatives, Stivison confounded his critics by not naming himself as a delegate. He argued that he had fought for the students’ voice not his own, that they should have a say in who leads their University. In this way, Stivison was giving greater credence to the actions of May by reiterating the importance of student voices in the decision-making processes of the University.

After securing a student voice in the presidential selection process at OU, another issue emerged on campus prior to the Thanksgiving recess—the arming of campus security officers. The newly reformed Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) chapter at OU issued a demand to the administration calling for the disarming of campus security forces—because “no piece of University property is worth the life of a single student.” Predictably, the administration refused to disarm campus security, sparking a peaceful sit-in by approximately 20 SDS members at the campus security office. When the students failed to disperse, the Athens police arrested them and charged them with

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27 Clarence Page, “Campus Force Must Disarm,” The Post, November 20, 1968; Flyer, [re: Campus Police Disarmament], November 1968 [presumably on or about November 19, 1968], Whalen Records, Box 8, SDS Folder, OU. The OU chapter of SDS left no archival collection; rather historians see them only through the files of University administrators. At Pitt, SDS is virtually nonexistent in the archival collection. Of the three, WVU’s chapter of SDS had the greatest archival sources, the result of the Papers of Harry F. Shaw, Jr., and Scott Bills; however, the organization itself left no independent records.
trespassing. While their sit-in failed to end the arming of campus police, their actions led to wider campus newspaper coverage and initiated a debate amongst the student body.28

While many rejected SDS tactics, some showed a willingness to consider their arguments while others argued that police were within their right to shoot if the officers needed to protect the University. John Felton noted that trying to mobilize campus around any issue in the days before the Thanksgiving recess was a flawed idea but this topic particular was doomed, saying, “If students cannot be mobilized to protest a $90 per year fee increase (which certainly hits most students where it hurts), they will obviously react with intense dis-interest when told 24 seemingly harmless campus cops should be stripped of their unused weaponry.” In a letter to the editor, student O.E. Frank offered a law and order critique of the SDS position and took issue with SDS statements that the standard service revolver was “meant only to kill or maim a human being.” He went on to argue:

It is really only meant to stop lawbreakers. … They said at his [the Security Officer’s] whim he can shoot and kill you. I think that if you get shot by University Police, it will be by your whim, not theirs. They said no piece of University property is worth losing a life. I say leave University property alone and you’ve got nothing to worry about.29


It seemed that Frank supported the use of deadly force against suspected criminals that anyone arrested was obviously guilty, and therefore deserving of whatever pain and suffering she or he received. The debate over arming campus police, which also appeared at Pitt, highlighted a wider national conversation on gun control in 1968 following the assassination of King and Robert Kennedy and increasing fatal incidents of gun violence nationwide.30 In a letter to the editors of The Post, SDS members Pat Dorner, Marty Denlinger, and Eric Fralick stated that, “SDS has as its primary objective a total and complete restructuring of the University (and the society in which the University exists).”31 Thus, OU’s SDS claimed a right as concerned citizens of their University community, as well as of American society, in their disarmament efforts and the disarming of campus security officers served as a tangible proxy for reducing military arms.

From August 1967 to December 1968, students demanded a greater voice in campus issues. They claimed the right to be a part of the decision-making apparatus based on their citizenship of the university. They demanded the right to have a greater say over the decisions that effected their daily lives from where they lived to when they could


come and go. They also claimed the right to determine whom their leaders would be, based on the idea that power, even at the university, derived from the consent of the governed. They believed they were an equal part of the university community and they had an obligation to ensure administrators and the other university constituencies heard their views of how the community should function and live up to its mission.

**ROTC:**

For many, especially antiwar protesters, ROTC was the most immediate physical representation of the American military establishment on campus and, as such, on several occasions became the target of demonstrations and activism. Through the campus debates on ROTC programs, one gains a greater insight into the students’ conceptions of the role the university in American life as well as the meaning of citizenship. While nationally SDS viewed ROTC as an integral part of the war machine, northern Appalachian students in 1967-1968 did not express this type of sentiment. Northern Appalachian student efforts to disrupt ROTC classes or challenge its accredited status at best represented proxy fights for larger issues, specifically the war in Vietnam. They attacked ROTC as a way to impede the government’s pipeline for creating officers but did so by claiming the mission of ROTC did not conform to that of the university that housed the program objecting to the curriculum as courses in death and denying the spirit of academic free inquiry essential for the university. In so doing, students were laying the foundations for wider political engagement—if they, as concerned citizens of the university community, could affect change on this policy, a policy both local and national in origins, then in the future they could claim greater legitimacy to confront other policies with which they disagreed.
Thus, the debates and protests surrounding ROTC were simultaneously local and national in perspective. Claiming ROTC was inconsistent with the nature of the university provided a framework for challenging national issues that students felt were out of step with the mission of the nation.

Students, faculty, administrators, and the public at large had debated the question of military training and education within public universities for nearly a century by the 1960s. By the 1830s and 1840s, officer training beyond the official American service academy at West Point had begun at several private military institutes and was beginning to take form at public universities. The passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862 expressly made military training a component of any college created by its provisions. However, it was not until 1911 that the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) came into existence. After a rocky start during World War I, the program blossomed over the next three decades, eventually expanding to nearly 353 ROTC units by 1950. The primary mission of ROTC was the creation of reserve officers for national defense in a time of crisis; however, in 1951 the program transitioned into one that created mostly active duty officers due to the needs generated by the Korean Conflict. Between 1951 and 1964, enrollments in ROTC fell, the result, in part, of changes to the Selective Service deferment system. In 1964, the ROTC Vitalization Act attempted to stop the downward trajectory of enrollments, though initially conceived prior to the Gulf of Tonkin Incidents, the effort to strengthen ROTC came alongside the growing American war effort in Vietnam, and as draft calls increased, so too did ROTC enrollments.32

The Vietnam War brought ROTC into a brighter light of scrutiny than it had been since the end of World War II. However, the Sixties’ criticisms of ROTC built on earlier opposition, especially during the 1930s. In the decade prior to World War II, ROTC programs came under fire by students who argued against what they saw as the militarization of the civilian academy. While prewar objections to ROTC faded due to American entry into World War II and the birth of the Cold War, there remained some who questioned whether ROTC should continue to hold a place on campus. By-and-large, the movement to shift ROTC from compulsory to voluntary in the Sixties was not a rejection of ROTC’s place on campus, but a normalization of ROTC, which had, prior to World War II, mostly been voluntary.33 An example of this normalization exists in West Virginia, where legislators and administrators began efforts in 1965 to transition West Virginia University’s compulsory ROTC program to voluntary, which eventually occurred in 1968. However, in all these efforts the proponents argued that military education had a role at the University suggesting its heritage as a land grant university made such training part of its educational mission.34 As the war in Vietnam grew a


dualistic movement occurred on campuses around the nation, with students attacking ROTC as the most immediate example and embodiment of American militarism while simultaneously flocking into the ranks of ROTC as a way to avoid the draft or, at the very least, to exert some level of influence over their potential military assignment. While anti-militarism and antiwar sentiment served to heighten criticism of ROTC, at the heart of Vietnam War era debates over ROTC were questions surrounding the nature and purpose of higher education in American society and whether ROTC conformed to that educational mission.

Military historian Michael Neiberg has argued that universities in the twentieth century accepted ROTC as part of their educating mission not because it conformed to the rest of the university mission nor even because of an abstract notion of academic freedom but out of a fear of professional standing armies inherited from the eighteenth century. In *Making Citizen Soldiers*, Neiberg argues that faculty and administrators accepted ROTC based on an undocumented belief that ROTC served to humanize and liberalize the military by regularly infusing civilian ideas. This was especially true after 1951 when changes in ROTC led to more graduates becoming active duty officers rather than simply serving out their commitments in the reserves. Neiberg demonstrates the dualistic behavior of students during the Vietnam War era—rejecting and embracing ROTC while challenging the war. Because Neiberg is focused on how faculty and administrators attempted to shoehorn ROTC into the educational mission of the

university based on a desire to civilianize the military, he offers no real sense of the
student voices of protest (or defense) during the Sixties and, as such, severely underplays
the influence of the Vietnam War on the changes wrought on ROTC policy.\textsuperscript{36}

In the wake of the Gulf of Tonkin Incidents and the ROTC Vitalization Act of
1964, little student activism existed to challenge ROTC’s position on college campuses.
In the nearly two decades since the end of World War II, most Americans simply took for
granted that ROTC was a component of college life, and that college men would be
compelled (or, highly encouraged) to take at minimum two years of military training.
However, as the American war effort in Vietnam expanded, as draft calls grew, and as
deferments shrank or ended, ROTC became a focal point for antiwar activism. Students
recognized they may never be able to end the war or the draft and that they could exert
only indirect influence over elected officials, but ROTC represented a symbol of
American militarism, a key cog in the war machine, and something they could directly
affect.\textsuperscript{37}

Faculty and administrators had validated ROTC’s presence at the university by
arguing that through this process, they were helping to inculcate civilian values within the
officer corps and thereby blunting the effects of military doctrine. Student defenders of
ROTC argued that the themes and lessons taught in ROTC—such as leadership and

\textsuperscript{36} Michael S. Neiberg, \textit{Making Citizen Soldiers: ROTC and the Ideology of American Military

\textsuperscript{37} Knipfing, “Attitudes of Seniors Toward the ROTC Programs at a State University,” 42, 50; Dan
Not to Hurt Program,” \textit{Daily Athenaeum}, February 14, 1967; Paul Yeager, “Men May Lose Deferments,”
\textit{The Pitt News}, April 3, 1967; “Students for Peace Continue Protest Against ROTC Academic Standing,”
\textit{The Pitt News}, November 3, 1967; Linda Founds, “Military, Anti-Ball to Coexist,” \textit{The Post}, March 1,
Athenaeum}, October 1, 1968; Ted Goertzel and Acco Hengst, “The Military Socialization of University
logic—were transferrable skills to civilian life. In this way, they argued that the military was consistent with other civilian career pursuits.  

However, some students who defended ROTC made arguments that the program was bringing civilian ideals into the military rather than suggesting a compatibility between military and civil military training. For example, Pitt News columnist Dan Booker who, in November 1967, stated, “the overriding factor is that ROTC helps maintain societal values in the military establishment.”

However, this liberalizing mission of ROTC seems to have little evidence. In a study conducted during 1970, in the wake of the controversy surrounding the My Lai massacre, scholars found that while there existed some differences between officers who had entered the military through the service academies or Officers Candidate Schools (OCS) and those who gained their commission via ROTC, that both groups shared more values in common than those who earned bachelor’s degrees without participating in military training. The study ultimately determined that students who joined ROTC held preexisting attitudes favorable to aggression and authoritarianism as well as being more inclined to accept immoral orders or military control over civilian affairs than non-ROTC students.

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Further, the research determined that efforts to shift ROTC to a purely volunteer basis served to weed out students who possessed the liberal, humanistic values that supposedly validated the ROTC program. The researchers argued that only through ensuring that individuals with strong support for humanist, civilian values made their way into the officer corps could the university have a liberalizing effect on the military. They argued:

Those who indicated that they were humanities majors were less willing to obey immoral orders than were social science, natural science, or engineering majors. They were the least willing to use nuclear weapons; they were the least likely to respond physically to insult; they were the least capable of imagining a situation in which a military takeover of the U.S. government would be justified; they were the least interested in endorsing “My country, right or wrong”; and they were the most critical of the size of the military budget. The trouble is that humanities majors do not seem very enthusiastic about joining the military, … [they] are less interested than any of the other major in joining ROTC, and more insistent than others on “the right of the soldier to criticize his superior officer and/or government policies without facing sanctions for his dissent.”

Ironically then, while antiwar activists—many of whom were humanities majors—were busy trying to dismantle the compulsory ROTC programs that they saw as an overbearing militaristic hand of the federal government, they were creating conditions in which the military would be less connected to civilian values and more accepting of immoral, aggressive behavior.

Students often made the antiwar arguments against ROTC in conjunction with, or as auxiliary to, arguments about the proper role of the university in American society. In making these arguments, students raised two important, if contested, points about the nature of the university and its mission in society. First, students argued that the educational mission of the university rested on the principle of academic freedom, the

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free and open inquiry into a number of often-controversial issues, which may or may not lead directly to career preparation. Students noted that the federal government, and not the university, controlled ROTC and asked whether its emphasis on protocol allowed for the free inquiry and questioning that were key components of the educational mission of the university. *Pitt News* columnist David Rosenblum argued, “In order for this institution to maintain a position of complete academic freedom it should have no part of a course over which it has no control.”

Second, students argued that as citizens within the university community they had a right to participate in the decision-making processes of the university. In an editorial regarding the growing ROTC controversy at Pitt, *The Pitt News* argued that students should be engaged and concerned as well as voice their opinions, stating, “We feel the issues are paramount, for they reflect the very integrity of this institution. … It is a matter of academic principle.” The following week Pitt’s Student Government passed a resolution supporting the removal of ROTC’s credit toward graduation in part because they felt it right and proper that the elected representatives of the student body weigh in on such an important topic. In the end, the editors of *The Pitt News* hailed the decision to end ROTC accreditation as a triumph of the power of student engagement in the decision-making process. However, they argued the success occurred only because students eschewed “violent confrontation or legitimate civil disobedience” and worked

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within “established channels.” The editors conclude that “If an issue does not have legitimate gripes and is aired in a highly irrational manner, it can not [sic] be accepted. And we hope that the students of this University learn the value of this lesson in the future.”

Thus, the editors saw the ROTC confrontation as establishing a framework for other student grievances, one that did not embrace civil disobedience or disruption, but did prize the importance of the student voice. Students connected their activism on the question of ROTC to wider issues of their roles as students and citizens, and as such demonstrated the cross-causal connections of student activism during the Vietnam War era.

In the ROTC debate, students confronted the question of whether the university needed to remain neutral to controversial issues of society in order for it to achieve effectively its educational mission, as faculty and administrators claimed. What students saw, however, was the university not maintaining neutrality but rather in fact, if not in word, supporting one particular political position by accepting, promoting, and accrediting ROTC programs within the campus. Students argued that to accept ROTC, to defend its presence on campus as having a liberalizing influence on the military (with no evidence), was to put the university on one side of the political debate over the role of the military an American (civilian) society. This side accepted the status quo militarization of American society, which represented a specific political orientation and not neutrality. However, faculty and administrators often balked at the idea of eliminating ROTC claiming to do so would serve the interests of the antiwar factions, and as such would be unacceptably politicizing the University.

Robert L. Holmes, scholar of social and political philosophy, noted in a 1973 article on neutrality and ROTC, virtually all decisions favor one political side or another, what mattered was the reasoning. Holmes argued that the elimination of compulsory ROTC—in fact, the abolition of ROTC entirely from a university—while something supported by one political side, could, and did, represent a movement toward neutrality, just as maintaining the status quo often was not a mechanism for neutrality. Though Holmes never made the connection, the simplest analogy was that of civil rights in the South: maintaining the status quo of legal racial discrimination was not a neutral act, removing inherently biased laws that hindered the neutrality of the institution was praised by one side of the political argument; however, ensuring that the law treated everyone equally was not a loss of but a gain for neutrality. In this same way, student activists pointed out that ROTC was a threat to the university’s neutrality. However, many of the more radical students argued that since the university had for so long leaned in one direction, they should now move to swing the bias in a different direction, attempting to use the weight of the university to affect change on a number of socio-political issues. It is because of this desire to shift the university from one biased stance to another that created some of the strongest opposition to student activism on campus, especially since faculty and administrators generally did not accept the premise that the status quo was biased.45

During the series of ROTC protests at Pitt in 1967-1968, students used the theme of “intellectualism, not militarism” with regards to the role of higher education, and questioned whether allowing ROTC on campus put the University on one side of the

45 Holmes, “University Neutrality and ROTC,” 177-95.
political debates taking place in America at the time. Students for Peace argued that the University was offering tacit support for “the study of warfare and death” by permitting ROTC on campus. The student group rejected administration arguments that ROTC had a place at the University because of the universal military obligation of American men. Students for Peace argued that not all men did, in fact, serve in the military. Rather, they noted that as citizens of the United States, they (as many non-college men had) could petition for conscientious objector status if drafted, and receive non-combatant service; yet, they could not achieve a similar status vis-à-vis ROTC. As such, the administration and the ROTC programs were compelling young men into military training that they would not be forced to accept anywhere else; thus, as citizens, they had the right, the obligation, to object. The students argued that other paths to an officer’s commission existed and that their goal was not to end the American military but remove military training from the University because it failed to meet, but rather flew in the face of, the educational mission of open inquiry at the core of the University. An SFP spokesperson stated emphatically, “We believe that teaching people to kill other people should not be a part of the curriculum of an institution dedicated to the development of thinking minds.”

Conversely, students who supported the status quo of ROTC used the same themes of academic freedom and the right of students to participate in decision-making to argue their positions. In a letter to the editor of The Pitt News, a student argued, “Clearly ROTC does not violate the concept of academic freedom—a foreign language or physical

science course is equally as regimented.” Implicit in this line of reasoning was the assumption that a military career was no different from any other profession students were preparing for, and thus the instruction in combat was no different than any other course in skill set development. An OU student argued that if one did not believe in ROTC one “does not have to eat from its table.” The student argued that it would be wrong to deny others this opportunity to decide for themselves. For this student, as with many others throughout northern Appalachia, academic freedom meant the right of the student to choose the career path they so desired and purse coursework to that end, including military careers. At Pitt, in the fall of 1968 during a debate over whether to retain ROTC accreditation, several ROTC supporters formed pro-ROTC accreditation organizations and argued that administrators should hear their voices before they reached any final decision. In this way, the forces for the status quo argued for the vocalization of the student voice, while at the same time highlighting the reality that there was not a single student voice.

For students, the ability to affect change in curriculum represented an affirmation of their rights as citizens within the university community. Thus, the debates over ROTC


were as much a part of Sixties student activism as antiwar or civil rights activism. Further, it highlights how these various movements intersect—through the sense of citizenship. Students had the right to dissent, the right to participate in decision-making, the right to challenge and change their world. There was often a direct connection drawn between debates over issues such as women’s hours and the war in Vietnam, a direct line connecting them as the purview of the adult American citizen. Thus, it seems to make sense that one of the strongest nexus points for the convergence of campus and community issues would surround the question of civilian military obligation. It is not surprising that students infused antiwar arguments into the ROTC debate; but the debate over ROTC was so much more than just a question of militarism in American society or a question of the academic mission of the university. The debates over ROTC get to the heart of a question about what does it mean to be an American, the very central theme of Sixties activism: What limitations and power, what rights and obligations, what privileges and penalties does one have as an individual in American society? These questions find voice in student antiwar activism and efforts to define who had legitimate rights to the university space.

Antiwar and Campus Recruiting:

By the fall of 1967, Vietnam had taken over as the chief issue of concern on campuses in northern Appalachia. Escalating American involvement and the widening credibility gap from August 1967 to December 1968 meant that students were highly concerned with the war and their connection to it. However, aside from the October Mobilization for the Confrontation against the Warmakers in Washington, D.C., a great deal of general
antiwar activism seemed to have dried up. While this period saw a great deal of student activism that drew inspiration from the antiwar cause, the various national and local events were often not restricted to broad antiwar sentiment but focused on specific components of the wider society or system that made the war possible—targeting particular components of the war machine. An International Student Strike in April 1968 represented one of the few antiwar events on campuses during this period in which organizers issued a general call to “stop the war,” not a list of several demands to dismantle the mechanisms of war, simply: end the war. Much of the activism connected to issues of the war focused on specific targets, such as ROTC, military or defense-industry recruitment on campus, or the draft. Occasional, infrequent, and small antiwar protests and pickets at northern Appalachian universities occurred including ones directed at Dow Chemical or against secret research undertaken by the university. However, for as much as the campus papers covered the war through wire service reporting, there appeared to be limited direct activism on a general call for an end to the war. Activism still existed and was growing in some areas, like draft resistance, demonstrating a more focused approach to their opposition to the war. Where in 1964 to 1967 they called for a general halt to hostilities, by 1967-68 they were emphasizing specific points they deemed crucial for ending the war. Debates about the origins of American intervention and continued presence faded from campus. Though the war played a key role in how students viewed candidates in the 1968 presidential election, the papers presented the issue as one of many concerns students should use to evaluate a potential leader, not a cause to become active in stopping.
In October 1967, Washington, D.C., hosted one of the largest protest against the war in Vietnam. The event, billed as a confrontation with the warmakers, represented the shifting emphasis in antiwar activism toward large mass rallies and away from the smaller teach-in style actions that sought to build knowledge as well as raise consciousness. The planners hoped to attract a few hundred thousand protesters to the events of October 21, and the wide range of possible messages and actions afforded a wider cross-section of antiwar activists to participate. These differences highlight the fractures within “the movement,” that some wanted only a rally and peaceful march, while others wanted to stage massed civil disobedience. In the week prior to the Washington events, local demonstrations occurred either to encourage people to travel to D.C. or because local organizations knew they could not all travel to the capital. Pitt, OU, and WVU all held rallies or staged events in mid-October and students from all three schools went to the national protest. In total numbers, the representation of these schools in Washington in October 1967 significantly outnumbered those who traveled to Selma in March 1965, the last large national event in which northern Appalachian students participated. Further, like the Selma marchers of 1965, the exploits of the peace demonstrators were covered by the campus newspapers; however, with slightly less zeal than in March 1965. There were noticeable differences between the events of March 1965 and October 1967 including the subject of the rallies (civil rights versus antiwar), the size


of participation, and the local events held in conjunction. However, in both cases, northern Appalachian students felt compelled to act based on a moral sense of duty as citizens of the nation.

Pittsburgh participation in the October mobilization drew together students from throughout the city and centered on the arrival of the “peace torch.” Students from Duquesne University, Carnegie-Mellon University, Chatham College, and Mount Mercy College joined Pitt students in a series of rallies in support of the October Mobilization. On the evening of October 16, 1967, the peace torch, a torch ignited in Hiroshima, Japan, and containing fragments from an anti-personal mine used in Vietnam, passed through Pittsburgh on its way to Washington, D.C., for the national antiwar demonstration. When the torch stopped at Bellefield Presbyterian Church near Pitt’s campus, several hundred spectators came out to see the torch and hear a brief message from Rev. Edward Biegert of the United Oakland Ministry. Biegert reaffirmed the demonstrators’ commitment to peace and their desire to end the war in Vietnam. A few dozen members of YAF counter-demonstrated and passed out flyers calling into question the patriotism of the protesters. The peace demonstrators generally ignored the YAF leaflets and the peace torch march resumed.53

The brief set of ceremonies, which took place in Pittsburgh, culminated in a rally on Carnegie-Mellon’s campus. Even though events earlier in the day passed without incident, the administration decided to lock down the campus prior to the rally for fear

that the peace demonstrators would turn into rioters. However, the only threat of violence came when a uniformed soldier roughly made his way through the crowd resulting in some pushing, shoving, and name-calling. In the week after the rally, students wondered aloud why the administration had equated peace demonstrators with “vandals.”

Both WVU and OU held local events in conjunction with the Washington rally and sent student representatives. In the week prior to the confrontation in D.C., WVU’s SDS set up a table on campus to distribute anti-draft literature, including gaining signatures on a national draft and war survey. The two dozen WVU students who traveled to Washington, all SDS members, joined with students from other West Virginia colleges and universities to march as a state unit. The WVU chapter of SDS did not participate as an organization in the Pentagon civil disobedience; they argued that it was a personal decision and that they would support any of their number who wanted to participate. In the end, three WVU students did engage in the actions at the Pentagon and police arrested them for their actions. Seven of the 150 OU students and faculty protesters also engaged in civil disobedience at the Pentagon, though none went to jail.

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The Athens Committee to End the War in Vietnam, chaired by Elaine Herald (the Quaker student who helped initiate weekly silent peace vigils on campus), held a sympathy march on campus at the same time as the Washington protest. In an editorial, *The Post* noted that while neither the rally in Athens nor in Washington would change President Johnson’s mind that was not the goal. Rather, the editors argued the intention was to “encourage other political aspirants to think more seriously of the peace movement—its support and its determination.”\(^{56}\) This sentiment was echoed by editors of *The Pitt News*, who, on the same day as *The Post* editorial, issued an editorial stating “What does matter is that opposition to the war does not center around a fringe element any more … We can no longer point to an organization such as Students for Peace as an isolated example of people opposed to the war.”\(^{57}\)

If opposition to the war had become more mainstream within American society by late 1967, it had not necessarily become more frequent on campus. The campus newspapers show few general antiwar activities on campus, most war-related activities targeted specific components of the government’s war effort. The lack of news coverage of general antiwar sentiment may be a function of the mundane not being newsworthy, in other words, an antiwar picket on campus was not seen as an oddity as it had in previous years and thus elicited little or no interest from the campus papers. However, this does not appear to be the case. In the previous three years, with increasing regularity,


campuses in northern Appalachia had witnessed Vietnam War debates and educational programs, often with faculty experts squaring off against each other, and newspaper coverage of the events remained relatively consistent or increasing somewhat. It appears that by late-1967 these events halted almost universally, as students promoted new conceptions of their rights and power they became less likely to listen to faculty debates and more likely to engage directly themselves. One of the few exceptions to this transition to a demonstration model from a teaching model of antiwar activism was a “Vietnam Dialogue Week,” held at OU in February 1968 featuring speeches by politicians and a handful of faculty-centered debates. Despite this exception, the shift was from a general antiwar focus to specific, actionable foci—ROTC, campus recruiters, or the draft. Students no longer needed to debate and discuss how the US got in or whether it should get out of Vietnam, rather they now sought to challenge things that had a tangible or symbolic effect on the war and the nation’s capacity to fight it.

The adoption of the mass rally tactic as the mode of expression of student frustrations demonstrates this shift. While large rallies functioned as communal expressions, they were also massed individual actions of dissent that served as mechanisms for giving voice to the frustrations of the disenfranchised, if not necessarily to build sustainable communities of engaged citizens. The New Left prioritized the idea

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of a community of individuals capable of participating in the democratic process, yet mass rallies demonstrated the size and extent of the disaffected population, they did not draw these individuals into the decision-making process or help to generate workable solutions though they did on occasion create lists of demands that infrequently resulted in changes. Mass rallies were transitory and temporary events meant to energize individuals, especially those whose dedication to the cause was situational or minimal. It was through smaller actions of dedicated individuals attempting to exert control over the decision-making process that solutions to the problems expressed at mass protests developed and at this smaller, more personal scale where community empowerment grew and achieved sustainability. However, in 1967-1968, even these smaller actions took on a greater oppositional tone. Campus protests against military and defense-industry recruiters demonstrate this clearly.

In challenging the right of the military or defense-industries to recruit on campus, students were claiming a right to control the university based on their citizenship within the university. Students argued they could deny access to the physical space of the university to any who they believed conflicted with their interpretation of the university’s mission. In the month following the Washington confrontation, students throughout northern Appalachia protested against recruitment efforts by the Dow Chemical Corporation. At both OU and Pitt, nearly 100 students participated in the anti-Dow marches on each campus over two days in mid-November. Protesters reasoned that failure to oppose publicly Dow’s use of campus space would send a message that students –and by extension their universities – endorsed the war and the mechanisms of
war making in the United States. In a letter to *The Pitt News* editor, Ivan Abrams and Joshua Chasan argued that Dow Chemical had a right to recruit employees, just not at the University. They noted that Dow Chemical was free to speak at the University if it chose, similar to the right of the Communist Party; but, just as how the Communist Party was restricted from recruiting on campus so too was Dow. They argued:

> Ultimately it is a question of the nature of the University. Should the University exist within and become a part of the moral vacuum outside its halls, or should it sit in continuous and urgent judgment and criticism of the society in which it exists? Should it, with the companies with which it cooperates so directly, abdicate the moral responsibility which is so lacking in our society? Are we in this University merely part of a fact exchange, or are we involved in an experience for which the transition of values is an integral process? And has not the University abdicated any sense of its role in shaping, debating and exchanging concepts so basic as right and wrong? Dow Chemical Company’s presence on campus is merely one manifestation of the perversions of the nature of our University.

Abrams and Chasan argued that corporations should not use the University space to recruit students into enterprises that perpetuated the corrupt status quo.

A similar rationale underpinned efforts by WVU’s SDS chapter to deny Marine recruiters’ access to the Student Union in October 1968. In a letter to WVU president

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James G. Harlow, SDS denied the legitimacy of military recruitment on campus and denounced the growing connection between the University and the military-industrial complex. As SDS local chapter president Louis Horacek put it, “We’re interested in the aspects of the University tied to the war machine.” Horacek went further to indicate, “SDS decided to take action against the Marines because it was a direct action against the agencies supporting the war in Vietnam.” In this way, the WVU chapter of SDS was going beyond the proxy fight OU and Pitt students were having with Dow and attempting to affect directly US policy. In all cases, northern Appalachian students rallied against Dow or the military expressing their frustrations with the nation and the university.

In April 1968, OU students participated in the International Student Strike and Boycott, holding a series of events on the College Green. The goal was to get the bulk of the student body to boycott classes on April 26 as a way to draw media attention to student concerns about the war, the draft, and racism in America. The event demonstrated the cross-causal nature of student activism, as they rallied against the Vietnam War and racial discrimination at home, arguing that they were part of a larger problem with American society. An editorial in The Post declared, “The United States is not the perfect place that those in power try to tell us it is. It’s time we realize this and commit ourselves to trying to change things. Particularly in this election year, a massive display of opposition to current policies could have effect.” However, the events at OU, including speeches and folksinging, only drew about 200 students and the attention of the local Athens newspaper. Though the effort played out across the nation at various campuses,

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there was no real sense of a national, much less international, event in northern Appalachia. Neither Pitt nor WVU observed this day of protest and boycott. The strategy of decentralized mass protest would prove to be an important tactical shift in future antiwar efforts—especially the October 1969 Moratorium.

As the war became a more important part of college students' lives, the way students engaged with it changed. Students no longer felt the need to discuss Vietnam but felt compelled to act. Through attacking smaller, more tangible targets, they sought to affect larger change. Unlike the ROTC debates at the time in northern Appalachia that almost universally focused on the general issue of the militarization of American society and the role of the program and its consistency with the mission of the university, antiwar activism during these months sought to dislodge the idea of university complicity with the war. Attempting to prevent Dow Chemical or the Marines from recruiting was an effort by students to claim greater control over the operations of the university the same way that OU students demanded the right to participate in selecting their next president or WVU students rejected the proposed Code of Conduct.

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62 Pamphlet, “International Student-Faculty Strike, April 26th,” Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, undated [presumably between January 29 and April 26, 1968], CSA, Box 1, Vietnam War Folder, OU; Carol Towarnicky, “Students Organize War, Racial Boycott,” The Post, April 16, 1968; Victor Zinn, Letter to the Editor, The Post, April 19, 1968; Flyer, “Bring Our Men Home From Vietnam NOW!” Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, April 1968 [sometime on or about April 20], CSA, Box 1, Vietnam War Folder, OU; Flyer, “Schedule of Activities,” Athens Committee to End the War in Vietnam, April 1968 [sometime on or before April 20], CSA, Box 1, Vietnam War Folder, OU; “Class Boycott Protests Prejudice, War, Draft,” The Post, April 26, 1968; Editorial, “Support the Boycott,” The Post, April 26, 1968; Bob Rogers, photos and caption, Athens Messenger, April 28, 1968.

While Pitt did not participate in the International Student Strike and Boycott, students at Duquesne University did. It is not possible to know with certainty, but given previous interactions between Pitt and Duquesne students, some Pitt students may have attended the films, discussions, speeches, or the “Is the War Over?” dance. See, “Duquesne University—Vietnam Day April 26th,” Pittsburgh Peace and Freedom News, April 1968; “Strike for Peace,” Duquesne Duke, April 26, 1968. 268
Draft Resistance:

Beginning in 1967, the selective service system underwent a number of important transitions raising greater amounts of resistance amongst college-aged young men. Steadily college enrollment eroded as a bulwark against conscription and as deferment options dwindled, the once distant conflict in Southeast Asia became an uncomfortably closer reality for many students. As Michael Foley as noted in *Confronting the War Machine* there were distinct differences between those who sought to avoid the draft—dodgers—and those who challenged it—resisters.63 Those who disagreed with draft dodgers and resisters lumped the two groups together and scholars have often overlooked these distinctions as they speak in generalities about the draft and its opponents. However, the distinctions are important since incidents of resistance rose locally and nationally almost exponentially during the eighteen months from August 1967 to December 1968.

While draft resistance became more frequent from late 1967 to late 1968, the phenomenon did not begin with draft resistance ceremonies in late 1967, but rather in the spring of 1964. A young man from the city of Pittsburgh, Thomas Rodd, the son of William Rodd, an official in the Johnson administration, announced that he would refuse induction into the military in late-March 1964. Rodd staged a one-man sit-in at the federal building downtown demanding police arrest him for his refusal; he also announced his intentions in the Carnegie Tech student newspaper, *The Tartan*. Rodd’s arguments against the draft and in defense of his actions were representative of the

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statements made by later resisters in northern Appalachia—the war was immoral, conscription was illegal, and accepting deferments rather than resisting the system was complicity with murder. Further, he hoped his small act of rebellion would serve to inspire others saying, “I seek to generate power in this witness, power to help end the war in Vietnam.” Rodd believed that individuals could change their world one small act at a time and that with each effort the power to change grew—a message consistent with student calls for greater control over their lives within the university. Rodd was given probation, though he would eventually be sentenced to prison for his participation in antiwar demonstrations in violation of his probation.64

Debates over the duty of citizens in a time of war flourished in fall 1967. In September, General Lewis Hershey, director of the Selective Service System, came to Pitt to discuss conscription and the military obligation of young American men. Members of the Pitt Students for Peace (SFP) handed out pro-resistance literature and Hershey’s kisses (as a symbol of peace) in the lobby prior to the general’s speech. During the question and answer session following his speech, Hershey often came back to the theme that citizens have a duty to their country, at one point stating, “Congress never gave the


right to the citizen to choose his war.”65 Hershey saw no patriotism in resistance to the
draft and equated citizenship with military service (and, apparently, being a man).

In stark contrast to the pro-war rally of 1965 that reinforced the image of
patriotism as public expression of unconditional support for America qua the state, a late-
1967 anti-draft demonstration at Pitt focused on patriotic expression as reasoned
opposition to policies perceived to run counter to America qua the ideal. In December
1967, students gathered at a draft resistance rally at a church just off Pitt’s campus. At
least five men engaged in acts of individual resistance when they turned in their draft
cards, and several dozen others signed statements of support. Joshua Chasan spoke during
the event and argued that the war was inconsistent with American believes and values
and went on to lay out the resisters’ argument against the war and the draft, suggesting,
“the Resistance … is above all a quest and a stand for human dignity.” Again, the proper
role of a citizen and patriot came to the forefront as Chasan argued that a moral
imperative, a sacred duty, compelled citizens to stand against injustice.66

The seriousness of the night’s activities hung in the air, mixed with the acrid air
and smoke from an arsonist’s failed attempt to disrupt the peaceful event. Speakers
expressed their belief that citizenship required active participation and their disdain for
the war and the draft, with varying degrees of militancy. Former graduate student and


current substitute teacher in the Pittsburgh school system, Ted Marsh, challenged the constitutionality of selective service, while Carnegie-Mellon University computer science graduate student, Ed Fuller, called the war in Vietnam “bloody madness.” The service ended with Mgr. Charles Owen Rice calling forward those who were willing to resist the draft by turning in their registration certificates and those who were willing to sign statements of support. Mgr. Rice closed the event by reaffirming the strength of the resisters’ convictions, saying, “We are stronger than the violent… We will not stop. Force of spirit will not stop this evil thing.”

Chasan’s roommate and fellow resister, David Morrison, also spoke during the event. Morrison’s speech represented a call to action when he stated, “the draft and the military are not to be fleed or dodged; they are to be opposed and resisted.” The following day, Morrison drove three hundred miles to appear before his local draft board in Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, to inform them of his act of resistance the previous night. The board members present for Morrison’s personal appearance struggled to understand why he, as a Quaker, would not accept a deferment or civilian work as an alternative to military service. Morrison argued that accepting alternative service or deferment represented a tacit support for the system as legitimate, which he simply could not do. For Morrison, resistance represented an “internally derived” principle that one must uphold even (or, perhaps, especially) when it challenged the position of the government.68


68 Flyer, “No Longer a Card Carrying Member of the Draft,” DWRM, Series I, Box 1, Folder 1, ASC; Statement by David Rittenhouse Morrison, December 4, 1967, DWRM, Series I, Box 2, Folder 1, ASC; Transcript, “Personal Appearance Before Local Board #58, Lansdowne, Pa.,” December 5, 1967, in the David R. Morrison Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.
In 1968, the incidents of draft resistance in Pittsburgh increased. Ted Marsh, the pacifist schoolteacher, refused induction in January while a crowd of nearly two hundred stood vigils outside the federal building downtown in sub-freezing temperatures. Marsh argued that he chose to resist rather than flee the country because he “likes the American way of life too much to throw it away;” only through resisting the draft could Marsh exercise his simultaneous love for country and his right to dissent. The *Duquesne Duke* called Marsh’s resistance an act of courage.\(^69\)

Also refusing induction in early 1968 was Francis Shor, a Pittsburgh native, who attended Pitt between 1963 and 1967, the years Dr. Kurtzman identified as so full of “unreal” changes; individuals like Shor highlight the cross-casual nature of student political and social activism. Shor was heavily involved in the civil rights and antiwar movements as well as anti-poverty work and local community organizing. He was an active member in a wide variety of organizations and activities including SDS, Friends of SNCC, Student Peace Union, and programs aimed at tutoring black children from impoverished areas of Pittsburgh. Shor, self-identifying himself as a New Left scholar and activist during his years at Pitt, had at one point in 1965 considered applying for a conscientious objector’s deferment from the draft but by 1966 had “decided the draft was also oppressive and signed [a] ‘We Won’t Go’ statement, refusing my student deferment.” After graduating from Pitt, Shor participated in Vietnam Summer as a draft counselor and in October 1967, as a graduate student in history at the University of

Minnesota, engaged in active resistance by turning in his draft card, he would later face legal action due to his refusal of induction in 1968. Shor saw social and political activism, especially those rooted in non-violence and based on moral witness, as providing effective means to change society and that despite their political differences young people of the Sixties shared a common generational vision inculcated through music, movies, and television and enhanced by political rhetoric and product marketing.70

In April as Pittsburgh and the rest of the nation reeled from the assassination of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., a full page ad appeared in *The Pitt News* signed by over forty faculty members who expressed their support for an upcoming draft resistance ceremony at the United Oakland Ministry and for those students who chose to resist the draft or sign statements of non-compliance. That same month, David Worstell, a University of Chicago student from the North Hills region of Pittsburgh and an active member of the Pittsburgh Resistance, refused induction. He previously considered conscientious objector status but recanted saying, “I refuse to admit that any individual must ask his government for an exemption so that he won’t have to kill.” *The Tartan* ran Worstell’s story with a companion piece by resister David Morrison about how one could seek draft reclassification and “maximize [their] civil rights under the law.”71

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During the first week of April 1968, as part of a national draft resistance campaign, David Morrison from the Pittsburgh Draft Information Center came to WVU to hold a two-day workshop on draft counseling and conscientious objection. Meanwhile, two students, both members of SDS, held a press conference at which they read statements of resistance and packaged their draft cards for return to General Hershey at the Selective Service. From the steps of Wesley Methodist Church on the edge of campus, Harry Shaw, former president of the WVU chapter of SDS, and Louis Horacek, serving president, stated that their consciences had driven them to conclude that they could no longer continue to comply with “a system that is totally undemocratic and totalitarian,” in Horacek’s words.72

Unfortunately, for Horacek and Shaw, the outcry of grief from the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr., in Memphis that same day largely drowned out their statements of resistance. One week later, freshman forestry major Joe Hinson wrote to the Daily Athenaeum to express his displeasure with the acts of resistance of Horacek and Shaw. Hinson attacked the two as “pseudointellectuals” existing in “self-made protective wombs” and that they needed some “common patriotism … driven in to their long-haired heads.”73 Two days later, a junior education major, Sam Hoye, came to the defense of two resisters. He argued their actions represented the deepest love for their country and highest form of patriotism, concluding: “America needs more of those people, people who can stand up for the things they believe are right at a time when standing on the


73 Joe Hinson, Letter to the Editor, Daily Athenaeum, April 10, 1968.
issues may be contrary to traditional ideas of patriotism.”74 The two responses highlighted the contours of student debate over the proper role of a citizen with Hinson representing a traditionalist conservative view and Hoye a more liberal perspective. Should citizens follow where their nation’s leaders direct them and accept these leaders’ definition of the nation’s interests or should citizens actively challenge leaders when they believe the direction set is counter to the best interests of the nation?

The question of how a citizen should respond to the actions of their government directly linked to student perceptions of their role within the university. For traditionalists such as Hinson, student-citizens must conform to a perceived normality subsuming their own interests to the will of the majority and dutifully fulfill their obligations regardless if they agreed with them or not. Student-citizens must not challenge the authority of their administrator-leaders who defined the parameters of acceptable behavior; one must conform and oblige because dissent was disloyalty. However, for Hoye (and by extension, Horacek and Shaw), the role of a student-citizen was to seek to improve the campus-national community. Their efforts echoed the words of Henry David Thoreau, “There will never be a really free and enlightened State until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly.”75 For students like Hoye, Horacek, and Shaw, the university functioned as a conglomeration of citizens that could serve as a tool for the refashioning of the state to meet the needs of citizens.

74 Sam Hoye, Letter to the Editor, Daily Athenaeum, April 12, 1968.

In May 1968, OU student Peter Fromm refused induction into the Army and *The Post* offered brief coverage of his experiences. Fromm admitted he was not a member of any organized resistance organization but drew inspiration from the same rejection of systematized killing that motivated resisters throughout the region stating he disagreed “with the de-humanizing effect of the military system on the lives of individual citizens.” However, as the prospect of jail time became a more distinct reality, Fromm sought ways to prevent a prison term. Though he claimed, “his anti-draft beliefs were based on ‘the totalitarian structure of army life’ and not any particular political belief,” according to *The Post*, it appeared that Fromm was never as committed to draft non-compliance as other resisters. His willingness to accept a deferment countered the resister argument that the draft was itself inherently immoral. The Fromm experience highlighted the difficulty in classifying and understanding resistance to conscription as he appeared to reject the idea of military service and its corrupting influence on humanity as resisters did, but unlike resisters, he seemed to have not accepted the idea that he should suffer to bring an end to the system.\(^76\)

Joshua Chasan, the Pitt graduate student who had spoken so eloquently on the meaning of the war, the draft, and resistance, in December 1967 himself became a draft non-compliant in early October 1968. His act of disobedience became part of a larger rally calling for “non-violent, radical change” to end the “bloodbath” in Vietnam. Students marched on the home of Pitt’s Chancellor Wesley W. Posvar, to demand the end

of the University’s support for conscription and rallied downtown outside the federal building as Chasan refused indication."

For the resisters and their supporters these actions represented the duty of patriots. The ridicule and scorn they faced for their decision reaffirmed their sense of martyrdom rather than discouraged or dissuaded them. Some saw their actions as part of a long tradition of anti-militarism associated with the nation’s founding generation. Though their actions were public, and often times collective, they were still instances of private, individual witness. The Pittsburgh Draft Information Center’s counselors were advised to inform a potential conscientious objector or resister that pursuing this course required a “willingness to go to prison for his convictions.” The individuality of the resisters actions seemed to symbolize a conviction that, as David Morrison put it, “Instead of the people always being brought to the bidding of their leaders, why can’t the leaders be brought to the bidding of the people.” To those who refused to comply with the draft their actions represented the obligations of all citizens to force their government to live up to its ideals. As students made greater claims to participation in the decision-making of their campus community, draft resistance represented a parallel call for greater personal control and a hope for reform in their community.


78 Flyer, “Is the Draft Bugging You?” DWRM, Series I, Box 1, Folder 12, ASC; Memo, “Letter to C.O. Counselors,” DWRM, Series I, Box 1, Folder 1, ASC; Flyer, “No Longer a Card Carrying Member of the Draft,” DWRM, Series I, Box 1, Folder 12, ASC.
Conclusion:

During the period from August 1967 to December 1968, students in northern Appalachia made claims for greater power in decision-making as citizens of the university and of the nation. During these months, the cross-causal connections of student activism dimmed some as the emphasis on the war in Vietnam overshadowed most other concerns. That antiwar activism itself became much more specialized and focused taking aim at ROTC, campus recruiters, and the draft, attacking all within the dual context of the mission of the university and the nature of the nation. While the earlier forms of student engagement such as teach-ins and faculty-centered debates began to fade, incidents of student action increased. For many, the role of the student merged with a more active conception of citizenship and the tactical shift toward the airing of grievances through the issuing of demands. These individuals increasingly saw the identity of “student” as yet another example of a disenfranchised subset of Americans yearning for recognition as equals in the power structures of both the university and the nation.

Student activists never quite gave up the hope that their actions could end the war in Vietnam and racial discrimination, but realized that through attacking campus-specific issues they could affect local change that could ripple out into a wider societal change. Students continued to challenge in loco parentis policies as well as the issues of racial discrimination and poverty, all out of a belief that individuals should have a greater control over their daily lives, that the American ideals of liberty and equality dictated these changes. As much as ROTC represented the most obvious and direct connection to the American military apparatus on campus, student attacks on the program had to do with questioning its fit within the wider educational mission of the university in
American society and the idea of academic freedom. Similarly, reactions against military and defense-industry recruitment on campus had more to do with whether the university served as a conduit for the militarization of American society, or whether it had a higher purpose to generate individuals who would challenge this militarization. The spread of draft resistance on campus was another manifestation of this rejection of militarization. In all of these cases, from campus issues to the draft, the concern was with the expansion and elevation of the student voice in decision-making processes, that students were an equal part (if not the most important part) of the university and should have their views heard. Further, some recognized that if they could get a foothold of power within the university, an ability to exert control over certain aspects of their world, they could use that as advantage to gain a greater voice over issues within the wider American society.

Over the next few years, student social and political activism at northern Appalachian universities would peak and begin to drop off; however, it would be erroneous to assume that 1968 was the watershed moment. The year was as much a bridge as a breakpoint. The expanding calls for a greater student voice in their community (university and national) represented a continuation from the previous few years and would only amplify through the end of the decade. The trend toward large demonstrations in which participants aired grievances and made demands that began in Selma in 1965 and flowed through 1968, would only become more prevalent by the early 1970s with some of the largest and most violent demonstrations yet seen on college campuses. The crowding out of other issues by those of the war begun by 1965 would not change for several more years. Late 1967 to the end of 1968, therefore, provides a way to see the continuity of student activism from 1964 to 1972, by demonstrating how the
student-citizen identity continued to develop within the context of the war, the changing nature of the civil rights movement, and the wider political and social changes of the era.
CHAPTER VI

“UNREST WITHIN THE YOUNGER GENERATION”:

DECENTRALIZING STUDENT POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM, 1969-1972

Oh war, is an enemy to all mankind
The thought of war blows my mind
War has caused unrest within the younger generation
Induction, then destruction who wants to die
War, good God, y’all
What is it good for?
Absolutely nothing, say it, say it, say it
-- “War,” Edwin Starr (1970)¹

Thought I heard a rumblin’
Callin’ to my name,
Two hundred million guns are loaded
Satan cries, “Take aim!”
Better run through the jungle,
Woa, Don’t look back to see.
-- “Run Through the Jungle,” Creedence Clearwater Revival (1970)²

Introduction:

While 1968 gets a great deal of attention as the turning point year of the Sixties, the transitional moment from the supposed “good” 1960s to “bad” 1960s, the events of 1969 to 1972 suggest that this assessment may be overstated. The largest national protest against the war in Vietnam occurred in October 1969, the Moratorium. The tragedy at


Kent State University, for many the defining moment of the Sixties, occurred in May 1970 and the national reverberations extend for months in places like northern Appalachia. However, in the wake of the failure of the Moratorium to end immediately the war and the tragic deaths in Kent, student activism did not completely end, rather it transitioned away from the frequency of large massed demonstrations of individual protest back to an emphasis on small-scale community organizing slowly, which had lost some influence over the previous half-decade. In all, protest-oriented activism seemed to be waning overall. Thus, the question is not, as some might construct it, why did students become less active after 1970; rather, the question is why did students opposed to the war shift away from the tactic of large mass demonstrations? One of the many factors in this transition appears to be the combination of fatigue and frustration that arose from seemingly limited successes from a half-decade of activism.

In 1967 and 1968, student participation in massed demonstrations had grown significantly, as changes to the draft made many male students more susceptible to conscription; however, the institution of a draft lottery by 1969 removed a degree of uncertainty that had plagued draft-eligible men in previous years. The size of antiwar demonstrations grew during these years as enrollment in college became a less certain guarantee of avoiding military service. Individuals had no way to know whether his draft board would call him for military service, he therefore spent every day anxious that that may be the day he received his induction notice. The steady reduction in draft inductions, to where the Selective Service conscripted only one-third as many men in 1971 as in 1969, helped to reduce some anxieties over the draft. Furthermore, while the draft lottery instituted in 1969 continued to have flaws, it provided a degree of control for individuals.
Knowing one’s draft number meant that one could calculate his potential risk and to what extent he may need to concern himself with the issues of the war. For example, men whose draft number was 100 had a greater likelihood of being drafted and thus had a greater incentive to care about the nature of the war, whereas an individual with a draft number of 325 could be fairly well assured that he would not be called and no longer had to live with the same fear of a seemingly inevitable induction notice. The changes to deferment structures had made many young men face virtually the same draft potential and therefore they felt compelled to participate in antiwar activities as a way to exert some control over their situation, the lottery removed a degree of uncertainty and made fair-weather protesters less likely to participate in the large rallies.

After 1969 and 1970, large mass demonstrations began to wane as it became more and more obvious that they were not affecting significant policy change despite their vast numbers. No matter how many people they mobilized, no matter how forceful their demonstrations, no matter how pithy, provocative, or erudite their rhetoric and slogans the massed actions achieved seemingly little tangible change in national policy on the war or the draft. Although some advances in terms of civil rights at the universities or campus policies did emerge from these types of demonstrations, by-and-large the changes that did occur came as a result of means other than larger protests. People began to

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wonder aloud how much longer they would have to protest, how many more thousands they must mobilize, how loud they had to chant their slogans before the nation heard their message. They noted with dejection that they had been marching against the war and discrimination at the university for the better part of the decade and seemingly little had truly changed. In his work on the October 1969 Moratorium, Paul Hoffman noted that the massive protests had made the Nixon administration confront the possibility of changing some short-term war policies; however, he also stated that national leaders in the peace movement had begun to wonder if mass demonstrations could have the intended effect of ending the war. Moreover, the students of northern Appalachia were reflecting national trends as discussed by Simon Hall in *Rethinking the American Anti-War Movement*. Hall argued that the peace movement did have some tangible effects on the American political process, though indicated it was difficult to know the extent to which the peace movement shortened or prolonged the war.²

In his participant narrative history of the Sixties, Todd Gitlin argued, “the post-Cambodia uprising was the student movement’s last hurrah.” Gitlin went on to note the shrinking size and frequency of protests in the academic years 1970-71 and 1971-72, though some events did draw a half-million participations, “Demonstrations declined at the old centers of protest and press coverage declined precipitously.”³ While Gitlin was right that activism had shifted from national to local in focus that change did not begin after May 1970, but with the Moratorium in October 1969, as Hoffman noted “the day of


the mammoth rally is over. In October, more than a million turned out in city after city, community after community, campus after campus to protest against the war. In November, hundreds of thousands massed on the Mall or gathered at the Golden Gate. It’s doubtful we shall see their like again.\textsuperscript{4} The idea of decentralizing national protest meant local groups had a greater say in the tone of the events, it could potentially increase the number of participants, but it also created too many points of interest for the media to effectively cover or frame within a narrative. Regardless if it was the fall or spring, academic year 1969-70 saw the beginning of the decline in mass political rallies.

In part, the inability to affect immediate and thorough change through massed demonstration was an intrinsic failing of the form of protest students engaged in, as rallies and marches called on individuals to devote little time to the deeper cause and represented transient outbursts of expression. As it became increasingly apparent that the level of dedication necessary to achieve substantive change in the face of institutional inertia many people disengaged or turned away from the massed actions that seemed, at best, to elicit only limited tangible results. There was a shift for some to smaller direct actions and occupations as a means of achieving change, though these rested not on the mobilization of as many bodies as possible but on a small, dedicated cadre of individuals deeply committed to the cause at hand. Frustrated by the limited change created and worn out from the near-Sisyphusian nature of the struggle, individuals began to turn away from the large demonstrations, channeling their energies into more immediate matters within which they felt they were more able to achieve definite results.

\textsuperscript{4} Hoffman, \textit{Moratorium}, 204.
As the type and focus of protest changed, so, too did the student-citizen identity forged over the previous decade. The emphasis on massed actions had attempted to utilize the language of a student-citizen identity; however, it had failed to offer ways to nurture and grow that identity, seemingly turning it into a student-protester identity. The rhetorical calls to citizenship rights continued, but student activists made little effort to create and sustain the community of engaged student-citizens. The turnover in student population facilitated this transition as well. Older students, imbued with a sense of student empowerment, left campus and the new generation of student activists emphasized demonstrations over community building. Furthermore, the era of the rebel student identity faded as the careerists asserted a greater influence over the campus, rejecting the student-protester model of citizenship. The university was not a site for social experimentation and the expression of political ideologies meant to transform society, it was a transient part of one’s overall career arc that one completed as quickly as could be managed with as little distraction as possible.

The high-water mark of the 1960s came in academic year 1969-1970. That year began with the Moratorium and ended with the killings at Kent State and Jackson State. In the wake of this academic year, students increasingly expressed a sense of futility in their actions to change immediately national policy. Changes in the draft and a slow draw down of American forces in Vietnam suggested there might be a light at the end of the tunnel, though few were willing to express optimism at this point. By the 1972 presidential election, student engagement with electoral politics seemed to have ebbed in

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5 By-and-large, the students at northern Appalachian universities focused on the events at Kent State not Jackson State. If, and when, they referenced Jackson State it was often in the context of Kent State as the initial point of state violence directed at student protesters.
comparison with 1964 and 1968, though one would caution to say students were apathetic. Student activism did not end in the early 1970s, rather it shifted focus, turning attention back to the local community or promoting new identity politics that fractured what little cohesion had existed within student activism of the previous decade.

**Campus Policies and Civil Rights:**

Although by the end of 1968, at all three Appalachian campuses, the Vietnam War became the central area of concern for many student activists. Additionally, attention shifted from poverty issues as students focused on other concerns, mostly the war. It is not clear why antipoverty efforts faded, although it may have been due in part to the Johnson and Nixon administrations’ shift in emphasis away from the War on Poverty. Civil rights activism on campus continued to emphasize curriculum changes and the need for dedicated space for black students, though student tactics became significantly more confrontational. Women’s hours, ROTC, and the need to expand or alter student relations to university decision-making continued to serve as rallying points for activism. So, too, did student efforts to connect with the labor movement, as seen in WVU student support for miners and road workers in the spring of 1969. The wider national context of these local events was always present. Frustrations over the limited achievements and fatigue caused by the constant state of tension put students and administrators on edge, and fears of riots like those reported in the national media, such as the Columbia takeover in 1968, played into decision-making. Some students continued to view the university as an

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instrument for positive social change while others saw it as an obstacle of the entrenched establishment perpetuating a flawed system.

On Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday, January 15, 1969, over two dozen black students at Pitt entered the University Computer Center on the eighth floor of the Cathedral of Learning and staged a sit-in. The students refused to leave until administrators addressed their demands for expanded black curriculum, increased efforts at black recruitment and retention, a special section in the library be established that emphasizes black interests, and the creation of school holidays honoring black national icons like Dr. King and Malcom X, among other issues. The sit-in lasted into the early morning hours and ended without bloodshed or arrests. Pitt’s Chancellor, Wesley W. Posvar, met with the students and agreed to implement changes and work with them on several of their issues. The standoff came, in part, as a response to perceived lack of administrative concern for black students and the demands the Black Action Society (BAS) had issued the previous year. The January standoff demonstrated that one did not need massive crowds to achieve change. Further, the occupation was not violent or actively threatening to University property as the Columbia takeover had been the previous year; rather, the students peacefully, yet forcefully, occupied an important University center and through nonviolent confrontation forced the administration to take their concerns seriously and address them in earnest. Black students at OU had issued demands the previous December using similar tactics and found the administration

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willing to work with them to achieve positive results. However, at WVU, blacks coupled their demands with not-too-subtle threats of violence ensuring that administrators would be reluctant to initiate reforms.

The events of mid-January stirred a great deal of debate in The Pitt News, with many students arguing that it was never acceptable to occupy University property, while others stressed the righteousness of black indignation. Sam Liscock and Ken Huber wrote a letter to the editor in which they warned that “If every minority group used force to attain ends which they believed just, chaos would result.” Other authors and campus speakers worried about a drift toward separatism that threatened King’s vision of integration, blaming the Black Power movement for corrupting the vision of civil rights reform. The University Committee on the Racial Crisis (UCRC), an organization made up predominantly of faculty with some student representation, argued, “when legitimate grievances are met with indifference or persistent and self-defeating hostility,” there is a potential for violent confrontation. At the end of January, UCRC ran a full-page advertisement stating that the computer center incident provided an opportunity for the administration and the University community to take up the mantle and reaffirm their commitments to racial justice. Over 240 faculty and staff from various departments and schools within the University including in the humanities, social sciences, medicine, and

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engineering, signed the statement. In the end, Chancellor Posvar concluded that “All of us in this nation have a duty as citizens to support that progress; as members of an academic community, we ought to welcome the special opportunity we have to speed it,” reinforcing the sense of special position student-citizens occupy.10

A perennial question for the better part of the previous half-decade, the issue of women’s hours came back to the foreground in 1969. Throughout northern Appalachia, women became more insistent on the need to abolish these vestiges of in loco parentis. Activists attempted to end the curfews through legitimate channels such as student administrations, petitions to administrators and boards of trustees, as well as writing campaigns to get parents to sign broader permissions. Interestingly, there were many in this movement who argued that the abolition should not be universal, that freshmen women should continue to have restrictive hours imposed upon them. Others fed up with the slow process and the endless debates over who should receive privileges, moved beyond established channels and demanded immediate and universal abolition. At OU, women staged protests against the curfew system, marching around campus and holding peaceful rallies after their curfews. In May 1969, OU students used the opportunity of the dedication of the new library in honor of outgoing President Vernon R. Alden to make their call for an end to the University’s in loco parentis policies. Nearly 1,200 students participated in a rally outside the newly named Alden Library and demanded an end to what they saw as a breach of democracy when it came to social issues like women’s

hours. They issued a statement declaring, “In any issue affecting individuals directly, those individuals, being responsible, have a democratic right to decide for themselves what action they will take in dealing with that issue.” In the end, the OU women did not secure an immediate end to hours though phased endings to women’s hours began at both Pitt and WVU, but they moved the debate far enough that total abolition, inconceivable five years earlier, seemed realistically within their grasp. In this way, OU students had achieved a success, over the long-term, even if they had not achieved their short-term goals.

The status of ROTC, an issue of increasing concern throughout 1967-68 again became an important site of debate in early 1969. Following a demand by the American Legion in January 1969 to have the state remove funds from Pitt if it ended ROTC accreditation and a decision from top administrators to unilaterally reverse parts of the faculty decision to remove credit, the tenor of the debate on campus became squarely a question of the power of students and faculty to affect control over the decision-making processes of the University. When peace advocates raised the question of ROTC’s


privileged position at Pitt’s freshman orientation, and asked for equal time to present
other options, administrators either ignored or rebuffed them. At OU and WVU, the
question of accreditation arose, following a pattern similar to events at Pitt the previous
year. One key difference from the Pitt movement was the explicit argument that attacks
on ROTC were efforts aimed at the American war effort in Vietnam. Pitt ROTC protests
had revolved around issues of academic freedom and whether ROTC adhered to the
overall mission of the University.

Ultimately, the issue of ROTC led to increasing student and faculty actions, and at
OU in April 1970, eight female students participated in a sit-in protest during an ROTC
class as a silent protest against the program and its place on campus. When the women
were asked to leave, they “insisted that they, as University students, had the right to
attend any class at any time, anywhere in the University,” according to Major Stanley L.
White the instructor of the ROTC course they disrupted. Campus security arrested the
women, and a male bystander, when the women refused to obey a request that they leave
the classroom. Over the next few days, students held a handful of protests attended by, at

“American Legion Still Fighting University,” The Pitt News, February 21, 1969; George Lies, “Posvar
Attempts to Clarify Issues,” The Pitt News, February 24, 1969; Eric Fralick, “Is a Campus a Place for
ROTC?” The Post, February 28, 1969; Ken Brill, Letter to the Editor, The Post, March 6, 1969; Fred
Bryant, Letter to the Editor, The Post, March 6, 1969; Bob Berlan, “‘U’ Students Voice Opinions on ROTC
Academic Credit,” Daily Athenaeum, March 27, 1969; Bob Arnold, “Definition of Academic Credit Root
of ROTC College Hassle,” Daily Athenaeum, March 27, 1969; Bob Arnold, “Military Has Role in
Academic Community,” Daily Athenaeum, March 27, 1969; Scott Bills and Brad Pyles, “ROTC Has No
Place in University; Military Should Train Its Leaders,” Daily Athenaeum, March 27, 1969; Carol Divens,
“Fate of ROTC Program Investigated by Committee,” The Post, May 6, 1969; Geoffrey Bauman, “Posvar
Reply NG—SDS,” The Pitt News, June 17, 1969; Letter, David R. Morrison to Wesley W. Posvar, July 10,
1969, DWRM, Series I, Box 1, Folder 5, ASC.
most, several hundred students and, in some cases, by University President Claude Sowle, who made himself available largely to express administration disapproval of student actions. Despite student claims that the issue was the status of ROTC on campus, Sowle argued the issue at hand was the students’ behavior and that such disruptions were not productive.¹⁴

The campus debates over ROTC drew the attention of state lawmakers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Most viewed the university administrations as failing to rein in student radicals. The media image of radicals run amok, hardened positions against things such as the removal of ROTC credits. Further, the law and order impulse also gave rise to a number of state bills to enforce harsh punishments against student radicals (and their faculty enablers). Lawmakers asserted control over state institutions, based in part on the faulty assumption that administrators lacked the will to prosecute agitators. An Ohio bill, sponsored by OU alum George Voinovich, would automatically dismiss any student who engaged in ambiguously defined “disruptive activities.” In a letter to Voinovich, the Executive Vice President of OU, James J. Whalen expressed concern over the ambiguity of the language of Voinovich’s bill and stated that he and the state schools of Ohio already had the statutory powers necessary to deal with campus disturbances. He argued that all Voinovich’s legislation would do, would be to remove

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the autonomy of state university administrators to deal with situations on a case-by-case basis and apply an unnecessarily harsh unilateral policy from Whalen’s perspective. Voinovich’s bill appears to have not been enacted, though in the wake of the Kent State tragedy the following year Ohio legislators proposed a flurry of such bills. In Pennsylvania and West Virginia, legislators introduced or enacted bills that sought to withdraw state aid from state-controlled or state-related universities if administrators did not implement draconian repression against potential student radicals as well as fining and jailing students who participated in disturbances. Pitt Chancellor Wesley Posvar called such legislation unnecessary, a threat to university autonomy, and the product of misreading national events as happening on campuses like Pitt’s.¹⁵

Not surprisingly, students decried these pieces of legislation as undue restraints on free expression. However, more surprisingly, they also denounced the state efforts for threatening the autonomy of the universities. They argued that the university was a unique space within the American community, a place where free expression was necessary, especially the ability to dissent. In this way, student response to the actions of the state legislatures was to claim a special or privileged status as student-citizens, which afforded them greater leeway in the expression of unpopular positions. Further, they based their argument on the concept that the university was a sovereign space governed

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by rules that differed from wider society. An editorial in *The Pitt News* argued that the effort by State Senator Robert Fleming to enact a new “antiriot” act threatened “institutions encouraging free thought and expression.” Furthermore, in an opinion editorial for a special edition of *The Pitt News* sent to Pennsylvania legislators, journalism student Dave Kuhns was more direct in suggesting that not only was the University a place where dissent was encouraged as part of the educational process but that such expressions were necessary because students lacked any actual voice in the political process. He stated emphatically:

> The University community is a living, dynamic, changing entity—we are not a bunch of degenerate zombies who wallow in the hypocritical paternalism of so-called leaders that refuse to listen to us, or even make an attempt to understand where we’re at—in short, we don’t give a damn about us. I hope … I really hope that somebody in Harrisburg is still human enough to stop for a moment and think and feel … if they and their counterparts across the nation will only listen to us, talk with us, feel with us as human beings … if not … that’s cool … Legislate, Man, Legislate, ‘Til You’re Blue in the Face … Then Send Your Billy Clubs and Tear Gas and Bayonettes [sic] … hatred, violence, tears, blood … all of these will nourish the monster … it will grow and wax strong … and one day, devour us all."16

Unfortunately, despite the vigorous opposition of students, faculty, and administrators to state laws that would punish students (and faculty) for participation in disturbances on campus, in the wake of the violent and disruptive demonstrations that raged after the events at Kent State, state legislatures passed these types of laws as a way to ensure to the wider public that law and order would reign on college campuses.17

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The public’s concern for student radicals came precisely at the time the most widely known New Left and radical student organization, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), faced internal implosion. At the national level, SDS had confronted growing internal divisions over the goals and tactics of the organization. The Progressive Labor (PL) faction with its strong socialist precepts clashed with a growing faction, the Revolutionary Youth Movement (RYM), made up of individuals enamored by revolutionary violence in the wake of the Columbia take-over in 1968. During the summer of 1969, the two factions as well as other coalitions within the organization, like the Rank and File Caucus, reached a point where they could no longer exist together under the umbrella of the same organization. The RYM moved to expel the PL and the entire convention fell apart; SDS broke into different groups. However, local chapters like those in northern Appalachia had long been largely autonomous that the breakup of the national organization was not necessarily representative of their own decline. Yet, some of the divisions that existed at the national level existed even in the northern Appalachian chapters.

In January 1969, when the national organization of SDS declined to endorse the “Counter-Inaugural” in Washington, D.C., the OU chapter sponsored buses to take

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students arguing such an event was consistent with the spirit of SDS. Following the Counter-Inaugural, OU’s SDS embarked on a series of workshops to raise the political discourse of its members and OU students in general. Also in February, SDS at OU sponsored an Anti-Military Ball, part dance and part teach-in, to coincide with the ROTC Military Ball. That summer, however, as the national SDS tore itself apart it appears that OU’s chapter chose to fold and New Left students sought other outlets, as their presence in the campus media ceased.

At Pitt, while an independent SDS chapter existed, New Lefters participated in a range of radical groups beyond SDS, including the Resistance and an ad hoc group known as “Concerned Students and Faculty.” Concerned Students and Faculty emerged in February 1969 and provided the nexus for activism for several months, coordinating a series of events, including issuing demands, holding teach-ins, and staging vigils, fasts, and occupations. In February, 500 students and faculty issued a series of demands to

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21 After February 1969, there is no further mention of SDS at OU in The Post or archival sources consulted.

22 Concerned Students and Faculty was representative of the ephemeral, transitory student groups of the period that popped up, was quite active for a short period, and disappeared leaving virtually no trace aside from references in the student newspapers.
Chancellor Posvar, who was still recovering from the fallout of the brief occupation of the University’s Computer Center by black student activists. These demands revolved around students and faculty having a greater voice in University decision-making. History teaching fellow Wolf Swoboda asked the assembled protesters, “Is the University a corporation or an institution for the search for truth? If it is a corporation, let’s unionize. If we are searching for the truth, then it’s not their [administrators and the Board of Trustees] university but ours.” Swoboda’s comments show how students were struggling with defining their position within the University community and thereby how best to exert power to achieve change. However, the individual who emerged from the February action with the greatest influence was fellow history graduate student Joshua Chasan—who had made headlines the previous semester by refusing induction. Chasan became the voice of the concerned students raising questions about the role of the university in American society and how students could and should influence that role.23

The following month, nearly one thousand students and faculty participated in a teach-in as part of the Free University that became a brief occupation of the Common Facilities Building at Pitt. Upset by the lack of student input in University decision-making and state efforts to punish student activists, protesting students meant for the peaceful teach-in to demonstrate the flaws in the sweeping legislation that equated virtually all activism with a threat to law and order. As the night wore on and over successive days, Joshua Chasan emerged as the spokesman though he adamantly denied the label expressing the New Left rejection of hierarchy, stating emphatically, “There is

no leader. The beauty of this group is that decisions can be made in the form of open
democracy.” While nationally, the Revolutionary Youth Movement, a wing of SDS that
would morph into the Weathermen, called for revolutionary violence, New Left students
at Pitt were embracing the nonviolent stance of the *Port Huron Statement*, as Chasan put
it, “We’re trying to create a non-violent context, and we’re being very reasonable and
tolerant. If the administration rejects our proposals, they will be denying the spirit of the
University that we’ve been trying to create.” Chasan and the Pitt New Left were
countering the popular media image of radical student violence while projecting a
nonviolent and active conception of a student-citizen identity.²⁴

When SDS collapsed that summer, the Pitt SDS chapter responded by debating
their future, including which, if any, faction to follow. It appears that the Pitt chapter,
with its 17 members, rejected both the PL and RYM factions, choosing to disassociate
with the national organization, while professing a closer connection with the Rank and
File Caucus, if they had to choose a national faction with which to affiliate. However,
Geoffrey Bauman, local secretary, suggested the Pitt chapter would retain the autonomy
it had cultivated over the previous years. Bauman stressed the growing coalition between
the local SDS chapter and the Black Action Society—both calling for radical change at
the University and in society-at-large. In testimony to a State Senate hearing on campus
unrest held over the summer, Pitt SDS outlined their philosophy and why they believed
campus disturbances were happening, “We believe the growth of campus unrest is a part

of a larger problem, an increasing anger and discontent among more and more people throughout the country. … We believe that, to a large extent, these problems are rooted in the lack of real democracy in the United States.” Over the next year or so, Pitt’s SDS attempted to promote their vision of democracy on campus and continued to eschew violence.\(^\text{25}\)

Internal divisions similar to the national divides existed within the WVU chapter. Following the failure to receive recognition from the administration, members of the campus SDS chapter formed two other organizations as a means to continue their efforts, and in doing so reflected to some degree the rifts found at the national level. In early 1969, former SDS members founded the Mountaineer Freedom Party (MFP), a student political party to run candidates in the upcoming campus elections. Though MFP embodied many of the same ideas as the WVU chapter of SDS had, it gained official recognition from the University and was able to participate in student elections. The creation of this party seems to have been a calculated effort by some radicals, that they would play within the system as a means by which to change the system as MFP co-founder Scott Bills put it, “The MFP was organized to go through this system of political parties and try to get students involved in the system.” The long-term goals of MFP, however, did not change significantly from their initial iteration as SDS, which led the *Daily Athenaeum* to brand them as too idealistic and pursuing goals that were simply not attainable within a single academic year. Bills ran for student body president as the MFP candidate and argued that of course their goals were wider ranging than a single academic year.

year, because that was the only way to achieve true change at the University. Bills said, “Sometimes you’ve got to commit yourself, ideologically, to work toward a really big thing.” Not surprisingly, MFP did not win many seats in the student elections, but the fact that they won any at all suggests that when radicals presented their ideas to students in less confrontational terms, some students were willing to accept them.26

The other organization formed after the failure of SDS to achieve recognition at WVU was the Student Activist League (SAL). This group carried on the “outside-the-system” approach of SDS, rejecting MFP as too limiting and watering down radical ideas. Oddly enough, some members of MFP were also members of SAL, including Scott Bills the MFP candidate for student body president. Student Activist League sought to confront students, faculty, and administrators with radical solutions to campus and social issues. While never as radical or accepting of revolutionary violence as the Weathermen, SAL did represent a similar rupture in WVU’s chapter of SDS as the larger national divisions.

In late February 1969, a seemingly odd pairing emerged when WVU students took to the streets to support calls for state lawmakers to pass an emergency aid package for miners suffering from Black Lung. The students, many members of SDS and other New Left organizations, helped circulate a petition garnering over 3,200 signatures and also walked picket lines in early March with union miners. The miners were grateful and

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praised the students for their dedication and support. Near the end of March, WVU students again took to the picket lines to help road workers demonstrate against the State Road Commission, protesting labor practices. The striking miners “all agreed in the event of a student strike, they would now support the students,” a sentiment echoed by the road workers in late March.27 This student-labor rapprochement seems out of place given the popular images at the time and in the scholarly discourse, which paint the picture of deep animosities between the two sides.28 Yet, despite this accord on Black Lung and the State Road Commission, or even the OU students’ previous support of nonacademic employees’ rights to unionize and strike, there was still a great deal of distance between the two on the issue of the war in Vietnam. It is important to note that the West Virginia miners said they would support “a student strike”—perhaps something like the actions of OU students in January 1970 when they opposed a tuition fee increase—but the miners and road workers did not offer carte blanche. They were not going to come to the aid of antiwar student protesters. Interestingly, though, Joseph Yablonski of the United Mine Workers of America told students at a May Day rally at Pitt that, “nothing was ever achieved in the world without getting militant. Young people in America today … better get militant or they are going to pay a terrible price in the future.” Yablonski went on to praise the militancy of groups like SDS and to encourage students to join with these types

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of organizations. If nothing else, experiences like these force historians to complicate the simplistic narrative of student-labor antagonism.

The spring session of 1970 picked up where the previous fall had left off after the October 1969 Moratorium with a degree of escalating student activism at WVU. In January, SAL issued a series of thirteen demands. None of the proposals were overly radical, and in some cases, they were identical to a list of demands made the previous summer by black students at WVU: the call for a Black Studies department, the University’s intervention in off-campus housing discrimination, and the need to recruit and retain more minority students, faculty, and staff. However, one should note that simply because the predominately white SAL supported the calls for change initiated by black students did not necessarily mean that black students embraced the white radicals, as there does not appear to be any expressed support by black student organizations for the SAL efforts.

While SAL seemed to embody the more confrontational wing of the former SDS, their lack of deep, radical ideology reaffirms the reality that radicalism on the WVU campus differed significantly from the national movement, such as the Weathermen. The SAL demands called into question the practices of WVU’s student union, the Mountainlair, and the campus bookstore, and while it did ask the administration to exert its influence to reorganize the Board of Regents to represent better the people of West Virginia, SAL did not declare a revolutionary principle behind any of these demands.

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They issued no manifesto of radical ideology, no calls for revolution to overthrow the system (at either a collegiate or a national level). In the end, their demands were fairly limited and seemed to echo changes happening at Pitt and OU, changes that were occurring without the use of revolutionary violence. Aside from calling for the University to recognize the rights of workers to unionize, the most radical proposal over which the administration had direct control was “an immediate end to all academic credit for ROTC programs on campus and an unconditional end to all war-oriented research.” The point of a university, for SAL, was not to sustain the war machine but to promote peace.

The administration’s response to SAL was dismissal and derision. Joseph Gluck, Dean of Students, wrote two letters to Scott Bills as the supposed, or, at least, de facto, president of SAL, the first reminded him that the administration had not recognized SAL and threatened him with disciplinary action should the group attempt to use University space without proper authorization. In the second letter, Gluck informed Bills, in a less than veiled threat, of the University policy against actions that disrupt or prevent normal University business. The Daily Athenaeum and local Morgantown papers feared an imminent showdown between the administration and SAL that could boil over into larger civil disobedience and demonstrations, possibly riots. However, when Bills and President Harlow met on January 28, 1970, the meeting was cordial and productive (according to both parties).

31 Flyer, “Student Activist League Thirteen Demands,” A&M 2828, Scott Bills Papers, WVRHC.

The official line for many of the problems highlighted by the demands of SAL was that the administration had begun work on some issues or that there was nothing they could do. Harlow referred Bills to student government to address some of the demands and suggested that “SAL was laboring under two misconceptions when it brought him the demands;” (1) that the University could create simple solutions to complex issues, and (2) that the president could work unilaterally. Just like with the black students’ demands, Harlow dismissed both the requests as misguided and SAL as too small a faction on the campus to be taken seriously—suggesting that their 100 student supporters was far too small to carry any real weight on a campus of over 13,500. Harlow went further to state, “a student referendum or petition, would not influence him in anyway,” suggesting a decidedly one-sided understanding of dialogue between administration and students, of polite listening on his part and then the total evisceration of their ideas with no room for further negotiation.33

Bills emerged from the meeting with Harlow determined to continue to organize in support of the causes he believed justified. He argued that the administration’s unwillingness to support change meant that only through student activism and the exertion of student power would any meaningful progress occur. He cited changes in women’s hours in the recent past as an example of how students organized and fought until the administration relented and he argued that if students wanted to see the thirteen points implemented, they would have to do the heavy lifting. While admittedly changes

in curfew hours was a rather limited change, the erosion of the University’s claim to *in loco parentis* was a necessary step for any larger changes to occur. Bills did not rule out the need for civil disobedience as a tactic in achieving change, but stated that Harlow had made his position clear on demonstrations—he would “deal with disruptions severely with expulsions and arrests.”\(^{34}\) Perhaps it was no surprise that Scott Bills would become one of the six students indicted for the disruptions in May, since the administration had targeted him as a potential threat since the beginning of the year.

At virtually the same time as SAL was issuing demands at WVU, students at OU took to the College Green to protest a tuition fee increase. This was not the first fee hike many of these students faced; rather it seemed to be a fairly regular occurrence. Students were frustrated that they paid more and more and felt they received nothing substantively better in return, no quantifiable or qualitative shift in student-administration relations. On January 29, 1970, nearly 100 students staged a protest on the College Green outside the administration offices in Cutler Hall, before entering the lobby and demanding to speak with President Claude R. Sowle. Recognizing he was outnumbered and that in this current state of agitation the students would be disinclined to demonstrate the patience necessary for productive dialogue, Sowle sent them away with a promise to meet with five of their leaders the following day. Initially the students rejected this stating they had no leaders and that Sowle should meet with all of them. However, Sowle’s refusal and promise of further meetings seemed enough to placate the students who eventually dispersed.\(^{35}\)

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The following day, protests devolved and seemed on the verge of a riot, yet it did not fully manifest. At 10 a.m., the appointed time Sowle said he would meet with leaders of the student protesters, there were a few dozen students milling around Cutler Hall but none agreed to speak as leaders for the assembled students. Sowle left the group and proceeded to a press conference with local and campus media to answer questions about the fee increase that the students now seemed reluctant to discuss. However, after having left the students, more arrived and were quite upset that Sowle refused to meet with all of them on their terms. The students began marching around the College Green, hemmed in by local and campus police. Police read a court-ordered injunction to the gathered students and ordered them to disperse but the students did not leave. Over the next few hours police moved in and arrested a total of forty-six people—mostly the noisiest and most likely to start violence, but in their sweeps they nabbed a few students who had attempted to cut through the Green on their way to classes.36 The events in January suggest the degree of frustration mounting at OU as students felt they had no alternatives and as the student-protester model of engagement superseded other forms of citizenship expression. Ohio University was already a powder keg looking for a spark when the tragedy at Kent State happened barely three months later.


There was growing activism and frustration in West Virginia as well. By the fall of 1970, students from across the state of West Virginia met and forged a cross-campus student organization, the West Virginia Union of Students (WVUS). What drew these students together was their shared interest in improving both the colleges they attended and the society they inhabited. The constitution of this organization embodied a New Left interpretation of the rights and liberties of students and citizens and called for recognition of this dual identity. Their call to action stated emphatically:

As students we will dedicate ourselves to the highest level of intellectual accomplishment of which we are capable and pledge that our efforts will be directed to solving problems which will improve the conditions of the people and humanize our society. As citizens we will actively participate in political and social movements dedicated to the elimination of exploitation.  

The WVUS’ expression of the dual identity of student-citizen was the most direct encapsulation of a sentiment floating around northern Appalachian college campuses for at least the last few years of the 1960s. Accompanying this statement was a call for greater student engagement to counter exploitation and degradation at multiple levels of society. However, WVUS did not embrace revolutionary violence, or even massed disruptive action, as a means by which to achieve these goals. West Virginia Union of Students viewed the university as a tool to achieve change, if wielded by active students who recognized their multi-faceted identity. Students must be part of the decision-making process of universities because they were a vital constituency that deserved

representation if the university was to retain any semblance of being a partner in American democracy.

Campus issues and civil rights activism continued to play important roles though often connected to the larger issue of the war in Vietnam. Issues such as antipoverty had all but fallen off the radar for students due to the war in Vietnam. Following the transitions of 1967-1968, activism on campus became more and more about issuing demands and holding disruptive demonstrations. The use of radical rhetoric existed, but aside from the small cadre of dedicated student activists who planned and organized rallies and demonstrations, most students did not seem overly committed to a revolutionary transformation of society, at any level. The two major events during these years—Moratorium and post-Kent State riots—were not efforts to create and sustain communities of student activists but rather were expressions of frustrations and concerns, that once made left many participants feeling as if they had accomplished something and that they could now return to their regular lives.

Moratorium:
In the fall of 1969, despite the dismissive views of some in the general public and even some administrators of the role of the university to engage with local and national issues, students and community members began to organize local events for the Moratorium and sought the assistance and approval of the local university administrations. The Moratorium, a national movement to raise awareness about the war in Vietnam and motivate individuals to demand its end, found expression on hundreds of college campuses around the nation, and for colleges in northern Appalachia, the Moratorium
generally represented the largest war-related event to occur on campus. Unlike earlier major peace demonstrations which called on antiwar activists to descend on a particular city (Washington, D.C., or New York City, or San Francisco), the Moratorium asked activists to protest where they were.

The point of the Moratorium was to take a one-day break from one’s ordinary routine, to spend it in quiet or directed meditation on the war: its horrors, its costs, and its purposes. The limited goals of the Moratorium reflect what Paul Hoffman described as the liberal philosophy behind the event, in his 1970 book about the Moratorium. The hope was to bring out those who had not protested before and to emphasize the “respectable” nature of war opposition. However, these liberal goals did not stop the Vietnam Moratorium Committee from circulating an anti-draft pledge under the heading, “They Can’t Jail a Generation,” asking people to pledge to resist the draft in a statement reminiscent of the Oxford Pledge of the 1930s. Despite this blip of radicalism, organizers focused on the argument that if the entire nation took just a single day and said they would not work or go about business as usual it would show the Nixon administration how much the American people wanted the war to end. Through its decentralized and national nature, Nixon and other leaders could not dismiss them as the usual suspects of rabble-rousers and outside agitators.38

Working together, WVU students and Morgantown citizens created a full day of activities, discussions, and vigils. A national CBS television report featured the WVU-

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Morgantown Moratorium planning as part of “an effort to focus on a representative campus involved in the Moratorium,” suggesting that northern Appalachia may not have been so removed from the rest of America as popular conceptions may suggest. In a letter to faculty, James Buchanan of the Morgantown Moratorium Committee asked for donations of support and that they cancel classes for the day. Student organizers met with President James G. Harlow to ask that the University close for the day to allow students to participate; or, at the very least, to instruct professors to excuse those students wishing to join in the scheduled events. Harlow refused to close the campus, not a surprising position given that most college presidents when faced with similar requests declined. He argued that as a state institution, WVU represented all constituencies, both those who opposed the war and those who supported it, and to close campus would suggest an alignment of the University with one faction over the other. The administration would not prevent Moratorium activities, but it would not advocate them either. This position remained consistent with Harlow’s previous decisions that the University did not exist to serve as an agent of change and that in its service to constituencies beyond the student body it could not take a stand on the war without jeopardizing some of its potential research and consulting contracts.39

The daylong events in Morgantown went off with little threat of violence or confrontation. Over one thousand people participated in activities that included the screening of several antiwar films and a twenty-four hour sit-in of the commons. During the day, following a prayer vigil, students processed peacefully from campus to the county courthouse a few blocks down High Street where they assembled for a series of speeches and some folk music. As congregants gathered to hear a message of peace and hope, they were also assaulted by heckles and jeers. One woman, hanging out of her window overlooking the courthouse plaza, shouted obscenities at the gathered crowd. In another instance, a carful of college co-eds cruised past the courthouse several times streaming an American flag behind their sports car and chanting pro-war slogans.

According to various newspaper reports, these were the only significant confrontations that day.

The Moratorium in Athens was not nearly as detailed and intricate as events in Morgantown, though there were some important similarities. Events on the OU campus were part of a community-wide effort coordinated by the Athens Peace Committee, much

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What is interesting is that women threw the epithets and heckled the assembled peace demonstrators. Perhaps this suggests a sense of women shaming those men who they saw as deficient in their exercise of manly duties, such as military service; in other words, challenging their manhood through mocking them. It may also indicate a need to re-evaluate assumptions about the masculine nature of prowar support and to question whether support for the war existed more strongly amongst segments of the population that had little or no likelihood of personally seeing combat. In any case, these questions of gender lay beyond the scope of this analysis, though they suggest some interesting paths for future study.
like the Morgantown Moratorium Committee. There was a march that took participants through town and campus, and a rally with the reading of names of soldiers lost in Vietnam.\textsuperscript{41} Both school’s events encapsulated the sense of “demonstration, teach-in, and memorial service,” as one scholar described the Moratorium.\textsuperscript{42} Claude Sowle was new to the position of university president in the fall of 1969, yet his actions displayed a great deal of skill and echoed the actions of WVU President James G. Harlow.

Moratorium organizers in Athens, as in Morgantown, asked the University to cancel classes for the day, a request denied by Sowle. Advocates argued the University should close to demonstrate that the student body opposed the war and wanted it to end. Interestingly, this argument highlights the lack of institutional memory that occurs at places like universities where there is high turnover in personnel. In 1965, only four years earlier, antiwar students balked at the idea that the pro-war Bleed-In held by organizations at the University stood as a statement of the entire student body’s support of the war effort. The bulk of blood donors expressly rejected this premise even as they gave blood.\textsuperscript{43} Now, in 1969, antiwar activists claimed to speak with the unified voice of the student body they had previously denied the pro-war faction. Regardless, like his counterpart at WVU, Sowle argued the University could not take a side on the Moratorium, that the University was home to a wide range of political views and each individual must make the decision whether to participate or not for themselves.\textsuperscript{44}


\textsuperscript{42} DeBenedetti, \textit{An American Ordeal}, 256.

\textsuperscript{43} See, Chapter 4.

\textsuperscript{44} Claudia Bernard, “No Class Cancellation on Moratorium Day,” \textit{The Post}, October 9, 1969.
decision, as it did at WVU, served only to strengthen the meaning of the Moratorium and the message of its participants.

By not cancelling classes, Sowle forced students to make a conscience choice to protest. Assuredly, numbers of participants would have increased if the University did not hold classes; Moratorium events would have little or no competition for student attention. However, the point of the Moratorium was to stop “business as usual,” for a single day and devote that time instead to trying to stop the war in Vietnam. No classes would mean it was not business as usual and the students’ efforts would lack the note of sacrifice, limited though that sacrifice may be, that provided symbolic power to the event. If students were not willing to face the limited consequences of a missed day of class, it would be fair to question their dedication to the cause. By ensuring the University held classes, Sowle forced the students to make a harder choice and by participating, they were saying for at least that moment, stopping the war was more important than getting an education. Thus, what some organizers may have decried as a lack of courage on Sowle’s part, in retrospect served to strengthen the symbolic power of the event.

The Moratorium in Pittsburgh came as a culmination of increasingly vocal rallies throughout the year. Demonstrations in February and March involved extended stays in various lecture halls by large numbers of students and faculty to protest conscription or to express opposition to new state legislation that would punish student protesters.45 In October, thousands of Pittsburgh students and faculty members participated in

Moratorium events at Carnegie Mellon University, Duquesne University, and Pitt, despite the fact that these institutions did not suspend classes for the day’s activities. Michael Kosloff, a member of the Pittsburgh Resistance and student at Pitt, described the events in Pittsburgh as less than radical and geared more towards breaking down the myth of the “bad youth” by saying that the tone of the event was “to impress the Nixon administration that we are good, clean, white, middle class, non-violent Americans.” In this way, the events in Pittsburgh reflect the description of the Moratorium by scholars Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, who argued, “For some, long kept in silent restraint by radical usurpation of the ground they might have taken, [the Moratorium] was, at last, a chance to be safely heard.”

In all, roughly 12,000 demonstrators surged through the city, converging at and briefly occupying Point State Park in downtown Pittsburgh for the culminating events of the daylong protest. Here speakers addressed the questions of the morality of war and the patriotic duty of citizens to dissent. Many left downtown that evening with the feeling they had accomplished something, though the war would continue to drag on. Others expressed disappointment that the demonstration seemed geared more towards talking about change rather than taking action. In describing the result of the Moratorium,

46 “Views of M-Day, Oct. 15,” Pittsburgh Draft Resistance Newsletter, DWRM, Series I, Box 2, Folder 1, ASC.
Note, also, the intersection of race in Kosloff’s construction of the “good” young American.


48 In a book written and published only a few months after the Moratorium, Paul Hoffman discusses the sense of deflation felt as the optimism of October 1969 confronted continued war; see, Hoffman, Moratorium, 200-01.
Kosloff expressed frustration that at the end of the scheduled events everyone dispersed and returned to their daily lives as if nothing had happened.  

In part, Kosloff’s disappointment may have stemmed from expectations generated by who had organized the effort in Pittsburgh. Graduate students and members of the Pittsburgh Resistance and the Peace and Freedom Center, including David Morrison and Joshua Chasan were important coordinators and voices in the planning of the Pittsburgh Moratorium events. Morrison adamantly insisted on a daytime march, initially hoping to get 1,000 participants rather than a suggested candlelight vigil. Ed Fuller, David Worstell, and Joshua Chasan, all draft resisters, insisted that the Moratorium had to be a springboard for radical activism; in particular, Chasan hoped to radicalize Pittsburgh campuses. Morrison had initially called for a march to Mellon Square downtown to culminate in draft card burnings and a flag washing. However, Msgr. Charles Owen Rice, a local Catholic priest who had served as officiant at several local draft resistance ceremonies suggested a less radical and confrontational approach which seemed to coincide with the desires of students coordinating Moratorium activities on the various Pittsburgh campuses. Obviously exasperated by the “liberal” nature taking over the events he was planning, Morrison left for Chicago in early October to participate in the Days of Rage, to reimmerse himself in radical activism. In the end, what Morrison and

49 “Views of M-Day, Oct. 15,” *Pittsburgh Draft Resistance Newsletter*, DWRM, Series I, Box 2, Folder 1, ASC. The *Pitt News* ran an entire edition dedicated to the Moratorium on October 17, 1969. The *Duquesne Duke* also ran several articles in both the October 17 and October 24, 1969, editions about the Moratorium. In both cases, the student papers provided images of the activities, as well as commentary from students, professors, and administrator. The front page of the October 16, 1969, edition of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* contained a half-dozen stories about the Moratorium locally, nationally, and its effect in Vietnam.

50 David R. Morrison, “The October 15 Moratorium March,” November 20, 1969, DWRM, Series I, Box 1, Folder 12, ASC.
other radicals had hoped to use as a means of energizing and mobilizing a radicalized city and student population became an expression of liberal opposition to the war.

Following the Moratorium, no action in Pittsburgh ever achieved the same level of participation. In the wake of the Kent State shootings (when Ohio National Guardsmen shot into a crowd of protesters, killing four students on May 4, 1970), renewed calls for an end to the war rippled through Pittsburgh, through admittedly fewer in number than in other regions of the country as some of Pittsburgh’s colleges had already ended their spring sessions.\(^5\) However, both OU and WVU would see large and, at times, chaotic demonstrations following the Kent State tragedy. Regardless, the Moratorium was the last planned large demonstration at most of the campuses of northern Appalachia.

The Moratorium in northern Appalachia helped to signal a shift in student activism, bringing the national back to the local. By decentralizing resistance, and empowering local groups to stage large events, the Moratorium reinforced the idea of a fading national structure to protest. Further, the Moratorium highlighted the limits of activism centered on large protests. Hoffman noted in his book on the Moratorium that afterward national leaders questioned the influence of mass protests, “If these outpourings couldn’t get the message across to the administration—and all the evidence indicates they didn’t—than no amount of mass action will.”\(^5\) Many emerged feeling as if


\(^5\) Hoffman, *Moratorium*, 204.
they had accomplished something with minimal sacrifice; however, only a minimal, if any, change actually occurred. Six months later, when the Nixon administration announced the Cambodian invasion and the following tragedy at Kent State, the explosion of student response was locally focused and a visceral reaction to years of pent up frustrations not addressed by events like the Moratorium.

Kent State Tragedy:

The month of May 1970 began with Americans reacting to President Nixon’s announcement of military involvement in Cambodia. A shockwave of protest surged through the nation, especially on college campuses. After several days of escalating conflict at Kent State University, the National Guard attempted to disperse a demonstration of several hundred students on May 4, 1970, and resulting in the death of four and the wounding of nine others. The National Guard, called in by Governor James A. Rhodes to help defuse the situation, marched on the protesters to break up the crowd and prevent further damage or violence. However, a combination of various factors led to the Guard firing on the students and the tragic death of four individuals. The events

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54 The President’s Commission on Campus Unrest painstakingly reconstructs the events of that day, and the days leading up to the shootings; the commission’s report details not only what happened in Kent (and, later in Jackson, MS) but also explore the underlying causes of student protests. For a detailed explanation of the day’s events and images from Kent, see: U.S. President’s Commission on Campus Unrest, Report of the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest; Including Special Reports: The Killings at Jackson State, the Kent State Tragedy (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1970), 259-82, 293-410.
shook the nation and inspired Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young’s “Ohio,” an ode to the dead, the refrain of which hangs hauntingly in the air, “four dead in Ohio.”

In the wake of the Kent State tragedy, as hundreds of campuses around the nation suffered major disturbances, the scene in Pittsburgh was comparatively subdued. Several hundred students from the city’s six colleges and universities (Pitt, Carnegie Mellon University, Chatham College, Duquesne University, Carlow College, and Point Park College) gathered at events in the week after Kent State, but they never achieved the riotous standards of events at OU or WVU. Students at CMU broke windows and threw ROTC manuals into the courtyard, only to then go out and pick up what they had just thrown out in one of the most polite riots on a college campus. Pitt had already ended its spring term, graduating nearly 4,800 students on Sunday, April 26, and the summer session, which was already underway, meant there were significantly fewer students on campus. Pitt student body president Lenny Klavonic and the president of the University Senate Council, Dr. Jack Matthews, sped to Washington, D.C., to meet with members of the Pennsylvania congressional delegation. As formal representatives of the University, they explained the situation on campus and called for an end to the war in Vietnam. Meanwhile, back on campus, students, faculty, and even Chancellor Posvar, called for an end to the war, renewed efforts at addressing America’s domestic ails, and the recognition of student voices within the political process. In an emotional editorial in *The Pitt News*, the editor asked, “Is it wrong to want America and Democracy to be synonymous with the word PEACE?” The editor went on to argue that student protesters

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were fighting for the soul of their nation in much the same way as their parents had
during World War II:

The parallel is fairly obvious. Those Kent Staters were no different than your
parents would have been and others were. They were protecting their America and
the freedoms entailed; or rather, striving to gather again the freedoms entailed, or
rather still, striving to gather for the first time the promised freedoms.

In the end, the editorial suggested it took great courage to face “a fully equipped and
well-armed squadron of soldiers, with only bricks and tin cans, and sticks.”

During the evening of Sunday, May 3, students at OU gathered on the College
Green and built a bonfire, little did anyone realize that the fires of that evening would
continue to burn within the students for the next two weeks. When word reached OU of
the killings at Kent State, between two and three thousand students gathered on the
College Green the evening of May 4 and voted in favor of a two-day peace strike against
“business as usual” in a not-too-subtle homage to the October Moratorium. A May 5
editorial in The Post described the disturbing reality that, “The war came home
yesterday.” In an effort to direct student outrage toward peaceful outlets, the United
Campus Ministry initiated a three-day fast to reflect on the killings in Kent. Over the
next few days, hundreds and thousands of students continued to meet to denounce the
war, the killings, and, increasingly, the administration of Ohio University.

56 “Pitt Graduates 4800,” The Pitt News, May 5, 1970; Bill Gormley, “Kent Deaths, Cambodia,
May 8, 1970; Virginia Joyce, “Peaceful Market Square Rally Held,” The Pitt News, May 12, 1970; Wesley
W. Posvar, Edward Eddy, Rev. Henry J. McNulty, Sister Jane Scully, Arthur M. Blum, and H. Guyford

CSA, Campus Security Reports, OU; David Blumberg, “Massive Rally Votes to Strike,” The Post, May 5,
The question OU students and administrators confronted was whether the violence of Kent State would travel to Athens, a legitimate fear as unrest swept across the nation engulfing several million young people at hundreds of colleges and universities throughout the nation.\(^{58}\) On May 5, several thousand students gathered on the College Green throughout the day moving as if in a fog still trying to comprehend what had happened. President Sowle addressed students saying the University would remain open and while he understood the need of some students not to attend classes, they had to respect “the rights of those students who wish to attend classes.” Between 2,500 and 3,000 participants marched from campus through town past the Selective Service office and back again to campus, on Wednesday, May 6. The “March against Death” was an hour-long procession preceded by debates over the need for violence as the only acceptable response to what had happened in Kent, leading Rev. Thomas Jackson of the United Campus Ministry to tell the assembled marchers, “I’m beginning to think it’s more radical to call for non-violence.” The day ended with a disorganized rally of several thousand students outside Memorial Auditorium. In his diary, Rev. Jackson described these days as pregnant with the anticipation of violence, “Everyone merely milled around, as if waiting for some catalyst to act, but nothing violent happened.” President Sowle appeared on a national ABC television special on campus unrest, on May 8, where he noted that by-and-large students at OU and around the nation wanted to keep their schools open, they were just frustrated at feeling as if no one could hear their voices. Over the next few days, Sowle would have several opportunities to put into practice his

message of listening to students. However, when students asked him to allow
controversial speakers to come to campus, he balked, causing tensions to flare up again.59

By May 10, the worst of the protests seemed to have passed until an
administrative decision not to allow two previously approved controversial speakers to
hold their scheduled talks rekindled the embers of unrest. In response to The Post’s
reporting on the administration’s decisions on May 11, thousands of student gathered for
rallies throughout the afternoon and evening issuing statements and demands reminiscent
of those made during the riots two years earlier. Eventually, a group of one hundred
students moved to occupy Chubb Library after midnight, in part to help force the
University to close and additionally as a symbol for their sense of limited control over
their own lives at OU—that they could only control an abandoned building in the middle
of the night. During the night of May 11 into May 12, with several students occupying
Chubb Library another set of students firebombed a cafeteria on the South Green, across
campus, resulting in tens of thousands of dollars-worth of damage and bringing the
University to the brink of closure.60 In an editorial following the occupation and arson,

59 David Blumberg, “‘March’ Set as Strike Continues,” The Post, May 6, 1970; Monica
1970,” CSA, Campus Security Reports, OU; Notes, “Meeting of President Sowle with Representatives of
the Press,” May 6, 1970, Alan Geiger Papers (1965-2010) Collection, Box 32, Student Demonstrations
Folder [hereafter referred to as: Geiger], OU; Andrew Alexander, “Campus in Confused State Following
Security Reports, OU; Janis Burton, Lydia Parchment, and B.K. Perkins, Letter to the Editor, The Post,
Views,” The Post, May 9, 1970; Mark Custis and Julie Snider, “Sowle May Meet Group Today,” The Post,
May 9, 1970; Andrew Alexander and Eric Fralick, “Speakers for Rally Banned by University,” The Post,

60 Andrew Alexander and Eric Fralick, “Speakers for Rally Banned by University,” The Post, May
11, 1970; Robert Guinn, William Kane, James Westfall, and Wm. Charles Culp, “Security Report,
Monday, May 11, 1970,” CSA, Campus Security Reports, OU; William Kane, Robert Guinn, James
Reports, OU; Andrew Alexander, “University Struggling to Stay Open,” The Post, May 13, 1970; Andrew
The Post expressed deep reservations about the violence on display, though not with the nonviolent occupation of Chubb Library:

We do not condemn those occupying students. However, we do condemn those acts of violence that imperil the safety of all members of the University community. … The present trend of violence will not end in revolution. It will end, instead, in unbearable repression from the right. It will end in an irretrievable loss of academic freedom, closing not only the universities but also the minds of millions of people.61

The following two nights brought more demonstrations, denunciations, and destruction, and the administration was reluctantly forced to decide that for the safety of their students, staff, and community, the University would close.62

The decision to close OU was a difficult one made only after lengthy debate amongst administrators and the failure to prevent additional disturbances. President Sowle hoped to find other solutions to the crisis short of closure. Assuming that a handful of radical students were instigating the crisis, Sowle moved to suspend seven students on May 12. Sowle also encouraged a counter-movement amongst the University community to challenge calls for closure, saying in a statement on May 12, “It will take the active participation of the overwhelming majority of students, faculty, and staff to keep this University open in the face of a tiny minority bent on disruption and destruction.”

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However, the tide of activism against the administration and for closure was too great to withstand.⁶³

Like so many other campuses around the nation, May 1970 at OU proved to be an amazingly contentious time when lingering frustrations over students’ rights and deep passions surrounding the questions of war, dissent, and patriotism intertwined in the aftermath of the Kent State shootings. Ohio University was only one of dozens of campuses across the nation that closed in the weeks that followed the tragedy.⁶⁴ The proximity of Kent, no doubt, helped to spark the riots and disturbances in Athens; but, so too did the reality that there were very strong geographic and demographic connections between the two schools. Many of the students who attended Kent State came from the same regions, schools, and families as OU students. Thus, for many students at OU, the reality that students in Kent had died rang with heartbreaking immediacy not felt throughout the rest of the nation; in Athens, friends and family anxiously awaited the news that someone they knew or cared for may be among the victims.⁶⁵ This immediacy, this urgency, perhaps gave the demonstrations in Athens over the week following the shootings a different tenor than one may find at more distant schools; though the raw emotion shown throughout the nation following the incident suggests a larger youth

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consciousness that lashed out in pain at the deaths of fellow young people. The outrage and indignation at OU was representative of the frustrations and disillusionment endemic to America’s youth in the opening years of the 1970s. One may also ask whether OU students would have had the ability to organize (to the degree that the disturbances were organized) and sustain protests in Athens if they had not had previous encounters like those in the springs of 1967 and 1968, or the Moratorium the previous semester.

Protests at WVU in the wake of the Kent State shootings began on May 5 and lasted for only a few days. Over one thousand students participated in a relatively peaceful demonstration on May 6 to “Support our brothers and sisters at Kent State and across the country.” Protesters occupied Oglebay Plaza, an area of campus in front the student union, the Mountainlair, milling about offering slogans and expressing a wide-ranging rage at events in Kent, the war, and the University. A smaller protest on May 7 called on “all citizens to assume responsibility for peacefully expressing their opposition to the extended war.” This protest began with a march starting at the Morgantown courthouse before moving to campus and resulted in the destruction of a bulletin board used by the ROTC and a few windows in various campus buildings and the use of tear gas to disperse demonstrators.66 The students at WVU, like their counterparts around the nation targeted ROTC as a focal point of their outrage, though their destruction of a

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bulletin board pales in comparison to the torching of ROTC buildings as happened at dozens of other campuses.\footnote{Zaroulis and Sullivan, Who Spoke Up?, 320; Gitlin, The Sixties, 410; Anderson, The Movement and the Sixties, 350; Isserman and Kazin, America Divided, 280.}

The largest threat of violence and injury in all the protests at WVU came when conservative counter-demonstrators surged into the peace protesters on May 7. Newspaper reports described the conservative crowd as “a large and vocal group violently opposed to the demonstrators.” They launched into the peace protesters threatening to remove them from campus physically if the police were too afraid to do it themselves; however, the altercation did not devolve into a full-on melee and police restored order before blood was shed. The peace demonstrators called on President Harlow to denounce both the Cambodian invasion and the KSU shootings, which he refused to do. The only statement he offered said the events of May 7, 1970, were unfortunate but that “the cleavages among University groups revealed by the circumstances of the last few days are shallow enough and narrow enough that the University community will be able to heal them quickly.”\footnote{Press Release, “Statement by James G. Harlow,” May 7, 1970, Incident Week of 08 May 1970 File, WVRHC; Sumpter, “Troopers, WVU Students Make Truce,” Dominion News, May 8, 1970; “Demonstrators Stage ‘Victory’ Celebration,” Morgantown Post, May 8, 1970; Drobney, “Generation in Revolt,” 105-22.} On the whole, the incidents at WVU lacked any sense of violent revolution and while disruptive were largely harmless.

Nearly one month after the demonstrations, and with the University seemingly moving on without lingering effects, the administration brought indictments against six individuals they claimed led the disturbances on May 7, 1970, and engaged in the destruction of University property that day, yet local and college officials did not charge
any of the conservative counterdemonstrators for their actions that day. Six men received summons signed by Dean of Students Joseph C. Gluck to appear before the Committee on Student Discipline. This action by the administration to bring charges against Scott Bills, Scott King, Steve Stepto, Mike Weber, Dan Bucca, and Pete Cowan set the campus along a path toward more demonstrations and threatened the public image of WVU.

The “Morgantown Six” retained legal counsel and fought back against the accusations; charges they argued that the administration simply did not have any evidence to support. It seems that the indictments served as a ploy by the administration to flex their power over the students, not because they thought they should act to straighten out the students but they acted to placate other constituencies who may have wanted to see a firm hand used in dealing with disruptive students. President Harlow had previously threatened expulsion and arrests during the SAL demand fight in January, which may have hemmed him into taking these actions. His attempts to pawn off the indicated students on federal, state, and local authorities to prosecute (all of whom denied for a lack of evidence) suggested the administration had little desire to see the legal proceedings through to their logical conclusion and may have acted under pressure from one of the other University constituencies, such as the general public.69

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As far as outside pressure, it may not have come in a direct form of taxpayer or contractors demanding action; rather, Harlow and others may have sensed a general impression. By 1970, there was a distinct mood in the country of disgust with continued unrest on campuses and a fear that such unrest could transform into riots. Thus fearing an unexpressed backlash for failing to act, the Harlow administration may have sought pre-emptively to assuage any fears.
Perhaps the administration thought the six would simply roll over and accept punishment as students had given in to the administration’s dismissal of student demands during the previous year; what the administration did not count on was a coordinated and impassioned defense. Among the six indicted, Cowan was a freshman and the only one that the administration thought may re-apply for the following school year; by the time of the indictment King had graduated and entered the Peace Corps, Bucca and Weber had dropped out of school, leaving only Stepto and Bills who were set to graduate. The administration, recognizing the weakness of its evidence and position, initiated its standard delay tactic, postponing any hearing indefinitely. However, the students were unwilling to let the matter drop quietly and leave the University without further incident. Rather, they wanted their day before the Disciplinary Committee. Fellow students and sympathetic faculty held rallies and spoke out on behalf of the indicted six creating further headaches for the administration and making it harder for them to back down without losing face. Bills and Stepto both applied to the Graduate School, expecting denials, so they could increase pressure on the University to either dismiss their case and issue a public apology or bring the case to the committee. The Morgantown Six drama effectively ended only when a court order compelled action. An appeals committee finally sat to review the admissions denials of Bills and Stepto and found no evidence of the students engaging in inappropriate behavior.70

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The Morgantown Six debacle highlighted the difficulties of universities serving multiple and contradictory constituencies; without perceived pressure from outside groups the administration may never have brought such flimsy charges against the six students. By choosing to fight both the indictment and the delay tactics, the students suggested that the University did not exist as an undemocratic, authoritarian regime and that students indeed had rights that administrators were obligated to respect. They saw themselves as equal partners with the governance in the University community, and that the administration must adhere to due process of law or else the students would become second-class citizens. The fight of the Morgantown Six was consistent with the existing tradition at WVU of students viewing themselves with the dual identity of citizen and student, one informing the other.

In a 1995 article about the WVU response to the Kent State shootings, Jeffrey A. Drobney argued that the campus had been virtually untouched by unrest. He claimed, falsely, that WVU had “no mass protests” prior to May 1970 and accepted the administration line of a conservative, politically-apathetic campus. In part, his presentation served to frame the events of May 1970 as spontaneous eruptions of


Interestingly Bills left WVU to attend graduate school at KSU where he earned both an MA and a PhD in history.
violence lacking precedent and responding solely to the singularly tragic events of Kent State. Further, it plays into the narrative of student activism bursting onto the scene only to burn out quickly due to a lack of coherent, long-range goals. Drobney focused in on the judicial hearings surrounding the Morgantown Six to highlight the fact the administration was wrongly ascribing leadership to what was really a spontaneous and chaotic set of leaderless events. He concluded:

The events at WVU during May 1970 were not the result of a group of “student radicals” deliberately provoking a confrontation, as suggested by the University administration. Neither can they [be] seen as a continuation of previous student protests, since antiwar activism had been relatively limited when compared to other large universities. Rather, the demonstrations were the spontaneous actions of citizens opposed to their country’s invasion of Cambodia and the shootings of four college students by the Ohio National Guard.

However, the events at WVU were not wholly without precedent and directly connected to a tradition of activism on campus for specific and identifiable goals. One need only look at the Moratorium the previous semester to prove Drobney’s claim of inactivity false. Although Drobney was correct that the events immediately following the Kent State shootings lacked good planning, they were not simply momentary blips of student unrest but a culmination of more than a half of a decade of growing frustration at the inattention of college and national administrations. The fact that the WVU administration was surprised at the student demonstrations in May does show, as Drobney said, “an administration [that] was out of touch with the students.” This only serves to reinforce that long-term inattention to student concerns was as much on display as a response to the immediacy of the Kent State tragedy.\footnote{Drobney, “A Generation in Revolt,” 105-22.}
The response in northern Appalachia to the Kent State shootings in many ways mirrored the national reaction. Nearly four million students lashed out in spasms of violence, yet by-and-large rejected full-scale revolutionary violence. Regardless, their numbers, the nationwide nature of the student strike that followed the Kent State shootings, and a fear that this could become something more dangerous forced President Nixon to seek refuge temporarily at Camp David.\textsuperscript{72} Seeing members of their generations, and quite possibly high school classmates, shot and killed was simultaneously sobering and terrifying, and this duality carried into the demonstrations at the schools in northern Appalachia. Though some levels of violence occurred, given that most of these schools saw their radical students eschew the more violent path of the Weatherman following the national disintegration of SDS in the summer of 1969, perhaps it is not surprising that these campuses did not see wider violent outbursts. Furthermore, as the editorial on May 12, in The Post, made clear, the students saw little advantage in massive, violent disruptions. The seemingly leaderless, large protests in May 1970 demonstrated what the Moratorium had made clear the previous year, the era of the student-protester model of engagement was waning. Student activism going forward would need a new model.

**Election of 1972:**

While the story of student activism in northern Appalachia does not end with the presidential election of 1972, this episode helps demonstrate just how much had changed in the previous eight years. This election represented the first presidential contest for

most students on campus since the nation had ratified the Twenty-Sixth Amendment, lowering the voting age to 18, the previous year. Students now had a legal voice and could participate in the established political channels of American governance. In many ways, this represented the culmination of the student-citizen struggle for many.

What one might assume as a moment of triumph and glory, the affirmation of the political power young people had spent a decade or more trying to achieve, the ratification of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment in summer 1971, barely received notice in the student papers in northern Appalachia. The momentous occasion slipped by with little more note than a blurb in the national news section of the paper. Perhaps this lackluster response was due to the anticlimactic nature of the ratification in July 1971. For more than a year, the inevitability of the 18-year-old vote hung over the country ever since Senator Edward Kennedy offered an amendment to the Voting Rights Act in March 1970. Kennedy’s amendment lowered the voting age for federal, state, and municipal elections, arguing, “A society that imposes the extraordinary burden of war and death on its youth should also grant the benefit of full citizenship and representation, especially in sensitive and basic areas like the right to vote.” However, in December, the Supreme Court struck down the requirements for state and municipal elections in the case Oregon v. Mitchell. The decision of the court reaffirmed the right of 18 year-olds to vote in federal elections, meaning young people could register and local boards of elections would have to maintain separate voter rolls. The bureaucratic nightmare this created compelled many states to seek to lower their voting age requirements to 18, while also sparking a national movement to amend the Constitution, with West Virginia Senator Jennings Randolph introducing a joint resolution in January 1971. From Congressional passage to
ratification, the Twenty-Sixth Amendment moved more rapidly than any previous amendment with Ohio becoming the 38th, and deciding, state to ratify the amendment a mere three months after it cleared both houses of Congress. Yet, the amendment, like much to do with electoral politics in the early 1970s, seems to have not phased many students at northern Appalachian universities.

Students felt turned off from the 1972 presidential election by the seeming lack of a candidate worth supporting and the triumph of the New Left message of the broken nature of American electoral politics. Assuredly, the McGovern candidacy did speak to many issues of students, including, but not exclusively, the war in Vietnam. However, the revelation of VP nominee Thomas Eagleton’s medical history—his depression, hospitalization, and electro-shock therapy—became a debacle for McGovern due to his handling of the situation, his vacillation between support and eventually dropping Eagleton led to a sense among some movement activists that McGovern was just another opportunist politician. McGovern’s longshot candidacy may have kept young voters from the polls, but the New Left had been saying for years that electoral politics in America

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was broken. According to a survey of Pittsburgh college students conducted on the eve of
the election, while “they unanimously agree that they are in favor of the legislation which
gave them the right to vote, they view the election and their part in it with indifference.”
Students had been hassled by local boards of election when they tried to register to vote,
now they were not overly enthused at their choices, and they expressed a sense that it did
not really matter anyway because their single vote could not stop the machine arrayed
against them. A poll conducted in February 1972 by the Student Government Board at
OU showed “A full 69 per cent of the responding students said they felt [that] ‘American
politics were beyond the influence of the electoral process,’ … Twenty-six per cent felt it
was no longer worthwhile to participate in the electoral process.” One Pitt senior gave
voice to many in his cohort, “McGovern’s programs are groovy and they’re what we
need. But nine of 10 of his promises he’ll never be able to fulfill. He just isn’t a dynamic
enough politician.” In the end, only 48.3 percent of eligible 18-to-20 year-olds voted in
the 1972 election, a percentage only slightly below the national trends for over-21 year-
olds. By 1972, student newspapers were again decrying student apathy as they had in
1964-65, as students became less convinced of their ability to affect change on a national
scale.74

74 “Students Deem Voter’s Registration Difficult,” Daily Athenaeum, September 3, 1971; “Student
Athenaeum, September 21, 1971; “Browning on Student Vote,” Daily Athenaeum, September 22, 1971;
Daily Athenaeum, November 5, 1971; Bruce Estes, “Residency Questioned,” The Post, January 13, 1972;
P.J. Bednarski, “Voter Poll Shows Student Apathy; Only 18 Per Cent Return Survey,” The Post, February
Sexton, “Survey Shows Student Election Apathy,” The Pitt News, November 6, 1972; Anderson, The
Movement and the Sixties, 399-404; Isserman and Kazin, America Divided, 292; Utter, Youth and Political
Participation, 27.
One can see the return of student apathy in how students engaged with the 1972 presidential election. In 1964 and 1968, the campuses of northern Appalachia buzzed with activities surrounding electoral politics. Campuses held mock Republican conventions and mock elections. Students openly, loudly, and regularly debated party platforms and sided with potential presidential candidates. In 1972, little of this happened. One may argue there was no need for the mock conventions or elections since students were now able to participate in the real thing. However, as the editors of *The Post* pointed out in advocating for a mock political convention, the fact that students had earned the franchise possibly made these mock events more important. The editors contended that, “College students are vitally interested in political issues and participation in such an organized activity can only help to channel potential votes into a true political force.” A mock convention could serve as a bell-weather or an unofficial primary, and would potentially draw major political candidates into a region of the country they may not visit otherwise—just as the 1964 and 1968 events had done. However, these arguments failed to sway students and they held no mock political events. In fact, few official election-related events seemed to happen on these campuses.

While the campus papers offered occasional updates on the campaigns of 1972, electoral politics did not dominate news coverage. For the most part, campus papers retreated to covering campus events, including those things the offered limited controversy or, if controversial, focused on the campus community. The national news returned to largely the publishing of wire stories or syndicated columns, as it had been a

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75 See Chapters 4 and 5.

decade earlier. In many ways, the campus papers of 1972 shared more in common with those of 1964 than say 1968 or 1969. Syndicated national columnists replaced student opinions on national events. Editorial became shorter and less pointed, less likely to attack administrations (college or national). The idea of the mid-1960s of a community of engaged student-citizens fed by a strong voice in the campus media was, for all intents and purposes, dead. At the exact moment students received an official voice in American politics, they seemed no longer to want it.

Despite the seeming lack of interest in the election of 1972, students were not completely inactive. Struggles over ROTC, women’s hours, and racial discrimination continued. Students continued to argue the changes so far made, while positive, did not go far enough to integrate the student voice into campus decision-making. However, the war in Vietnam continued to be one of the most important issues that generated student activism.

In May 1972, Athens police arrested over seventy students at OU for an antiwar protest that included a nighttime occupation of Lindley Hall, which housed the campus ROTC, to protest the program’s existence on campus. Nearly one thousand students had participated in an antiwar rally earlier in the evening in Memorial Auditorium on the night of May 9. As the students inside the auditorium debated what to do next, about 250 students moved to Lindley Hall, occupying various floors for several hours. On the second floor, a peaceful sit-in became a teach-in as students discussed whether ROTC had a legitimate place on campus. The second floor students argued as citizens of the university and the nation they had a right to debate the merits of military training at a public university. Police and campus officials ordered students to evacuate the building;
over 170 did while chanting, “All we are saying, is give peace a chance.” In the end, police arrested 77 people and charged them with violations under Ohio’s anti-riot bill, known as HB 1219.\(^77\)

Passed in the aftermath of the Kent State riots in May 1970, HB 1219 gave wide powers to arrest students to administrators and enforced harsh penalties on students arrested for disturbances. The punishments included suspension of students, prior to a conviction in a court of law, and a potential ban on admission into any state-sponsored college or university based on participation in an ambiguously defined “disruptive” demonstration. The act made little distinction between the riotous actions of May 1970 and the peaceful events of May 1972. After months of wrangling, the cases of the “Athens 77” were resolved without resorting to imposing the draconian measures of HB 1219, as students pled guilty to lesser charges not covered by the anti-riot act.\(^78\)

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The events of May 1972 suggest that the fires of student passions had not fully burned out, though it does raise interesting questions about student engagement with the presidential election that year. Since it seems that students were passionate enough to face stiff penalties for protesting the war, the question becomes why were they unwilling to fight as hard for the McGovern campaign. It seems that the low voter participation amongst young people did not emanate from a lack of concern over the issues taken up by the McGovern campaign. Rather, some disconnect existed between the student-citizen impulse to activism and the act of voting. Perhaps this was born from years of lacking the vote or maybe it came from a sense of pessimism and disillusionment about the ability of electoral politics to fulfill the wishes of the citizenry. Although, it appears that many young voters chose not to participate in 1972 in the wake of the Eagleton affair, which painted McGovern as just another politician. Regardless, young people had received the franchise and their first act with it was to withhold their vote.

If anything, the McGovern campaign and the weak youth turnout in the 1972 presidential election demonstrated, there would be no revolution. Young people in northern Appalachia, like their counterparts around the country, supported McGovern,


yet their support was not sufficient to overcome the Nixon landslide. The McGovern candidacy had represented the multi-faceted anti-establishment movement in all its disjointed, convolute, and contradictory glory. However, McGovern’s nomination victory was also the seal of his general election loss, as he represented a minority view that had failed for nearly a decade to gain widespread support within mainstream politics. While some aspects of McGovern’s campaign, such as the antiwar message, had mainstream support, largely the changes he called for were not appealing to most Americans. Nixon was a relatively popular incumbent who seemed to many the best option for ending the war and promoting the domestic well-being. McGovern’s failures, however, were not universal. His very nomination demonstrated how far American politics had moved in a dozen years since the Greensboro sit-ins, especially since McGovern had helped to rewrite the rules for nominating a candidate in the Democratic Party to allow greater voice for those who would be his supporters. The political voice of minorities, students, and women had grown exponentially, and these changes were marked on the campuses of northern Appalachian universities.

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Conclusion:

The Moratorium had been the high-water mark for organized national student protest. However, the Moratorium had not been a call to action as many had hoped it would be, but a sort of cathartic moment of national expression of frustration. The majority of participants appeared happy to take a momentary break from their lives to express their concerns and then resume their daily actions the next day as if they had accomplished something. In the end, the Moratorium failed. It failed to end the war, and it failed to generate an impetus for continued mass protest. The peaceful nature of the day made it stand out as a singular moment, a thing accomplished rather than an on-going process. If it succeeded at all, it did so in as much as it helped empower local organizers; however, with the drift away from mass protest this seems like a minor victory at best.

The immense tragedy of Kent State served as the spark to light the explosive frustrations building on campuses around the nation. The proximity to Kent State and potential for friends and family to be among the victims brought the tragedy home to northern Appalachian campuses in a way it may not have at other schools. However, the shock and terror of the events gave rise to visceral responses—uncoordinated and local, and, at times, violent. Many campuses saw students target ROTC buildings—burning some, or trashing them (as what happened in a limited way at WVU). It seemed the worst fears had come true and the frustrations at the long train of failures and delays turned irrational violence into an acceptable response. If one could simply be killed for peaceful protest, what was the point?
Students throughout northern Appalachia by-and-large rejected revolutionary violence. When SDS imploded in the summer of 1969, local chapters in the region expressly rejected the siren call of the Weathermen. The New Left of northern Appalachia reaffirmed a long held belief in nonviolence, the spasms of violence post-Kent State aside. However, these young people did not completely fade from activism. Some continued to pursue the mass protest model of political expression, but others receded to working to empower their campus and local communities. The centrally of the war in Vietnam had caused some forms of activism to virtually disappear, like much antipoverty activism. However, tutoring programs begun in the early-1960s as part of the optimistic War on Poverty, such as WVU’s Student Action for Appalachian Progress, still operated and continued to view education as a means to combat poverty.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

“THE BEAT GOES ON”:

THE STUDENT-CITIZEN IDENTITY, NORTHERN APPALACHIA, AND THE SIXTIES

Charleston was once the rage, uh huh
History has turned the page, uh huh
The miniskirt’s the current thing, uh huh
Teenbooper is our newborn king, uh huh
And the beat goes on, beat goes on
Drums keep pounding a rhythm to the brain
La de da de de, la de da de da
--“The Beat Goes On,” Sonny & Cher (1967)¹

Well we can’t salute ya
Can’t find a flag
If that don’t suit ya
That’s a drag
School’s out for summer
School’s out forever
School’s been blown to pieces
--“School’s Out,” Alice Cooper (1972)²

In May 1971, one year after closing the University down in the wake of the Kent State tragedy, students at Ohio University held a small antiwar demonstration. Promoters were


² Alice Cooper, Michael Bruce, Glen Buxton, Dennis Dunaway, Neal Smith, “School’s Out,” Alice Cooper, School’s Out, Warner Bros., 1972.
adamant this would be “both a legal and peaceful action.” The plan was to picket the local Athens draft board and to have draft-eligible men go in and ask a constant stream of questions to keep the board so busy they could not process any draft notices or other functions.¹

At 8 a.m. about thirty students began what they hoped would be a daylong peaceful action; however, shortly after 10 a.m. the event changed when the police arrested one of the protesters. Athens Police Captain Charles Cochran took Kim Levitch into custody when Levitch tried to reclaim his Viet Cong flag from Cochran. Levitch had displayed the flag outside the draft board and Cochran confiscated it, eventually arresting Levitch for disorderly conduct when he tried to retrieve the flag from the squad car. Protesters called an emergency meeting on the College Green, to which 150 people came. After some marching around town and back to campus, the protesters dissipated and a rally later that night drew barely 100 people.²

The Levitch incident highlights the burnout of protest-based student activism. The student-protester model of engagement simply failed to excite the levels of participation it had in the previous three or four years. Despite the breathless claims that “constitutional rights … are increasingly becoming constitutional luxuries for even the most peaceful of war protesters,” there appeared to be few on the Athens campus willing to do much about it.³ For years now, students had felt, and in a very real sense were,

¹ Flyer, Untitled, May 17, 1971, CSA, Student Flyers, OU.


³ Flyer, “Protest the Police State,” May 17, 1971, CSA, Levitch, OU.
disenfranchised. The lack of a political voice and the constant frustrations at being ignored had turned many off from the mass rally politics of the previous few years.

By 1972, the campuses of northern Appalachia had seen a great deal of change yet maintained a significant degree of continuity with their 1964 selves. *In loco parentis* as a governing philosophy was all but dead, yet schools continued to exert a degree of control over student morality through codes of conduct often constructed in part or whole by the students themselves. Students gained a degree of access to decision-making processes, mostly in judicial processes and as members of committees, but they never attained a preponderance of administrative powers. Curricula expanded to include a wider array of possible fields of study, but the notion of the free university—of education untethered to career preparation—largely did not take hold. The war was not yet over, the draft was still present though phasing out, ROTC remained, and the university as research center for the military and corporate worlds continued, in these ways one may note the failures of student activism. However, by 1972, students had won something quite significant: the right to vote.

**Student-Citizen Identity & Northern Appalachia:**

Contrary to popular imaginings of Appalachia in the Sixties, there was a great deal of student political and social activism in the mountains. The students at Ohio University, the University of Pittsburgh, and West Virginia University faced the same larger trends as young people around the nation during the Vietnam War era; they were full participants in the debates and upheavals of the period. Supposedly sequestered in the bucolic Appalachian countryside, historians have falsely silenced these students from the
historiographies of the Sixties and of the region. By shifting the focus to northern Appalachia and exploring how these students debated and constructed concepts such as patriotism and citizenship, gaps in existing scholarship can begin to close.

Young people of the Sixties offered new answers to old questions. Far too often, scholars, pundits, and average Americans have accepted the explanatory power of the phrase “generation gap” to illuminate the angst and rebellion of certain components of the Baby Boom Generation. However, upon closer examination, it is not that Boomers and the “Greatest Generation” failed to share common concerns or issues, but rather that the solutions they chose were close but not close enough. While myth constructs an image of the Depression Generation as willingly sacrificing and unquestioningly patriotic, even the most cursory investigation wipes away this veneer of memory. Young people in the 1930s rejected militarism by challenging ROTC on campus and pledging not to take up arms if called to do so by their country. When war broke out, thousands of young people got married and started families as a means of avoiding military service. However, when Boomers echoed these sentiments in the early 1960s, the older generation called them unpatriotic seemingly forgetting their own misgivings about war. The intervening years of the Cold War had helped to construct a patriotic memory of World War II and reconfigured conceptions of American citizenship obligations to the state, thus the Greatest Generation derided and attacked the Boomers’ actions.

Memory and myth do not just obscure the connections between the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boom Generation; they also create false images of Appalachia. For well over a century, Appalachia has existed in the popular and scholarly imagination as a backward region, serving as a foil for arguments of progress and modernity. These
images have lampooned the people of Appalachia as hillbilly and rednecks, while
derisively calling their culture “quaint” and “folksy.” Appalachia exists as a land
forgotten by time, out of step with the modern world. Its quasi-Southern image projects
virulent racism alongside rural poverty, both born from the twin tragedies of ignorance
and want. In these imaginings, all manner of avarice outsiders victimize Appalachia.
Furthermore, these constructions strip the citizens of Appalachia of their agency. These
visions of the region perpetuate an assumption that Appalachia could not be a part of the
Sixties, because Appalachia had not truly entered the modern world. As such, with
Thomas Kiffmeyer’s notable exception scholarship on the Sixties and of the region has
overlooked the role of student political and social activism.4

While undoubtedly poverty, unions, and out-migration from the region were
endemic during these years, they do not tell the whole story of the region and its people.
By exploring student political and social activism during the Vietnam War era,
Appalachia’s supposed isolation from the rest of America melts away. Indeed,
Appalachia did not experience the Sixties the same way as other regions of the country,
but all regions of the country experienced these turbulent years in slightly different ways,
as Kenneth Heineman, Marc Gilbert, Robbie Lieberman, and Andrew Grose have
demonstrated in their various works on Sixties student activism.5 This dissertation has

4 Thomas Kiffmeyer, Reformers to Radicals: The Appalachian Volunteers and the War on Poverty

5 Kenneth J. Heineman, Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the
Vietnam Era (New York: New York University Press, 1992); Marc J. Gilbert, The Vietnam War on
Campus: Other Voice, More Distant Drums (New York: Praeger, 2000); Robbie Lieberman, Prairie
Power: Voices of 1960s Midwestern Protest (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2004); Andrew
Grose, “Voices of Southern Protest during the Vietnam War Era: The University of South Carolina as a
shown that in constructing their own experience of the Sixties, northern Appalachian students found intersections with students around the country. When Dr. King called for people to march in Alabama in 1965, Appalachians answered the call alongside thousands from around the nation. Appalachians joined with hundreds and thousands of other citizens angry at the war in Vietnam and U.S. policies at home and marched on the Pentagon in 1967. Just like millions of their fellow Americans, Appalachians recoiled in fear and sorrow at the 1968 assassinations of King and Robert Kennedy, and they, like some many around the nation, lashed out in terror and frustration after the killing of four of their fellow young people at Kent State in 1970. As young people around the nation joined civil rights organizations, demanded greater say in university decision-making processes, refused the draft, and challenged the federal government’s foreign and domestic policies, so too did they in Appalachia. While Appalachian emphasis on antipoverty activism may have been greater than in some other regions, the impulse to generate empowered communities capable of asserting their rights and improving their circumstances was a largely national impulse among American youth of the Sixties.

By-and-large, the period 1964 to 1972 saw a dramatic outburst of student unrest. However, many misinterpret this spike in activity, misreading large demonstrations as indicators of student activism and wondering why activism faded so rapidly after the events at Kent State University in May 1970. In truth, the marches and rallies were only one part of student expression of discontent and were not designed to be self-sustaining or self-replicating. There were two different tracks of student activism, one in which student observed events and discussed issues in the campus newspapers and a second form of active engagement. Student active engagement with social and political issues
also expressed itself in two ways: one emphasizing community empowerment, and one focused on large displays of frustrations. Historical observers see the differences between the two forms of activism readily when comparing Freedom Summer in 1964 to the Selma march in 1965. Where students from around the nation, including Appalachia, moved to Mississippi in the summer of 1964 to occupy the state and help build empowered black communities, in the spring of 1965 busloads of students traveled to Alabama for a few days to march and demonstrate. The goals of these two actions differed significantly, from empowerment to voicing discontent. These tensions, easily observed in the civil rights movement, existed in all forms of student political and social activism during the Vietnam War era; from campus issues to antipoverty work, from the war to the draft, student activism oscillated between community building and empowerment and boisterous expressions of frustration and concern.

Within a few years of the Selma march, the pendulum had swung most decidedly toward demonstration and away from community organizing. Mass demonstrations became more frequent and widespread. Initially, these demonstrations were localized to national centers—Washington, D.C., New York, or San Francisco—drawing tens of thousands of protesters to a single location for the purposes of a rally, march, or demonstration lasting anywhere from a single day to a long weekend and then the protesters would leave after voicing their frustrations. These events were massed individual acts of protest, each participant there for their own reasons to express their own frustrations or concerns, a reality seen in the diversity of signs and placards as well as actions taken during these events.
The importance of individual acts of protest as spectacle also helps explain the rising tide of draft resistance ceremonies and the rallies held in support of resisters as they actively refused induction or stood trial. These acts of resistance were a form of theater and held power only in as much as they were observed by others, in much the same way that mass rallies and demonstrations only had power if they in some way disrupted the daily routines of others and penetrated into the public space. Draft resistance ceremonies conducted in or around churches, like in Pittsburgh in December 1967 or Morgantown in April 1968, were meant to convey the solemnity of religious conviction as well as the community of faithful that made up the resistance.\(^6\)

The October 1969 Moratorium shifted the emphasis of massed rallies back to the local communities. One of the arguments behind this shift suggested rather than have tens of thousands of people travel to one location for an event there should be hundreds of events around the nation on a single day forcing people around the nation to confront the realities of the war. However, following the October Moratorium the frequency of large rallies, local or national, faded significantly. There was a large demonstration in November that drew several hundred thousand people to cities on the coasts; however, massive, local protests coordinated at a national level did not continue. Thus, it was not the events of Kent State that signaled the end of the student-protester model of engagement, but the Moratorium. The post-Kent State riots and disturbances represented an outburst of pain and frustration, and while activists held a few large demonstrations

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after these events, it seems that prior to May 1970 many activists had chosen to forego these tactics.

Student activism did not end in 1970, rather one form of student expression of unrest faded. Mass rallies and demonstrations failed to affect meaningful change in the war policies of the administrations in Washington. In part, these failures resulted from the tactical decision to use mass rallies and demonstrations that mobilized individuals for a limited period to voice frustrations. The goal of these actions was expression of views and awareness raising, not the resolution of the issues that generated the protest. Successes, like changes to women’s hours and adding courses in black studies, limited though they may have been, came from community building and empowerment that required a deeper, longer, and, at times, harder commitment than simply a few hours on a given day. This form of student activism predated the mass rallies and continued, if subdued, during the rise of the rally years, and reemerged after 1970 as the dominant form of student activism. This locally focused form of activism emphasized affecting positive change through expanding access to the decision-making power within a given community. Activism along these lines required an identity based in the assumption that all citizens have a right to participate in their communities.

In the student case, this was the formation of the student-citizen identity. The process of forming this identity emerged in the early-to-mid 1960s and became the basis for much of the activism of students. Even during the years when mass protests overshadowed community building, the concept of the student-citizen identity was present. Students claimed the right to express their frustrations in massed individual protest because of their status as students and citizens. In a June 1966 opinion editorial,
Pitt student Frank Couvares explained (in the gendered language of the day) the student-citizen position, saying:

The University student is in a unique position. During his college years, he confronts, usually for the first time, the problems of integrity, identity and his obligations as an individual in a social context. His ability to think conceptually is intensely exploited and demanded. His sense of community is stimulated and challenged. As a result he is expected for form opinions, to articulate them, and to defend and advocate them.7

The following year, in a letter to the editor of *The Post*, John T. Nixon explained the link between student activism and the wider society:

The university is, to use an overworked but nonetheless apt idea, an assembly-line in which a student (reduced to a number) is processed through a diploma mill, very seldom even meeting their faculty. … The protest then is lodged with the university, because that is where the student is. But, unfortunately, the protest is much more deeply lodged than that. The protest is actually against the whole of contemporary society. … The university is seen as a microcosm of society, which the student views before he enters it, a culture characterized by impersonality in business, in living arrangements, even in social life—a culture in which nobody dares to be himself, and everybody wears a mask for fear he may be found to be in deviation at some point from conformity.8

Couvares and Nixon both recognize the university as a unique space, a place where the student develops a sense of citizenship duty through confrontation with a similar set of stimuli as the wider society. This unique space allows students to claim simultaneously citizenship in the wider society and that of the university, in both places an active citizen must be willing to engage with the issues of that community. They note that the impulses that drive engaged citizenship in one realm carry over into the other.

The many impulses of activism in the Sixties—antiwar and antipoverty, civil and students’ rights—provided a cross-causal basis for the student-citizen identity. Perhaps

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one of the best examples of this cross-causal student-citizen identity comes from WVU, Harry Shaw. Shaw was a vocal critic of the war in Vietnam, a draft resister in contact with the resistance movement in Pittsburgh, a founding member of the WVU campus chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, as well as an initial organizer of the Student Action Against Poverty (which later rebranded as Student Action for Appalachian Progress), and he traveled to Alabama in 1965 to march following the tragedy at the Edmund Pettis Bridge. With Shaw at the helm, the WVU chapter of SDS circulated anti-discrimination petitions in an effort to desegregate local barbershops; he also led the organization in their first attention getting protest against the Vietnam War when they picketed a student-organized variety show performance that the University falsely promoted as a statement of WVU student support for the war. Shaw argued that his conscience dictated him to act to improve the world around him and not to destroy it, rejecting discrimination, exploitation, and war in equal measure. Simultaneously, Shaw encouraged his fellow students to become active in their campus, local, state, and national communities, to exercise their voice and to change that which they saw as inappropriate in society. In 1967, Shaw described the society he hoped to help foster, “a society built on responsible freedom where the individual has his right to share in the decisions directly affecting his life; a social organ to encourage independence in man.”

embodied the very notion of a student-citizen, the dual identity of a person equally connected to the world of the university and that of the wider community that the obligations and duties of one intimately and unavoidably linked to the other.

By exploring the activism of individuals like Harry Shaw and the students of northern Appalachian universities, one gains a deeper insight into student political and social activism during the Vietnam War era. By 1964, students were becoming increasingly aware of larger social and political issues within and beyond their campuses. The primary focus initially was civil rights and anti-poverty activism, students sought to help build empowered communities capable of exerting their political rights, and in so doing developed techniques and strategies they applied to their own empowerment on campus. These efforts reinforced the growth of a student-citizen identity, one that activists saw as constructed upon students as a disempowered community in need of organizing. By 1967, activism began to orbit the war in Vietnam as the central focus of attention. Students increasingly used mass mobilizations to demonstrate and express their frustrations at the lack of political power and their desires to end the war and discrimination. Increasingly students linked the events of their campuses with larger national struggles. However, beginning in 1969, the emphasis shifted again from the national to the local with the Moratorium and the killings at Kent State, which sent a shockwave through the student community. Though activism did not completely end, the era of the large demonstration, brief though it was, had ended by the early 1970s and

once students had the political voice, long denied them, they found little desire to wield this power in the 1972 presidential election.

From the conflicted campuses of the early-to-mid 1960s as students began to conceptualize themselves as a distinct social group, through the turbulent years at the end of the decade when the world seemed to be falling apart around them, one sees the organization and development of a student-citizen identity. Assuredly, the activist model of student citizenship that dominated throughout the Sixties had begun to fade by 1972, but the idea that students as citizens of the university and citizens of the nation had rights that college and community leaders were obligated to respect did not disappear. The changes that emerged from the Sixties may not have been as radical, revolutionary, or far-reaching as the activists pushing for them had hoped, but they did represent a shift in the relationship between students and the university and the community. *In loco parentis* was nearly dead, students had some new voice in university and political decision-making, the war and the draft ended, and while civil rights and poverty are still works in progress, undeniable advances occurred due to the activism of students during the Sixties, including the students of northern Appalachian universities. Furthermore, exploring how students at these northern Appalachian universities engaged with issues that generally reached beyond their region, the dissertation helps to challenge notions of Appalachian isolation and victimhood, as well as suggests there is a great deal more to the story of Appalachia in the Sixties than poverty, unions, and out-migration.
Conclusion:

The story of student political and social activism in northern Appalachia during the Vietnam War era represents a way to bridge the existing scholarly gaps in the study of Appalachia and of the Sixties. This study established three main goals: (1) to explore the idea of a “student-citizen” identity at work in the Sixties that provided cross-causal unity to student activism, an identity hardly limited to students of Appalachia; (2) to break down false images of Appalachia as purely a victimized region out of step with the rest of the nation during the turbulent years of the 1960s by demonstrating the extent to which students of the region confronted similar questions, concerns, and issues; and, (3) to provide a narrative of events at universities considered apathetic or uninvolved, so that future scholarship can have a base from which to operate, just as scholars of events at Kent State University or the University of California at Berkeley, for example, have existing narratives from which to build. In short, the goal of this study is to add to the conversation, not change it, direct it, dominate it, or usurp it. In this way, inspiration comes from the preeminent Renaissance scholar Paul Oskar Kristeller:

We have the right and duty to communicate our findings and to express our views as best we can. We should not advertise them beyond their merit, or bully our critics, but patiently await the verdict of our successors. We have no power over the future. Our hopes may be deluded, and the fruits of our labor rejected or forgotten. We should like to believe that the past and present will always contribute to the future and be encompassed in it, and also that what is past has a life itself and a potential future. This is a faith which we cannot prove, though it may sustain us. We can only know and do what is given to us, and we must leave the outcome to the natural and human forces that govern the world and that we hope may be guided in the end by a higher law and providence. 10

In an opinion editorial in February 1969, Marc Simon of *The Pitt News* offered a different version of this same idea as Kristeller does, asking his readers to consider whether the concerns they carry with them have any meaning beyond the boundaries of the college campus. In essence, his argument was that one should be wary of confusing the concerns of academic life with the wider issues of the world. He said, “I don’t profess to know what is important to anyone except me, because everyone has their own list of priorities. But I can’t help feeling that the problems we face at school are miniscule in relation to the problems of people who don’t live in the ‘Ivory Towers’ face every day.”

It is this realization, this grounding, that what is debated and discussed within the halls of academia is important, but perhaps not nearly so as the experiences of the lives lived beyond the schoolyard that fuels and sustains the research and the mission of this dissertation. Whether the research presented here has value to others is simply an unknown reality, though the hope is that someone may find in it something that helps them understand their world in a way they had not before.

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