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Setting the Stage: The Turbulent 1960s

The decisions to embrace coeducation at elite private colleges and universities by no means represent the beginning of coeducation in institutions of higher education in the United States and the United Kingdom, and it is important to start here with the earlier history.

Early Experiments with Coeducation

At Oberlin, the first private college in the United States to become coeducational (in 1837), women students took on sex-segregated roles for the college community that mirrored their eventual familial responsibilities, like laundry, sewing, and dishwashing.[1] Coeducation was the norm at the many state universities founded in the mid- to late nineteenth century.[2] But the initial enthusiasm for it at some of the leading universities, like Berkeley, Cornell, and Michigan, waned in the face of experience. Too many women students were enrolling, and they were doing too well academically; the fear was that they might feminize, even overrun, their universities. In response, the institutions separated men and women in

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1 Ronald W. Hogeland, "Coeducation of the Sexes at Oberlin College: A Study of Social Ideas in Mid–Nineteenth Century America," *Journal of Social History* 6 (1972–73): 160–76.

2 Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, vol. 2 (Science Press, 1929; reprint New York: Octagon Books, 1966), ch. 5. The outliers were Louisiana and Georgia, which went coed in the 1900s and 1910s, respectively; North Carolina and Florida, in the 1940s; and Virginia, the last of the state universities to enroll women, in 1970.

many spheres of campus life, a separation finally reversed only in the 1960s.[3]

There was also an impulse for separation at private universities. In the 1930s, Duke and the University of Pennsylvania established women's colleges that persisted as separate entities until the 1970s. Although small numbers of women had been enrolled earlier at Duke, the women's college was founded in 1930 as a coordinate college occupying a geographically distinct campus. Initially, classes for freshmen and sophomores were segregated by sex, a practice that ended by the 1960s. In 1972 the university merged the men's and women's colleges.[4] At the University of Pennsylvania, the college of liberal arts for women was founded in 1933, when the university first offered a four-year liberal arts degree program to women. In 1954 Penn opened the undergraduate programs of the school of engineering and applied science and the Wharton school to women, the last programs at the university to exclude them. In 1975 the college of liberal arts for women merged with the college of arts and sciences for men.[5]

At Chicago, founded as a coeducational university in 1892, the impulse for separation resulted from the success of the first cohorts of women students. In 1892 women comprised 24 percent of the enrollment in the college. By 1900 that number had increased to 52 percent, and in the decade 1892–1902 women accounted for more than 56 percent of elections to Phi Beta Kappa. President William Rainey Harper feared that being identified as a predominantly female institution would alienate the benefactors on whom the new university depended. His solution was

3 Charlotte Williams Conable, *Women at Cornell: The Myth of Equal Education* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977); Ruth Bordin, *Women at Michigan: The "Dangerous Experiment," 1870s to the Present* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Lynn D. Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 52–84.

4 "Historical Note," *Guide to the Woman's College Records, 1928–1974*, Duke University Libraries, http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/uawomans/#historicalnote, accessed July 14, 2014.

5 Mark Frazier Lloyd, "Women at Penn: Timeline of Pioneers and Achievements," updated 2004, University Archives and Records Center, University of Pennsylvania, http://www.archives.upenn.edu/histy/features/women/chrontext.html, accessed July 14, 2014.

to introduce sex-segregated instruction in required introductory courses in the university's junior college for freshmen and sophomores. Despite protests from college alumnae, educators elsewhere, and representatives of national women's organizations, the policy went into effect in the winter of 1903. But the planned separation was only partially effective, affecting just half of the students in the junior college by 1906–7. After that, the scheme disappeared. Harper died in 1906, and his successor, Harry Pratt Judson, had a mandate from the trustees to bring the budget under control. Separate instruction had been extremely expensive, with duplication of faculty effort and increased instructional costs. The sex-segregation plan may have been abandoned in the interest of saving money.[6]

Typically, decisions to limit opportunities for women students were made by men. Stanford was different. The university was established by Leland Stanford, a railroad magnate, U.S. senator, and former California governor, and his wife, Jane, as a memorial to their son, Leland Stanford, Jr., who died of typhoid fever in 1884 at the age of fifteen. The founding grant from the Stanfords, dating to 1885, specified that the university, which opened in 1891, would be coeducational, with "equal facilities" and "equal advantages" for both sexes. Initially, women accounted for 25 percent of the students, but that number grew quickly, reaching 40 percent by 1899. Jane Stanford feared that women would overrun the university, making it less attractive to male students and no longer a fitting memorial to her son. In 1899, after Leland Stanford's death, Jane Stanford added to the founding grant the legal requirement that "the number of women attending the University as students shall at no time ever exceed five hundred." The cap on women remained in effect until 1933, when enrollments were low because of the Great Depression. The Stanford trustees then reinterpreted

6 Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*, pp. 85–120; Janel M. Mueller, "Coeducation at Chicago—Whose Aims?," Sept. 26, 1994, in *The Aims of Education: The College of the University of Chicago* (University of Chicago, 1997), pp. 120, 123–24, 126; e-mail, John W. Boyer to Nancy Weiss Malkiel, Nov. 13, 2014. I am indebted to Dean Boyer for pointing me to the Mueller essay.

the quota to mean an undergraduate male-female ratio of 3 to 2, which remained in place until 1973.[7]

The most extreme reaction came at Wesleyan, founded in 1831, which had embarked on coeducation as an experiment beginning in 1872. With too many women enrolling and women succeeding too well in their academic work, male graduates feared that the college's masculine image was threatened. Worried, too, that women graduates would not be generous donors, the trustees decided in 1909 to make Wesleyan a college for men beginning in 1912. Wesleyan alumnae responded by spearheading the effort that led to the founding of Connecticut College for Women in 1911. Wesleyan resumed coeducation in 1970.[8]

Just as coeducation was instituted over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries at many public and private institutions in the United States, the same was true in Canada. Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, admitted women in 1880; McGill University in Montreal and the University of Toronto followed suit in 1884. Women were enrolled at the University of British Columbia from its earliest years on its new campus in Vancouver, which opened in 1915.[9] And in the United Kingdom, by the mid-twentieth century, coeducation was the established mode at virtually every institution except Cambridge and Oxford.

7 Professor of History Estelle Freedman, "Women and Education," lecture notes, Stanford University, transmitted in an e-mail, Freedman to Nancy Weiss Malkiel, May 29, 2013; *Stanford University: The Founding Grant with Amendments, Legislation, and Court Decrees* (Stanford University, 1987), http://sul-derivatives.stanford.edu/derivative?CSNID= 00003895&mediaType=application/pdf, accessed July 14, 2014; "Jane Stanford: Timeline," *Jane L. Stanford: The Woman Behind Stanford*, Stanford University, http://janestanford .stanford.edu/timeline.html#c3, accessed July 14, 2014; "Court Action Begun to End the 'Ratio,'" *Stanford Observer*, Oct. 1972, clipping in Brewster II, Box 258, Folder 1.

8 David B. Potts, *Wesleyan University, 1831–1910: Collegiate Enterprise in New England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), chs. 4, 6.

9 Sara Z. Burke, "New Women and Old Romans: Co-education at the University of Toronto, 1884–95," *Canadian Historical Review* 80 (June 1999): 219–41; Sarah Battat, "The Advent of Coeducation at McGill University," paper written for Freshman Seminar 149, Jan. 14, 2014, Princeton University, in the possession of Nancy Weiss Malkiel. For some of the principal published sources on coeducation in Canada, see Lynne Marks and Chad Gaffield, "Women at Queen's University, 1895–1905: A 'Little Sphere' All Their Own?," *Ontario History* 78 (Dec. 1986): 331–49; Anne Rochon Ford, *A Path Not Strewn with Roses: One Hundred Years of Women at the University of Toronto, 1884–1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Lee Stewart, *"It's Up to You": Women at UBC in the Early Years* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1990).

But at the most elite, most prestigious private colleges and universities on both sides of the Atlantic, the norm was single-sex education. Understanding why those institutions embraced coeducation is the focus of this book. Before we turn to the individual college and university experiences, however, we need to understand the political and social changes in the 1960s that created the context for such important institutional transformation.

A Context for Change: Political and Social Movements

In politics and society, the world of 1960 was profoundly different from the world of 1970 in both the United States and the United Kingdom. By 1970, transformative social and political movements had challenged and reshaped the basic processes that had governed political discourse and mechanisms for effecting social change. The civil rights movement, the student movement, the antiwar movement, and the women's movement set an important context for the flood of decisions for coeducation.

THE CIVIL RIGHTS AND STUDENT MOVEMENTS

In the face of deeply entrenched racial segregation and discrimination against black Americans, the civil rights movement in the United States focused both on changing the law to guarantee the same rights to all citizens and on the mobilization of civil disobedience to ensure that the new laws were enforced. After decades of suits by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and others, the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed segregation in the public schools in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954. Staunch white southern resistance to the court's decision led to nonviolent direct-action protests throughout the South to secure equal access for black Americans to public accommodations, employment, education, and voting rights. Bus boycotts, sit-ins, and Freedom Rides challenged the established order in local communities; massive nonviolent demonstrations in the southern cities of Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma met with extreme violence on the part of whites, including local authorities.

Responding to violence perpetrated on nonviolent protesters seeking their fundamental rights, Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson pressed the U.S. Congress to pass civil rights bills of major consequence. Thanks to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the law of the land now protected black voting rights and promised black Americans equal access to employment and to places of public accommodation. Under the sustained pressure of nonviolent direct action, white Americans in communities across the South began slowly to change longstanding practices of segregation and discrimination.[10]

College students, male and female, black and white, northern and southern, participated actively in the direct-action movement, an experience that profoundly affected their views about one another, about their universities, and about the society in which they lived. The engine for the student movement of the 1960s was the "New Left" organization Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), founded in 1960 in New York in association with the socialist League for Industrial Democracy. Striking out on its own, SDS held a national convention in the summer of 1962 at Port Huron, Michigan. The Port Huron Statement, a manifesto drafted by Tom Hayden, former editor of the University of Michigan *Daily*, offered an "agenda for a generation" of student activists "looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit." American society was replete with "complicated and disturbing paradoxes": racial inequality, poverty amidst plenty, the role of U.S. economic and military investments in perpetuating the Cold War, the threat of nuclear destruction, the "sapping of the earth's physical resources," and the many "isms" that imperiled the world order, such as colonialism,

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10 On the civil rights movement, see, e.g., Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality, 1954–1980* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981); Robert Weisbrot, *Freedom Bound: A History of America's Civil Rights Movement* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990); Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988); Branch, *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998); Branch, *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006); Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981); August Meier and Elliott Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942–1968* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

imperialism, and totalitarianism. SDS was committed to "the search for truly democratic alternatives" and to "social experimentation with them."

The universities were implicated in the paradoxes and stasis of the old order: "Our professors and administrators sacrifice controversy to public relations; their curriculums change more slowly than the living events of the world; their skills and silence are purchased by investors in the arms race; passion is called unscholastic." In the main, the college campus was "a place of private people . . . a place of commitment to business-as-usual, getting ahead, playing it cool . . . a place of . . . mass reluctance toward the controversial public stance," a place characterized by pointless rules, intransigent bureaucracy, and irrelevant scholarship. Students were passive and disengaged from the public issues of the day; there were no big goals, no moral commitments of consequence, no engagement in the key challenges of the times.[11] Hayden's solution: "participatory democracy" whereby students would take control of their own lives in the academic communities in which they lived and, together with faculty members, "wrest control of the educational process from the administrative bureaucracy." Students could then act as agents of more comprehensive change by joining in a broad-based, transformative movement to reconstruct American democracy.[12]

SDS made its first big splash in the biggest of all university contexts: the 27,000-student University of California at Berkeley. Clark Kerr, the president of the University of California (UC) system and a former chancellor of Berkeley, identified the seedbed for protest at Berkeley as the changing relationship between faculty and students. Senior faculty members, increasingly engaged in research, were less attentive to and engaged with undergraduates than had been the case historically and thus were no longer well placed to play interpretive, mediating roles between students and the university.

11 Students for a Democratic Society, "The Port Huron Statement," in Ronald Lora, ed., *America in the 60's: Cultural Authorities in Transition* (New York: John Wiley, 1974), pp. 259–70.

12 Hayden, quoted in Allen J. Matusow, *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 313.

If the retreat of the research-driven faculty from undergraduate life laid the groundwork, the flashpoint for the emergence of protest was the move to restrict student political activity on the twenty-six-foot strip of brick sidewalk outside the university's main gate on Bancroft Way at the intersection of Telegraph Avenue, where student organizations displayed their literature, recruited supporters, and solicited funds. In the face of increasingly aggressive student political activity in the fall of 1964, the university announced that it was closing the Bancroft–Telegraph strip to groups engaged in activities involving off-campus issues, a policy then modified so that students could set up their tables but could not engage in any fund-raising, recruitment, or advocacy.

Students quickly began flouting the new regulation, and on September 30, five students were called to the dean's office for disciplinary action. One of them, a graduate student in philosophy named Mario Savio, brought along a group of five hundred students who claimed that they had all broken the rules by staffing unauthorized tables and should be subject to punishment. The group occupied the administration building, Sproul Hall, through the night. At midnight the chancellor of the Berkeley campus, Edward Strong, announced that the five original students, plus three others who had led the march on Sproul Hall, were being suspended. On October 1, a former graduate student in mathematics, Jack Weinberg, was arrested for soliciting funds for the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) at a table on the sidewalk. A large group of students immobilized the police car that had come to take Weinberg away. A legacy of the event was Weinberg's exclamation "Don't trust anyone over thirty"—a statement quickly adopted as the shorthand slogan of the student movement.

The next day, speaking for the UC system, Kerr declared, "The rules will not be changed in the face of mob action." A thousand police officers came to the campus, but after a day of tense negotiations a compromise was reached to avert violent confrontation. The next two months saw a political struggle between the students—now represented by a radical faction organized as the Free Speech Movement (FSM)—and the university, with campus authorities, the president of the university system, and the university regents divided over

which regulations should be enforced and how discipline should be meted out. After weeks of negotiations over disciplinary action for the eight suspended students, the university decided to reinstate the students, with the suspensions noted on their records. Savio and three other students were ordered to appear before the regents to answer charges that they had committed acts of violence against the police during the demonstrations in October.

On December 2, six thousand people assembled for a rally outside Sproul Hall. Savio declared, "There's a time when the operation of the [university] machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart, that you can't take part, you can't even tacitly take part. And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears, and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus, and you've got to make it stop." More than a thousand people then entered the building. During the night, Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown sent in a huge force of police in full riot gear to clear the building. In the end, some eight hundred people were arrested, about six hundred of them students. A student strike followed, interrupting classes and other university functions. The faculty rallied to back the students, voting 824 to 115 on December 8 to support the demands of the FSM. Going forward, there would be no restrictions on political activity on campus beyond those that applied in the community at large.[13]

Inspired by the events at Berkeley, student protests erupted at campuses around the country, beginning in the spring of 1965 and continuing through the decade. Students challenged the university's right to stand in loco parentis, and they pushed successfully

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13 Godfrey Hodgson, *America in Our Time* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), pp. 288–96; Irwin Unger, *The Movement: A History of the American New Left, 1959–1972* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1974), pp. 62–75 (the Weinberg and Savio quotes are in Unger); Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, pp. 316–18; Verne A. Stadtman, *The University of California, 1868–1968* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1970), pp. 443–67. The Kerr quote is in Clark Kerr, "Toward a Nationwide System of Higher Education?," 47th Annual Meeting, American Council on Education, Oct. 2, [1964,] ark.cdlib.org/ark:/13030/kt258001wp, accessed Mar. 23, 2016. A discussion of Kerr's mistakes in handling the crisis is in William G. Bowen and Eugene M. Tobin, *Locus of Authority: The Evolution of Faculty Roles in the Governance of Higher Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp. 231–33, and Clark Kerr, *The Gold and the Blue: A Personal Memoir of the University of California, 1949–1967*, vol. 2: *Political Turmoil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), passim.

for the liberalization or elimination of such restrictions as parietals (regulations concerning visitation by the opposite sex in dormitory rooms) and for a stronger hand in governing their own residential and social lives. They challenged the rigid, faculty-imposed structure of academic life, and they pushed successfully for curricular reforms: the abolition or liberalization of requirements, the elimination of what they considered to be irrelevant courses, the institution of pass-fail grading and self-scheduled examinations. Their protests resulted in the creation of new institutions of academic governance with greater student representation.

Student protests also went beyond day-to-day campus matters, with protesters often decrying universities as morally repugnant, integral parts of the establishment, noting universities' ties to the military-industrial complex and accusing them of actively perpetuating racism and imperialism. Student protesters pointed to recruitment on campus by the military, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and the Dow Chemical Company; university sponsorship of Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs; and some of the research done by faculty members—research related to national defense and intelligence operations, research in biological warfare, and research under the covert sponsorship of the CIA. They objected to university investments in companies doing business in South Africa and to the encroachment of some urban universities on neighboring black communities. They argued for intensive recruitment of minority students, a diminution of the military presence on campus, and social responsibility with regard to investment policies and urban universities' surrounding communities.

Although the majority of students involved in the protests were peaceful, other students occupied campus buildings, terrorizing teachers and other students, vandalizing public and private property, burning books, defacing buildings, and committing acts of violence. Students had moved well beyond accepted channels for seeking social and institutional change.[14]

14 William E. Leuchtenburg, *A Troubled Feast: American Society Since 1945* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973; updated ed., 1983), p. 231; Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c. 1958–c. 1974* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 665.

THE ANTIWAR MOVEMENT

The third major movement of the 1960s, the antiwar movement, was intimately intertwined with the student movement. A large part of the impetus for the student movement came from the war in Vietnam. Many students were deeply disturbed by American involvement in a war in which it was difficult to discern a clear national interest, a war in which their contemporaries—indeed, their friends and classmates—were being drafted and killed, a war in which repeated American bombing was killing untold numbers of noncombatants and destroying so much of the countryside in Vietnam and later in Cambodia.

Campus opposition to the war was first expressed in faculty teach-ins, starting at the University of Michigan in March 1965 and spreading to colleges and universities across the country. Every time President Johnson escalated American engagement, campuses erupted in response. Revelations of episodes of horrific fighting, like the Tet offensive against American and South Vietnamese troops conducted by the Vietcong in January and February 1968, or of atrocities committed by the United States, like the My Lai massacre of unarmed civilians in South Vietnam in March, stoked the anger of students and faculty. Students joined faculty members to stage antiwar protests on campus; beginning in the spring of 1965 and continuing through the decade, they also took part in massive demonstrations in Washington, D.C., New York, and San Francisco.[15]

Unlike their elders, most male students were subject to the draft for service in a war that many of them deplored. Students personalized their protests, burning their draft cards, fleeing across the border to Canada to avoid military service (or, in some cases, refusing induction and going to jail), and chanting, at public demonstrations in Washington and elsewhere, "One, Two, Three, Four, We Don't Want to Go to War."[16]

15 Matusow, *The Unraveling of America*, pp. 318–30.
16 Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987), pp. 247–55, 291–94.

Following the "Cambodian incursion," or invasion, announced by President Richard M. Nixon on April 30, 1970, and the fatal shooting of four student antiwar protesters at Kent State University on May 4 by Ohio national guardsmen, campuses around the country exploded in protest, with student strikes at hundreds of colleges and universities. Other schools, though not formally on strike, ended the academic year abruptly, with final examinations postponed or cancelled. Ten days after Kent State, two black students were killed at Jackson State University in Mississippi under circumstances similar to those at Kent State.[17]

The violence in Cambodia and at Kent State and Jackson State significantly widened support for the antiwar movement, and moderate and even conservative students joined in the outrage of their more liberal peers. The events were deeply disturbing in their own right, but they were compounded by the words of President Nixon, who publicly derided student protesters "blowing up the campuses" as "bums."[18]

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The fourth movement of the 1960s that influenced the coming of coeducation to elite colleges and universities was the women's movement, a movement closely related to and yet different in important ways from the civil rights movement. By 1960 it had been four decades since women had established what they perceived to be an adequate legal basis for equality: the right to vote. But suffrage had left a great many issues unsettled, and a number of factors made the 1960s a propitious time to take them on.

Giving women the right to vote did not affect the range of sex discrimination that was built into the fabric of American society. It did not give women equal employment opportunities; it did not require equal pay for equal work. Adjusting for education,

17 Jonathan Schell, *The Time of Illusion* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976), pp. 90–102; Leuchtenburg, *A Troubled Feast*, pp. 244–46; Unger, *The Movement*, pp. 185–88; John Morton Blum, *Years of Discord: American Politics and Society, 1961–1974* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), pp. 367–70.

18 Nixon is quoted in Schell, *The Time of Illusion*, p. 97.

experience, skills, and field, women in 1960 were earning 61 per-
cent of men's wages (a drop of 3 percent since 1955), though the
situation improved slightly by 1970, when women earned 70 per-
cent of male wages. Moreover, no matter what the industry, there
was a ceiling on how far women could go.[19] The vote did not give
women the same educational opportunities as men, especially in
graduate and professional schools. It did not give women agency
to make their own decisions: It did not give them access to credit in
their own name. It did not entitle them to terminate an unwanted
pregnancy. It did not affect cultural and personal expectations
about women's subordinate role: that it was women's responsibil-
ity to maintain the home and raise the children; that the husband's
needs and wishes should take precedence over his wife's; that biol-
ogy and nature made women suited to supportive, nurturing roles.

The broad source of the women's movement lay in the discrep-
ancy between the socially prescribed ideal of woman as homemaker
and helpmate and the more complicated reality of woman's role
as wife, mother, college graduate, and member of the labor force.
Education made it hard to accept the 1950s version of the cult of
domesticity. America told women that home and family were the
sources of all happiness. Yet for the woman who had so recently
studied Proust or Kant, it was hard to find fulfillment in a subur-
ban carpool and an all-electric kitchen. Employment patterns, too,
contradicted the cultural ideal as more women entered the work-
force. The gap between the male sphere and the female sphere was
narrowing. Adolescent girls, growing up with the role model of a
working mother, changed their expectations accordingly.

And the media began to pay attention, reporting on the "trapped
housewife." Articles in the mass media of the 1950s had rhap-
sodized about women as superwomen—*Life*, for example, had

19 Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed
America* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2000), p. 26; Burton G. Malkiel and Judith A. Malkiel,
"Male-Female Pay Differentials in Professional Employment," *American Economic Review*
63 (Sept. 1973): 693–705; Ronald L. Oaxaca, "Male-Female Wage Differentials in Urban
Labor Markets," *International Economic Review* 14 (Oct. 1973): 693–709; Ronald Oaxaca,
"Sex Discrimination in Wages," in Orley Ashenfelter and Albert Rees, eds., *Discrimination
in Labor Markets* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973), pp. 124–51.

described an exemplary housewife as "Home Manager, Mother, Hostess, and Useful Civic Worker." Now the media focused, in the words of one *Newsweek* cover story, on "Young Wives with Brains: Babies, Yes—But What Else?"[20] The typical American woman, the media reported, was bored, restless, isolated, overeducated, and underemployed.

Federal and state commissions on the status of women began to document the problems inherent in women's position in American society—and, in so doing, provided "a platform from which inequities could be publicized and the need for women's rights put forth."[21] The commission reports were candid in their descriptions but moderate in tone. Less moderate was the book that came to serve as the manifesto for the new women's movement. In *The Feminine Mystique*, published in 1963, Betty Friedan laid out a brilliant, biting portrait of the "problem that has no name," indicting the American home as a "comfortable concentration camp" and describing the woman in it as a bored, restless, unhappy prisoner of domesticity.[22] Here was an emerging basis for a public questioning of women's roles.

The women's movement of the 1960s took shape on two related but distinct levels. One level sought equality for women in the public sphere through equal access to jobs, equal pay for equal work, and legal prohibitions against discrimination on the basis of sex. This part of the movement was conceived and led primarily by professional women who had worked with the governmental commissions on the status of women. Its principal vehicle, the National Organization of Women (NOW), was founded in 1966 "to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society *now*, exercising all the privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men." There were other organizations as well, the Women's Equity Action League (WEAL) and the National Women's Political Caucus among them, all designed to end

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20 Sara Evans, *Personal Politics: The Roots of Women's Liberation in the Civil Rights Movement and the New Left* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), pp. 5, 16.

21 Ibid., p. 17.

22 Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963).

sex discrimination in employment and education and to promote the equal participation of women in the nation's public life.[23]

The civil rights movement gave feminism an ideology that asserted the importance of equality and human rights. NOW and WEAL were modeled on the NAACP, and they learned about legal activism and lobbying from the NAACP's example. The "rights" level of the new women's movement piggybacked on the civil rights movement in other ways as well. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave women an additional legal basis for equality. Title VII of that act prohibited employment discrimination on the basis of sex as well as race. Introduced as an amendment to the civil rights bill by Howard W. Smith (the powerful Virginia Democrat who chaired the House Rules Committee) to demonstrate the folly of the proposed legislation, Title VII provided women with a powerful legal weapon to take on discrimination in hiring and promotion.[24] The civil rights movement also provided the women's movement with the conceptual basis for an attack on sex discrimination; the precedents in civil rights demonstrated that a legal remedy was available for discrimination on the basis of sex.

The second level of the women's movement focused on the status of women in the private realm. Why were women treated as sex objects? Why was it assumed that women would change the diapers and clean the house? Why were men the spokespeople and leaders, women the typists and cooks? Why assume that the female nature was particularly suited to domesticity and motherhood? Such questions struck at societal expectations about women's roles in a more fundamental way than did the push for equality in the public sphere. It was one thing to say that women should have equal access to employment opportunities; it was much more threatening to social norms to claim that carpools and baby-tending were the responsibility of the husband as well as the wife. The implication was clear: Gender no longer determined automatic social roles.

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23 Evans, *Personal Politics*, pp. 16–21; Christine Stansell, *The Feminist Promise: 1792 to the Present* (New York: Modern Library, 2010), pp. 204–16; Gloria Steinem, "After Black Power, Women's Liberation," *New York Magazine*, Apr. 4, 1969, http://nymag.com /news/politics/46802/, accessed Apr. 3, 2013 (source of the quote).
24 Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, pp. 207–8.

The questioning of women's inequality in the private sphere came about in large part on the initiative of young women who were vitally involved in the civil rights and student movements of the 1960s. Simply by getting involved—going south, joining civil rights demonstrations, living in and organizing black communities, picketing and occupying buildings at colleges and universities, exposing themselves to physical danger—these young women had broken with established cultural norms. At war with their own culture on so many counts, they were ripe to question assumptions about sex roles as well. Their experiences showed them that women could and did do many things dramatically different from playing conventional social roles. But even in the civil rights and student movements, women were usually consigned to traditional female roles—typing, cooking, housekeeping, providing sexual companionship. How could supposedly egalitarian movements replicate such unequal sex roles? When women in the radical civil rights organization the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), angry at being excluded from decision-making and leadership positions and angry at assumptions of male superiority, raised the issue at a SNCC conference in 1964, it was treated as a joke.[25]

If SNCC seemed increasingly inhospitable to women, SDS was even more strongly dominated by males. Here again, women ran up against galling contradictions. Vitally involved in the grueling work of community organizing among the poor in northern cities, women were nevertheless excluded from the inner circle of SDS, exploited sexually by their male colleagues, and expected to handle housekeeping chores. After 1965, when SDS turned its attention to the war, women's auxiliary status in the movement was even more forcibly underscored. For men, resisting the draft meant a personal risk of going to jail. Women could only offer support.[26]

Steeped in the egalitarianism of movements against the oppression of blacks and poor people, trained in organizing and collective action, and pushed out of important roles in SNCC and SDS, a number of young women activists began to exchange views on

25 Rosen, *The World Split Open*, pp. 96–110; Evans, *Personal Politics*, pp. 57, 60–82.
26 Rosen, *The World Split Open*, pp. 115–24.

female oppression. They took on questions that Betty Friedan and
NOW had not confronted: How do women differ from men? Are
those differences biologically or culturally determined? Why de-
value the feminine but exalt the masculine? Attempting to raise the
issue of female oppression at the New Left's National Conference
for New Politics in 1967, women delegates, including Shulamith
Firestone, co-founder of radical feminist groups such as Redstock-
ings, were patronized and ridiculed. "Move on, little girl," said the
conference chair, patting Firestone on the head. "We have more
important issues to talk about here than women's liberation."[27]

Now women activists were ready to break with the movements
in which they had been trained and to concentrate exclusively on
women's issues. In 1967 they launched the women's liberation
movement. Within a year, the movement had spread like wildfire
across the country. It made its public debut with a flamboyant
display of guerrilla theater at the Miss America pageant in Atlantic
City in August 1968. Young women activists "crowned a live sheep
to symbolize the beauty pageant's objectification of female bodies,
and filled a 'freedom trashcan' with objects of female torture—
girdles, bras, curlers, issues of *Ladies' Home Journal*." A woman
"auctioned off an effigy of Miss America: 'Gentlemen, I offer you
the 1969 model. She walks. She talks. She smiles on cue. *And* she
does housework.'"[28]

In February 1969, women's liberation groups disrupted bridal
fairs in San Francisco and New York. In New York, members
of the Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell
(WITCH) sang, in a take-off on "Here Comes the Bride," "Here
Comes the Slave, Off to Her Grave."[29] Female activists forced
their way into male bars and clubs; they sat in at *Newsweek* and
Ladies' Home Journal; they stormed meetings of professional as-
sociations to demand equal employment opportunities.[30] Media

27 Quoted in ibid., p. 129.
28 Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 214.
29 Rosen, *The World Split Open*, p. 205.
30 William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Po-
litical Roles, 1920–1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 226–27; Stansell,
The Feminist Promise, pp. 239, 243; Rosen, *The World Split Open*, p. 207.

coverage, derogatory as it often was, "provoked a massive influx of new members into all branches of the feminist movement."[31]

Still to come were the signal public victories of the women's movement: the passage by the U.S. Congress in 1972 of the Equal Rights Amendment (which nevertheless later failed to win ratification in a sufficient number of states for it to become law) and the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roe v. Wade* that a woman's right to privacy under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment made abortion in the first three months of pregnancy a medical matter to be decided by a woman and her doctor.[32] As well, Title IX, part of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, prohibited discrimination on the basis of sex in federally funded educational programs and activities, enlarging opportunities for women students in coeducational institutions.[33]

The confluence of the public-sphere women's rights movement and the private-sphere movement for women's liberation provided the context in which elite colleges and universities began to consider the possibility of educating young women alongside young men. Like men, women were profoundly influenced by the major social disruptions of the 1960s: the assassinations of President John F. Kennedy, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and civil rights icon Martin Luther King, Jr.; the wave of race riots that swept American cities; the antiwar demonstrations; the often violent protests on college campuses, with their deeply unsettling effects on personal property and perceptions of physical safety. Sharing these searing experiences made it increasingly difficult to imagine pursuing separate, sheltered college educations.

Moreover, the introduction of birth control pills in the United States in 1960 enabled a sexual revolution wherein young women could have sex with young men without risking pregnancy. Separating sex from fear of pregnancy resulted in a vast change in female expectations and behavior. Women could now experiment

31 Evans, *Personal Politics*, p. 214.
32 Ibid., p. 217.
33 Overview of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, https://www.justice.gov/crt/overview-title-ix-education-amendments-1972-20-usc-1681-et-seq, accessed Dec. 22, 2015.

with their sexuality in ways that had not been possible before; sex
could now be for them, as it had always been for men, a source of
fun, a source of pleasure. By transforming the possibilities for sex-
ual activity, the pill also paved the way for new social arrangements
that brought male and female students into regular, easy contact.
Going to college together was part and parcel of these changes.

Moving toward Coeducation: The Slow Evolution of Sex Roles

Even to imagine coeducation required a dramatic shift in the way
men at elite colleges and universities thought about and interacted
with women. In their attitudes toward women, college men of the
early 1960s were very much like their older brothers of the 1950s.
In 1955 *Time* magazine commissioned interviews with graduat-
ing seniors at twenty colleges and universities, asking them what
they expected their lives to be like fifteen years hence. The sociol-
ogist David Riesman, who examined the transcripts, reported on
some of the most striking findings. Witness what three seniors in
the class of 1955 said about their future wives: "She shouldn't be
submissive," a Harvard man said. "She can be independent on lit-
tle things, but the big decisions will have to go my way . . . the
marriage must be the most important thing that ever happened to
her." A Princeton student said that his wife would be "vivacious
and easy with people. And she will belong to everything in sight
too—especially the League of Women Voters." Another Princeton
student said that his wife would be "the Grace Kelly, camel's-hair-
coat type. Feet on the ground, and not an empty shell or a fake. Al-
though an Ivy League type, she will also be centered in the home,
a housewife. Perhaps at forty-five, with the children grown up, she
will go in for hospital work and so on. . . . And improving her-
self culturally and thus bringing a deeper sense of culture into our
home will be one of her main interests."[34]

The views of male college students in the 1950s were consis-
tent with their elders' perceptions of women's roles. Publicists and

34 Quoted in David Riesman, "The Found Generation," *American Scholar* 25 (Autumn
1956): 430–32. The description of the interviews is on pp. 422–23.

educators alike celebrated women as homemakers and helpmates. The muckraking critic Agnes Meyer in 1950 called women "the cement of society," with motherhood their only proper vocation.[35] In his commencement address at Smith College in 1955, Illinois governor and unsuccessful Democratic presidential candidate Adlai E. Stevenson told the graduating seniors that he could "wish [them] no better vocations than [motherhood and marriage]." By raising good western children, these young women would help to defend American society against totalitarianism and authoritarianism. Through their role as "wives and mothers," they would "influence [man and boy] and [thereby] play a direct part in the unfolding drama of our free society."[36] Writing in *Saturday Review* in 1958, the anthropologist Ashley Montagu reinforced Stevenson's point: "Being a good wife, a good mother, in short a good homemaker is the most important of all the occupations in the world."[37] Editors of *Mademoiselle*, analyzing hundreds of questionnaires, concluded that young women shared their elders' views; they "wanted to be well-rounded rather than to excel, viewed the family as 'the ultimate measure of success,' and looked forward to relaxed, uneventful marriages 'of thoroughly barbecued bliss.'"[38]

Male presidents of women's colleges joined the chorus. The president of Mills College, Lynn Townsend White, Jr., said that women's colleges should "shake off their subservience to masculine values" and create a "distinctively feminine curriculum," including ceramics, textiles, weaving, leatherwork, and flower arranging, that reflected rather than denied the differences between the sexes. James Madison Wood, the president of Stephens College, touting the college's programs in home economics, child development, and interior decorating, said, "If [homemaking] roles are to be played with distinction, the college years must be rehearsal periods for the major performance."[39]

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35 Quoted in Chafe, *The American Woman*, p. 206.
36 Quoted in Thealexa Becker, "The Journey from Housewife to Having It All: A History of Smith College Commencement Speeches," Jan. 28, 2011, pp. 13–15, Smith College Archives.
37 Quoted in Chafe, *The American Woman*, pp. 206–7.
38 Leuchtenburg, *A Troubled Feast*, p. 74.
39 Quoted in Chafe, *The American Woman*, pp. 207–8.

Female presidents of women's colleges sounded similar themes. The president of Sweet Briar College, Anne Parnell, declared that "the task of creating a good home and raising good children" should be "raised to the dignity of a profession and made the primary purpose of women's colleges."[40] Hanna Holborn Gray (later provost and acting president of Yale and president of the University of Chicago), a member of the class of 1950 at Bryn Mawr, remembered a talk there by the president of Wellesley, Mildred McAfee Horton, about "how the graduates of women's colleges would make better mothers, helping educate their children at a higher level, imbuing them with respect for civilized values" while at the same time contributing their leadership skills to parent-teacher associations and "bringing their knowledge and taste to service on museum boards." This message was particularly galling at Bryn Mawr, the one women's college with a full-fledged graduate school from the outset, a college with a strong emphasis on "high scholarship and the training of women for scholarly pursuits, intellectual fulfillment, and personal independence."[41] A chapel talk a half century earlier by the college's second president, the formidable M. Carey Thomas, was still the stuff of legend at Bryn Mawr when Gray was a student. According to Thomas's written script, she declared, "Our failures only marry." As students remembered it, their president slipped, as she often did in chapel addresses, and said, instead, "Only our failures marry."[42]

These themes were not simply artifacts of the 1950s. Even into the 1960s, the president of Smith College, Thomas Corwin Mendenhall, spoke to his students about futures in which they would play multiple roles: wives, mothers, community volunteers, civic leaders, and professionals in various fields. And women students behaved accordingly. From World War II into the late 1950s, the median age of first marriages for women was under twenty-one, by far the lowest in the twentieth century (it had been twenty-three in

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40 Ibid.

41 Hanna Holborn Gray, "Bryn Mawr College," draft autobiographical chapter, Nov. 10, 2014, typescript courtesy of Hanna Holborn Gray.

42 Thomas, quoted in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *The Power and Passion of M. Carey Thomas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), p. 385.

1940 and would be twenty-one by 1960, then over twenty-two by 1970).[43] Sixty percent of college women dropped out of school to marry. The birth rate for third children doubled from World War II into the early 1960s, and the rate for fourth children tripled. There was an exodus to the suburbs, and interior decorating, sewing, child care, and parent-teacher associations filled the lives of women recently absorbed in collegiate study.[44]

Changing expectations about the roles women would assume in American society had a powerful effect on the way college women saw their opportunities, as well as on the way college men began to perceive college women. So did the new ways in which college men and college women began interacting in the 1960s. In the struggle for civil rights, college men and college women marched together, picketed together, and sat in together, and they worked together to register black voters in the Mississippi Freedom Summer of 1964. Once the wave of antiwar protests began, college men and college women demonstrated together to express their fierce opposition to the policies of the Johnson and Nixon administrations in the war in Southeast Asia.[45] With interactions of these kinds, it became increasingly untenable to assume that single-sex institutions were the proper way to educate college men and college women. And with traditional relationships between students and their institutions altered as a result of the student movement, traditional single-sex elite higher education seemed increasingly anachronistic.

Paving the Way for Coeducation: Other Forces

Although the civil rights movement was a distinctly American phenomenon, the women's movement, the antiwar movement, and the student movement were felt powerfully in Europe, affecting

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43 U.S. Decennial Census, 1890–2000, www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/marriage/data /acs/ElliottetalPAA2012figs.pdf, accessed July 14, 2014.

44 Rosalind Rosenberg, *Divided Lives: American Women in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), p. 147; Stansell, *The Feminist Promise*, p. 183.

45 On the participation of Smith students in protests against the Vietnam War and against the draft, often together with Amherst students, see Nancy Weiss, "This Year's Graduates," *Smith Alumnae Quarterly* 59 (Aug. 1968): 15–16.

expectations at Cambridge and Oxford about the ways men and women were to be educated. As the American historian Richard Hofstadter observed in his commencement speech at Columbia in the spring of 1968, "Not only in New York and Berkeley, but in Madrid and Paris, in Belgrade and Oxford, in Rome, Berlin and London, and on many college and university campuses throughout this country, students are disaffected, restive and rebellious."[46] Sir Eric Ashby, the master of Clare College, Cambridge, remarked on the "sustained gale-force wind of change" in British colleges and universities, with "sit-ins, protests, and assaults on the Establishment" part of the normal order of the day.[47] But Ashby was quick to point out that there was nothing uniquely British about the "movement of discontent among undergraduates with all that is traditionally involved in the concept of being *in statu pupillari*" (in the status of students). Rather, he said, it was part of "a world-picture of student self-assertion, visible from California to Indonesia."[48]

Other steps taken in the 1960s by colleges and universities paved the way, even if unintentionally, for coeducation. The first was the deliberate effort to diversify the student bodies of the most elite single-sex institutions. In the United States, efforts to increase diversity meant recruiting beyond traditional feeder schools and shifting the balance from independent day schools and boarding schools to public high schools. It meant admitting fewer legacies and more students from families of more modest means, students on scholarship, more Catholics and Jews, and even, by the end of the decade, some African Americans. In the United Kingdom, Cambridge and Oxford colleges began to look to grammar schools and state schools to supplement their traditional constituency of students from private boarding schools (in their terms, public schools) like Eton and Harrow. As student bodies on both sides of

46 Richard Hofstadter, "Columbia University Commencement Address for the 214th Academic Year," *American Scholar* 37 (Autumn 1968): 587. I am indebted to William G. Bowen for pointing me to this speech.

47 Eric Ashby, "Notes from the Master," *Clare Association Annual*, 1966, p. 23 ("gale-force wind"), and 1968, p. 16 ("sit-ins"), both in Clare, CCCS/4/5.

48 Ibid., 1966, p. 23.

the Atlantic became more diverse, it became increasingly anachronistic to draw the line at admitting women. Diversity in terms of gender followed logically from diversity of other kinds.[49]

In the 1960s, colleges and universities also began to diversify their faculties. For generations the faculties of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton had been populated by graduates of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. Increasingly, elite colleges and universities hired faculty with Ph.D.s from the great state universities, like Berkeley, Wisconsin, and Michigan.[50] These new faculty had direct experience with coeducation and were more open to the possibility of teaching women as well as men in their own classrooms. In some cases the pressure for coeducation came from the faculty; in others, faculty members responded enthusiastically to the prospect when it was raised by administrators and students. At Oxford and Cambridge, colleges that took the lead in embracing coeducation had typically appointed new cohorts of young fellows in the 1960s, some of them with direct experience with coeducation, virtually all of them more open-minded and progressive than many of their elders.

Amidst the profound social and political transformations of the 1960s, coeducation came to be instituted at very traditional, very conservative institutions, some of them centuries old, seemingly all at once, and over an astonishingly brief period of time. Given the social and political movements of the 1960s and the other steps colleges and universities were taking to diversify, it would have been remarkable if single-sex institutions had emerged from the

49 On diversification of student bodies in the 1960s in the United States, see, e.g., Jerome Karabel, *The Chosen: The Hidden History of Admission and Exclusion at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005); Marcia Graham Synnott, *Student Diversity at the Big Three: Changes at Harvard, Yale, and Princeton since the 1920s* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2013). For the United Kingdom, see Joseph A. Soares, *The Decline of Privilege: The Modernization of Oxford University* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Carol Dyhouse, *Students: A Gendered History* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006).

50 At Princeton, e.g., while the number of faculty hired from Harvard, Yale, and Princeton stayed constant from the 1950s to the 1960s, the number of faculty hired from public universities increased by 68 percent. These data are derived from trustee minutes and faculty personnel records in the Princeton University Archives, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. I am indebted to Daniel J. Linke for making the data available to me and to Jeremy Zullow for compiling them.

decade unchanged. No matter how powerful the influence of the times, however, the coming of coeducation was not a smooth, easy, uncontested process. Nor was it the same at different colleges and universities. It varied, institution by institution, on the basis of institutional culture, structure, and leadership. The people in charge, the quality and effectiveness of their leadership, made a critical difference in propelling or holding back institutional change. In the main, these people were men, in most cases leading colleges and universities established by and administered over many centuries for men. Although this book is about coeducation, and thus inevitably about women, it is primarily about those men: the decisions they made, the leadership they demonstrated, and the ways in which they harnessed the power of their institutions to meet the challenges of the times. Understanding how all of that happened takes us to the histories of the individual institutions that grappled with coeducation in the years from 1969 through 1974.