College Women in the 1950s: Complicating the Ideal

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 2

CHAPTER ONE – DEFINING THE *SEVENTEEN* IDEAL..... 6

CHAPTER TWO – PUSHING BOUNDARIES AT JACKSON COLLEGE..... 22

CHAPTER THREE – ASSIMILATING THE IDEAL AT RADCLIFFE COLLEGE..... 33

CHAPTER FOUR – SPARKING INTELLECTUALISM AT BARNARD COLLEGE..... 47

CONCLUSION..... 60

APPENDICES..... 63

BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 72

INTRODUCTION

> The simplest examples of the rewards are the happily married women. If there is anything that brings greater joy to most women than to love and live for one man who does just the same for you, and to create with him new lives and a new home, mankind has not found it. We needn't sell it to you. You want it.[1]
>
> Alice Thompson, *Seventeen Magazine*, July 1951

> Tea at the Jordans' yesterday was fun. First we stood up and drank tea in the dining – room, and then we sat down and drank sherry in the salon.[2]
>
> Adrienne Rich, personal letter, March 11, 1952

In the 1950s the mainstream media produced a rigid ideal of female behavior based on society's expectations for young women: marriage and motherhood. However, not all young women fully embraced the ideals of female behavior. Historian Carl Degler, in his work "What Ought to Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," looked at the lives of young women through the lens of expectation versus reality. Degler concluded that women's sexuality was a much-discussed topic in popular advice literature, yet in actuality the experiences of women were not well represented in the mainstream discourse.[3] This essay builds on Degler's approach and shows that the distance between

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[1] Alice Thompson, "How to be a woman," *Seventeen Magazine*, July 1951: 106.

[2] Adrienne Rich, personal letter to parents, March 11, 1952.

[3] Carl N Degler, "What Ought To Be and What Was: Women's Sexuality in the Nineteenth Century," *The American Historical Review* (Oxford University Press) 79, no. 5 (December 1974): 1467-1490.

prescription and behavior persisted a century later. An examination of women in college reveals the ways in which young women followed and deviated from the expected behaviors. Although the mainstream media in the 1950s presented a concrete set of rules and behaviors for young women, the ideal did not erase female agency.

As more young women headed to college in the postwar era, society feared that higher education would make women unfit for domesticity.[4] In the 1950s, college was a seen as a precarious time for young women. It was a time when young women were away from home, were encouraged to think, and were gaining independence. All three of these facets worried parents, educators, and the Experts who were quick to put rules in place to help protect young women from the threat of a college education.[5] The creation of parietals, female-directed curriculums, and strict behavior expectations managed the anxiety that parents and society had over young women leaving for college.[6]

Seventeen Magazine, the most widely read magazine for young women in the 1950s, reproduced attitudes of society. *Seventeen* directed messages about proper behavior to college women to encourage women to stay on the correct path. *Seventeen's* advertisements, articles, and advice columns reinforced the narrative of female behavior in the young women who subscribed to the magazine. The articles and advice columns predominantly supported the narrow definition of womanhood; however, in *Seventeen* they suggested a complexity within the postwar female experience.

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[4] Brett Harvey, *The Fifties: A Women's Oral History* (New York: Harper Perennial , 1994), 45 and 47.

[5] The Experts referred to scientists and pseudo-scientists who studied human behavior and created an official set of behaviors that were considered healthy and appropriate for young women.

[6] Harvey, *The Fifties,* 46.

While young women read *Seventeen*, they could not or did not always follow its message. By looking at the experiences of young women at three women's colleges, Jackson College, Radcliffe College, and Barnard College, a spectrum of experience emerges. Young college women and prospective college women, the intended audience of *Seventeen*, complicated the narrative of the 1950s female experience through their divergence from the *Seventeen* ideal.

Although the young women of Jackson College at Tufts University encountered a reinforced gender narrative, spaces of experimentation remained that allowed students to push the boundaries of the parietals, the sexual double standard, and racial segregation. The institution did not fully adhere to the ideal of the 1950s, but the expectations of female behavior reached Jackson students through strict campus rules and Greek Life. Jackson women likewise embraced the ideal through the goal of marriage, while challenging the limitations placed on them.

The women at Radcliffe College of Harvard University adapted *Seventeen*'s ideal to fit their own ambitions. Radcliffe women traditionally viewed marriage as a threat to their professional futures; however, in the 1950s the rhetoric of balancing a career and marriage emerged as marriage became more appealing. While at Radcliffe College, students embraced the prescription of marriage and incorporated it into their career aspirations.

Barnard College of Columbia University went against the postwar ideal, encouraging women to think beyond the Experts' instructions. Barnard women arrived with marriage and motherhood as their goal, but were inspired by coursework, professors, and fellow students to stretch their personal ambitions. Unlike other women's colleges, Barnard College awoke young women from the expectations presented in *Seventeen*.

College women in the 1950s could not escape the message of domesticity. At women's colleges traditional behaviors coexisted with behaviors that rejected, ignored, expanded, resisted, and challenged the boundaries of womanhood. Despite the rigid rules college women produced their own cultures that were informed by the ideal, rather than controlled by it. Comparing *Seventeen*'s ideal to the lived experiences at Jackson College, Radcliffe College, and Barnard College reveals how young women incorporated the mainstream expectations and shaped their own unique paths.

CHAPTER ONE

DEFINING THE *SEVENTEEN* IDEAL

> It is a big and wonderful job, this job of being a woman. It is your great career and you can't escape it. Your only choice is success or failure at it.[7]
>
> Alice Thompson, *Seventeen Magazine*, January 1951

> A woman in a man's world can't afford to make mistakes. Any girl who doesn't like the sound of this, or who isn't sure she'll be able to carry it off is better not trying to break into the male league in the first place.[8]
>
> Marguerite Higgins, Pulitzer Prize winning journalist interviewed in *Seventeen Magazine*, October 1951

Founded in 1944, *Seventeen Magazine* was a major source for fashion and romantic advice for young women in postwar America. For a generation of young women *Seventeen* defined success and what it meant to be a woman. *Seventeen* saturated young women with a single narrative of female behavior, placing marriage and motherhood as the end and beauty and feminine wiles as the means. The woman presented in *Seventeen Magazine* was the idealized American woman. She reflected a perfected vision to *Seventeen*'s readership of young white middle class women.

The definition of womanhood presented in *Seventeen* shaped the experiences of young women in the 1950s. Readers consumed *Seventeen*'s articles, advice columns, and

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[7] Alice Thompson, "How to be a woman," *Seventeen Magazine*, July 1951: 70-71.

[8] Natalie Gittelson, "Is it a Man's Game?," *Seventeen Magazine*, October 1951: 74-5.

products to recreate themselves as the ideal woman. Female success in the 1950s was built around the expectation of young marriage, which *Seventeen* perpetuated. Through subduing their natural personalities and looks and adhering to the guidelines of behavior presented in *Seventeen*, young women sought to ensure their success as women in the eyes of America in the 1950s.

One dimension of *Seventeen's* influence was advertising. Throughout the twentieth century advertising reinforced the expectations of femininity. Young women grew up surrounded by advertisements that depicted a single definition of desirable femininity and connected womanhood with consumerism. *Seventeen Magazine*'s advertisements featured young women on the cusp of womanhood, using feminine wiles and small waists to be successful. Advertising reinforced gender socialization and the *Seventeen* ideal of womanhood.[9]

Advertisements in *Seventeen* marketed purchasable solutions to young women with the slant of helping them become the ideal woman. An Ipana Toothpaste advertisement from the January 1948 issue of *Seventeen* featured Cupid telling a young woman that if she used Ipana toothpaste she would have her choice of boyfriends. "… get yourself an Ipana smile. Then there'll be Men… in your life. Plural!"[10] The advertisement reinforced the notion that young women should be concerned with finding a man.

Seventeen did not discuss the successes of imperfect women; instead it published stories about beauty queens with hearts of gold and inspirational stories of the girl who

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[9] For further discussion of advertising and the socialization of gender in the 1950s read: Daniel D Hill, "Teach Them Young," in *Advertising to the American Woman 1900-1999*, 193-211 (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2002).

[10] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Ipana Tooth Paste," January 1948: 1. SEE APPENDIX A

used to be "the fattest girl in the class."[11] The female ideal presented in *Seventeen* was a savvy, confident, and popular woman who became that way by following the *Seventeen*-way.

Dating guides were a staple of *Seventeen* in the 1950s, providing the *Seventeen* endorsed road to successful womanhood. The dating guides taught appropriate dating behaviors and activities. For example "10 Summer dates that don't cost money" featured date ideas such as going swimming, getting tickets to see radio and television show tapings, watching community sports, and taking hikes.[12] Young women fixated on proper date etiquette and keeping men interested, therefore the dating guides from *Seventeen* were avidly read. The attention *Seventeen* paid to planning dates suggested that women were very invested in dating culture.

Seventeen emphasized the economical side of dating, suggesting that many young women wrote in because they found dating difficult due to the economics of it. *Seventeen*'s primary target audience was white middle class young women. Young women's concern over their financial ability to date revealed a contradiction within the ideal. While the young women were expected to be middle class consumers, the reality was that young women needed to budget in order to adhere to the material dimension of the *Seventeen* ideal. The frequency of articles on topics such as "Look like a million for practically pennies," "Bevy of wardrobe-stretchers," "Ways to have fun for free," and "Fun for fifty cents per: a bang up party for the 4th featuring strictly American eats, done on a budget of

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[11] *Seventeen Magazine,* "Miss Young America in 4-H," November 1956: 94. Jane Engel, "The Fattest Girl in the Class," *Seventeen Magazine,* January 1948: 52.

[12] *Seventeen Magazine*, "10 Summer dates that don't cost money," July 1960: 76-7.

four bits each" suggested that many *Seventeen* readers were interested in dating on a budget.[13]

Seventeen's advice columns also revealed the questions young women sent in. Many questions were on beauty and etiquette, which *Seventeen* answered with concrete answers that offered a path to success. "Dear Beauty Editor" was one of many advice columns and it focused on questions that related to appearance. The questions sent to "Dear Beauty Editor" suggested that young women were trying to follow the expectations of womanhood, but many found it difficult to do on their own. "Dear Beauty Editor" reinforced the expectations of female behavior through the tangible instructions.

> "Dear Beauty Editor: I am troubled with a double chin. I'm not fat anywhere else and it seems there should be something I could do to help. I don't have a very big chin to begin with. I work in an office so I have to keep my head down right much, and that just makes things worse.
>
> C.K., Roanoke, Va.[14]

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[13] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Look like a million for practically pennies," July 1951: 60. *Seventeen Magazine*, "Bevy of wardrobe-stretchers," July 1951: 33. *Seventeen Magazine*, "Ways to have fun for free," July 1951: 78. *Seventeen Magazine*, ""Fun for fifty cents per: a bang up party for the 4th featuring strictly American eats, done on a budget of four bits each," July 1951: 54.

One behavioral expectation of masculinity in the 1950s was that men paid for dates. *Seventeen*'s emphasis on low or no cost dates illustrated that the onus was on young women to plan dates that their boyfriends could afford. It was important that young men not feel emasculated because of an inability to pay. In the same way that young women were confined by gender expectations, so were men.

[14] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Dear Beauty Editor," July 1951: 12.

"Dear Beauty Editor" gave advice that suggested there was a simple answer. She recommended maintaining a rigid posture, neck exercises, and different sleeping arrangements to "discourage a double chin."[15]

The exercises and posture changes that the beauty editor recommended underscored how the image of female beauty was artificially sculpted. The "Dear Beauty Editor" columns illustrated how young women attempted to reconcile the ideal with their own imperfections. Questions about getting rid of "writer's lumps" on fingers from writing with a pencil too often, flattering hairstyles, and ways to fix unattractive laughter reinforced the reality that the ideal was not natural for young women.[16] While the questions hinted at a population of young women, who struggled with the unattainable ideal, the answers provided the concrete paths that guaranteed success.

Young women also wrote in with questions about proper etiquette. According to *Seventeen*, young women were expected to behave in a particular way to be socially successful. The etiquette advice column in *Seventeen*, "Young Living," helped young women navigate their social questions and emphasized how to behave appropriately to best attract men. The November 1956 column featured the problem of "How to be a good flirt."

> Problem: My best friend is the biggest flirt in the school but still is the most popular. She is pretty, smart and very nice. Do you think that is the reason she attracts so many boys? Should I flirt more to get a boy I really want?[17]

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[15] Ibid.

[16] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Dear Beauty Editor," November 1951: 47. *Seventeen Magazine*, "Dear Beauty Editor," October 1951: 4.

[17] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Young Living: How to be a good flirt," November 1956: 90.

The question suggested the challenge of determining what was appropriate versus inappropriate behavior. The girl's opening statement, which condemned her friend as "the biggest flirt" who somehow "still is the most popular" illustrated the complexity of flirtation and sexual behaviors in the 1950s.

The expectations of female sexual behavior in the 1950s were convoluted and contradictory. The questions about appropriate flirtation etiquette in "Young Living" reflected the anxiety young women had over maintaining the appropriate level of being appealing, while at the same time not being overly available.[18] As demonstrated in "How to be a good flirt," there was a tension between being prudish and promiscuous.[19] The contradiction was the sexual double standard that forbade sexual intimacy before marriage, but expected women to maintain a level of sexual availability in order to attract men.[20]

The sexual double standard placed the onus of maintaining appropriate behavior on women because men could not be held responsible for their passion.[21] Kay D'Amico's experience illustrated the role young women played in the sexual double standard, expected to resist sexual temptation and to control their boyfriends.

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[18] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 116.

[19] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Young Living: How to be a good flirt," November 1956: 90.

[20] For more discussion of the origins of the sexual double standard read: Elaine Tyler May, "Brinkmanship: Sexual Containment on the Home Front" in *Homeward Bound* (New York: Basic Books, 1988).

For more discussion on the complexity of the sexual double standard and its impact on sexual behavior read: Beth Bailey, "Sex Control," in *From Front Porch to Back Seat*, 97-118 (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

[21] May, *Homeward Bound,* 128.

> We'd be inches away from doing it and Vince would be moaning… and I would be having this terrific struggle inside myself. Part of me just wanted to let everything go and just do it! In a way, I almost wanted Vince to forge ahead…I knew he expected me to stop him – especially since I was this 'nice' girl from the 'right' part of town. So I knew what my role to play was.[22]

The sexual double standard saddled young women with all the culpability in romantic encounters, which left them stressed by the responsibility, confused by the contradiction of their own desires, and turning to *Seventeen* for answers.

Appropriate sexual behavior was a major concern of young women in the 1950s. The question "How to be a good flirt" underscored that it was a question that many young women struggled with.

> Answer: Your best friend may attract so many boys not because she's a flirt, but because she's a good flirt. Remember the clues you gave us: that she was pretty, smart and very nice? As to whether you should flirt more to get a boy you really want, we'd say, don't necessarily flirt more – or less. Flirt differently. The 'good' flirts of this world seem to convey the impression that they like other people very much – probably because they really do. The other flirts seem to flirt mainly for conquest… If you can flirt at all, you can learn to be a good flirt. Look before you leap: Look for qualities you like in a boy before you try to attract him.[23]

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[22] Harvey, *The Fifties,* 8.

[23] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Young Living: How to be a good flirt," November 1956: 90.

The "Young Living" editor responded by breaking down the complicated etiquette of flirtation and presenting the readers of *Seventeen* with yet another practical guide to successful womanhood.

The attention given to beauty and etiquette in "Dear Beauty Editor" and "Young Living" respectively conveyed the importance of appearance and behavior. The ideal these characteristics presented reinforced the impossibility of the ideal. As the young women encountered their own imperfections, the contradictions in the expectations for young women in the 1950s emerged.

Faced with the complex sexual expectations, young women turned once more to *Seventeen* for the answer. An advertisement from the January 1948 issue of *Seventeen* linked the use of Kotex sanitary napkins to intelligence and social success, underscoring the *Seventeen* definition of successful womanhood. The Kotex advertisement featured three women who all needed to navigate social situations: one hosting a party, one dressing up for a formal affair, and one on a date. The advertisement asked the readers how they would handle a situation, "To a clever hostess, what's a good mixer?"

> When it's your turn to entertain, be different! Pin up home-made circus posters… have your guests come dressed like a Big Top troupe. It's a mixer that can't miss! And don't you miss the fun – even if your calendar says 'Killjoy is here'! Whatever your costume, those flat pressed ends of Kotex prevent telltale outlines. And what with that exclusive safety center giving you extra protection – you'll be gay as calliope![24]

[24] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Kotex Sanitary Napkins," January 1948: 6. SEE APPENDIX B

Kotex emphasized attractiveness and charm as the markings of a truly intelligent and successful woman. Kotex presented intelligence as social intelligence, which encouraged young women to cultivate popularity.

Seventeen addressed female education through its repeated presentation of valued intelligence as solely social intelligence. In the article "You're Old Enough to Know" *Seventeen* reinforced its definition of womanhood through the discussion of maturity and womanliness.[25] The secret *Seventeen* revealed to its readers was "the difference between being dressed and being well-dressed."[26] Maturity and education culminated in knowing fashion and presenting an appropriate womanly figure. "You're Old Enough to Know" underscored how female intelligence was measured through womanly wiles, fashion know-how, and romantic success.

Seventeen Magazine in the 1950s built up the expectations of female behavior around social intelligence, rather than academic achievement. *Seventeen* suggested that feminine success was defined by the prescriptive behavioral expectations. All education should be guide a woman towards her future marriage and impending motherhood. In the 1950s college became an anticipated step in a woman's life, in between leaving her parents' home and entering her husband's. Young middle class white women attended college in increasing numbers in the postwar era. However, while college became more commonplace in the 1950s, it was still considered a precarious phase for young women.

Parents and society more broadly feared young women gaining independence, because that was seen as making young women unfit for marriage. While institutions used

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[25] *Seventeen Magazine,* "You're Old Enough to Know," October 1951: 64-65.

[26] Ibid.

parietals to soothe parental anxiety over losing direct control over their daughters, *Seventeen* addressed the fear by addressing the expectations of young women in the college sphere. The August 1956 issue guided women through the college selection process in an article titled "How to Choose a College." "How to Choose a College" offered practical advice to young women about selecting a school that fit what she wanted from her experience.[27] The article taught young women about different curriculum options, the benefits of all-girls versus co-educational schools, and various scholarships to ease the financial burden of tuition, room and board, and books.[28]

While *Seventeen* discussed the logistics of getting into college, the focus was on appropriate female behavior once in college. *Seventeen* combined beauty and fashion into the college narrative. *Seventeen's* August 1956 issue focused on getting young women ready to go back-to-school by getting their wardrobes updated.[29] The table of contents of the August 1960 issue of *Seventeen* has the heading, "Getting ready to go back to school always has a touch of fresh-paint excitement (even if it happens every year). We won't say it's because of new clothes, but…."[30] By redirecting young women to thinking about fashion and dating life, *Seventeen* allayed parental fears of young women abandoning the ideal female behaviors and the goal of marriage. *Seventeen* steered women away from an academic focus and painted college as a stepping-stone to marriage.

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[27] *Seventeen Magazine*, "How to Choose a College," August 1956: 152-163.

[28] Ibid.

[29] *Seventeen Magazine,* "Key Words," August 1956: 154-157. SEE APPENDIX C

[30] *Seventeen Magazine,* "Table of Contents," August 1960.

Advertisements directed at college women further cemented *Seventeen*'s image of the social intelligence as the desired intelligence. An advertisement for a Joan Marie sweater set declared, "only the smartest girls get into the Joan Marie sweater set."[31] The advertisement reinforced the ideal of social intelligence in college through the image of young college women looking the part in their sweater sets. Additionally it drew the definition of "smartest" away from intelligence and towards its other meaning: fashionable or well-dressed. An advertisement for Jolene shoes further restated *Seventeen*'s message. The slogan "Phi Beta Capers" equated their shoes and the women who wear them to the members of the Phi Beta Kappa honor society.[32] The advertisement explicitly placed female achievement into the sphere of fashion and out of the sphere of education.

Seventeen created a worry free guide to college through advertisements; however, it also provided guides for the more troubling concerns. The article "DRINKING: Boy Girl Report" provided the opinions of ten young men and women on the topic of drinking.[33] While all of the young women politely detailed why she and her friends did not drink, the male students discussed their experiences drinking. The article underscored the double standard between the genders and revealed how women were expected to behave completely differently than men while in college.[34] By emphasizing the behavioral double standard between men and women, *Seventeen* hinted at the complexity of the female

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[31] *Seventeen Magazine,* "Joan Marie Sweater Set," August 1956. SEE APPENDIX D

[32] *Seventeen Magazine, "*Jolene: Hollywood Inspired Shoes," August 1956. SEE APPENDIX E

[33] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Drinking: Boy Girl Report," July 1960: 52-3.

[34] In the 1950s there was a large discrepancy between the appropriate behaviors of men and women. For more information about the etiquette of masculinity and femininity in the 1950s read: Beth Bailey, "Masculinity and Femininity," in *From Front Porch to Back Seat*, 97-118 (Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

behavioral expectations in the 1950s. Another article "Drinking: What's right for you?" focused on the facts and fictions of drinking. While trying to appear balanced, the "25 ways to say no" confirmed that women were expected to turn down alcohol.[35] Alcohol was seen as masculine and *Seventeen* underscored that proper young women did not drink. Both of these articles addressed alcohol, a subject that young women and their parents were concerned with. The conclusion of *Seventeen*'s discussion of campus culture reaffirmed female containment.

Seventeen provided information about college, while it reinforced the traditional expectations of female behavior. The goal of *Seventeen* was to prepare women for the career of womanhood and to aid young women in maintaining that focus through college. The July 1951 article titled "How to be a woman" spoke directly towards the expectation of domesticity that was celebrated by the articles and advertisements in *Seventeen.* "How to Be a Woman" painted an explicit vision of marriage and motherhood.

> You as a woman – not just a female or a girl child – are partner of man. You are not his rival, his enemy, or his plaything. Your partnership in most cases will produce children, and together you and the man will create a haven, a home, a way of life for yourselves and the children. This is your basic career, and all the apparently new ideas and modern ways haven't changed that basic.[36]

"How to Be a Woman" concisely articulated *Seventeen*'s vision for women, not as an academic competitor nor as a sexual being, but as a future wife and mother. The article

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[35] *Seventeen Magazine,* "Drinking: What's right for you?" July 1960: 54-55. SEE APPENDIX F

[36] Alice Thompson, "How to Be a Woman," *Seventeen Magazine*, July 1951: 70-71.

asserted the rewarding aspects of the ideal as they fit into "a code built by women for women and children."[37]

While Alice Thompson, the author of "How to Be a Woman," hinted at an unsettled population of young women, she focused only briefly upon them to disavow any experiences that dissented from the ideal. Thompson's outright condemnation of criticism illustrated the silencing power of *Seventeen Magazine* and the mainstream media in the 1950s. While there were unsettled populations that "How to be a woman" referenced, the overwhelming message of the article was the importance of female domesticity.

> All there is to it is courtship and the happy ending. That's what many movies and novels would lead you to believe. Or it sounds so dull, so tame, so old-fashioned and so…. so *frustrating*. That's what many of today's pseudo-scientific articles and conversations would lead you to believe. Don't believe either. The career of womanhood is about the most demanding, exciting and rewarding one in the world.[38]

Thompson underscored the vitality of domesticity and framed it for the younger generation to embrace. While "How to Be a Woman" extolled the ideal of womanhood, it suggested an undercurrent of discontent among young women.

Seventeen reproduced the dominant narrative of female behavior, yet hints of dissent and dissatisfaction with the ideal cropped up occasionally throughout. The advice columns and articles such as "How to Be Women" suggested that the ideal presented in *Seventeen* was not the whole story.

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[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

In order to silence the alternative paths, *Seventeen* controlled the readership's exposure to them. In October 1951, *Seventeen* published an interview with Marguerite Higgins, a Pulitzer Prize winning journalist. The article, "Is it a Man's Game?" presented a positive narrative of a professional woman as it discussed Marguerite's life as a career woman.[39] The article stood out from *Seventeen*'s typical articles because it acknowledged not only the presence of career women, but also her femininity. Much of the article focused on Marguerite's clothing and hairstyle; however, it also emphasized her femininity on the job.

> When she was on the job, reporting war, she lived like the most bedeviled foot soldier in the line. She ate and walked and crawled in the mud with the infantry. (But she carried a lipstick and a comb in the breast pocket of her GI fatigues.)[40]

While the article presented the hardships of being a career woman, it also presented Marguerite as a successful woman outside the realm of marriage. "Is it a man's game?" diverged from the ideal generally presented by *Seventeen* and reflected a different experience that women could and did pursue in the postwar era. The inclusion of Marguerite Higgins' interview indicated that *Seventeen* recognized that not all women followed the same path and emphasized the importance of femininity and beauty regardless of the path chosen.

Typically, however, *Seventeen* presented marriage as the singular goal for young women. Camay soap advertisements underscored *Seventeen*'s emphasis on marriage. In the

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[39] Natalie Gittelson, "Is it a Man's Game?," *Seventeen Magazine*, October 1951: 74-5.

[40] Ibid.

January 1948 issue of *Seventeen,* the advertisement featured a girl's "first manicure," her "first prom" and then the endorsement of a "Camay Bride."[41] In 1951 the path presented was a girl's first love triangle, her first cake of Camay next to an image her on a date, and at the bottom "Mrs. Jules Alexander, dazzling Camay bride."[42] Both advertisements linked the use of Camay to romantic success; the "Camay Bride" image rhetorically solidified the connection of Camay as the path to marriage.

While *Seventeen* established a path to marriage through articles, advice columns, and advertisements, it also explicitly reinforced the ideal of marriage to young women. *Seventeen* normalized young marriage and created a culture in which young women actively pursued marriage and motherhood. *Seventeen* reproduced the expectation of marriage through its frequent inclusion of wedding-related advertisements.[43] In the January 1948 issue of *Seventeen* a Linen Trousseau Club advertisement targeted brides and future brides. Through the calling of "Brides – and Future Brides" *Seventeen* reinforced the expectation of young marriage.[44] *Seventeen* further reinforced young marriage through advertisements for gift registries. The October 1951 issue featured an advertisement for silver patterns "for young homes," which explicitly celebrated and encouraged young marriage.[45] Additionally the inclusion of advertisements for trousseaus made marriage

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[41] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Camay Soap," January 1948: 9. SEE APPENDIX G

[42] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Camay Soap," July 1951: 4.

[43] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Linen Trousseau Club," January 1948: 108. *Seventeen Magazine*, "Orange Blossom Engagement & Wedding Rings," January 1948: 109.

[44] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Linen Trousseau Club," January 1948: 108. SEE APPENDIX H

[45] *Seventeen Magazine*, "Contemporary Classics," October 1951: 100.

something actively sought and planned for marriage, rather than something that came along.

In the 1950s *Seventeen* dictated the proper behaviors of young women.[46] The articles and advertisements reinforced the expectations of female behavior, while the advice columns made the ideals applicable. *Seventeen* was a powerful influence in the lives of young women during the postwar era, shaping their perception of womanhood and goals for the future. *Seventeen* occasionally revealed the contradictions within the ideal; however, occasional glimpses of alternative paths were presented in ways that reinforced femininity. While *Seventeen* represented the mainstream America expectations of female behavior, its occasional suggestion of dissenting views hinted that there was more to the 1950s than met the eye.

[46] For more discussion of how *Seventeen Magazine* influenced teen culture beyond the 1950s and into the second half of the 20th century read: Kelley Massoni, *Fashioning Teenages: A Cultural History of Seventeen Magazine* (Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2010). 28.

CHAPTER TWO

PUSHING BOUNDARIES AT JACKSON COLLEGE

> Marion Lloyd, a Jackson freshman, is currently the only girl enrolled in the air science course, and only the second girl to have done so in the history of the Tufts Air Force ROTC… Marion, of course, does not have to drill along with the other members of the AFROTC. She does office work, decorating, and similar duties instead.[47]
>
> Dorothy Kallis, "Cadet Cutie Enhances Air Science Curriculum," *Tufts Weekly*, December 1956.

Although behavioral expectations limited women, the reality of young women in the 1950s was complex. Within the postwar ideal of womanhood that persisted at Jackson College of Tufts University, the young women pushed boundaries, fostered political awareness, and challenged expectations. Jackson women demonstrated womanhood as it was experienced at Jackson College, which revealed the tension within the ideal presented in *Seventeen Magazine.*

Jackson College addressed 1950s America's fears of sending women to college along with the expectations of female behavior to campus through parietals. When young women in the 1950s first arrived at Jackson College, all students were required to familiarize themselves with the dormitory rules and behavioral expectations, which were explicitly written out in the student handbook.[48] The parietals, also known as dormitory rules, were

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[47] Dorothy Kallis, "Cadet Cutie Enhances Air Science Curriculum," *Tufts Weekly*, December 14, 1956. SEE APPENDIX I

[48] Jackson College. Medford, Massachusetts. Jackson College Handbook UP076 Box 001 from 1953-1954.

meant to protect the unmarried young women from the dangers of living away from their parents' supervision. Parietals assuaged the fears many parents had about young women leaving home and becoming independent.

Parietals underscored the sexual double standard in the 1950s because they cosseted young women away from the world, while men were allowed free reign of the campus. The longest section of the Jackson Handbook was on "Social Privileges." Social privileges included rules on calling hours, overnight absences, visiting other Jackson students, and signing out for an evening off campus.[49] Jackson College maintained the final word on female social lives and expected women to maintain proper decorum at all times and in all situations. "Article II – Social Privileges" stated: "Students are expected to exercise proper discretion in their social activities, and to realize that lack of judgment in this respect reflects not only on them individually but on the College as a whole."[50] The containment of female social activities to appropriate calling hours and to appropriate behaviors reflected the limitations placed on female social interaction at Jackson College.

At Jackson College, and on other college campuses, women experimented with and explored their sexuality. While behavioral expectations stated that proper young women remained chaste, Alfred Kinsey's 1953 report on the "Sexual Behavior of the Human Female" challenged that assertion. Kinsey's research into female sexuality revealed that between the ages of fifteen and twenty, when young women entered college, was when

[49] Ibid., 11-14.

[50] Ibid., 11.

sexual exploration began.[51] Before the age of 15 only 39 percent of women have engaged in petting, where as between the ages of 16 and 20 the number increases to 88 percent.[52] Kinsey's observations underscored the discrepancy between what was expected of young women and what their actual behavior was. To further complicate the ideal of female sexuality, Kinsey's report found that approximately 50 percent of young women engaged in pre-marital sex.[53]

Kinsey's research underscored the contradiction of female sexuality in the 1950s. Through his so-called discovery of female sexuality, Kinsey revitalized the importance of parietals to parents and administration while illustrating how young women consistently rejected the expectation of chastity. Kinsey's discussion of female sexuality reinforced the necessity of the parietals on college campuses, adding fuel to the containment of female sexuality.[54]

Through parietals, Jackson College aimed to prevent inappropriate flirtations and promiscuity. One example of how Jackson women challenged the sexual double standard was through panty raids.[55] While typically instigated by men, the women at Jackson College

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[51] Kinsey defined petting as "physical contact between females and males which do not involve a union of the genitalia of the two sexes constitute the socio-sexual behavior which American youths have come to know as necking or petting." (Kinsey, 227). The complete report can be found at: Alfred C Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1998).

[52] Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* 234.

[53] Kinsey, *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female,* 287.

[54] In the 1950s parents, educators, and young women relied on expert information in order to frame the appropriate behaviors of women. Women's magazines, like *Seventeen, Good Housekeeping, and Ladies' Home Journal*, simplified the messages of the Experts, making them more digestible by the female population. For more information about the impact of the Experts on young women read: Wini Breines, "The Experts' Fifties" in *Young, White, and Miserable* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1992)

[55] The panty raid was a fad that became popular in the 1950s. Male students would surround a female dormitory with the objective of stealing undergarments.

used panty raids as an opportunity to flirt and be openly suggestive. Panty raids were common during the 1950s and were publicly dismissed as the senseless antics of young men who were not under the same sexual scrutiny as young women.[56]

Panty raids were a way in which Jackson women subverted the expectations of the sexual double standard and explored their sexuality outside of the confines of parietals. On May 19, 1952, over five hundred male students congregated at Goddard Chapel and then travelled throughout the Tufts University campus in search of female undergarments.

> But the West Wing of Metcalf [Hall] proved to be the Achilles heel of the fortress, the raiders gaining entrance through a second floor balcony. It was to their regret a moment later. Fifteen lassies on the roof above bombarded them and the mob below with wastebaskets full of water, all well directed tosses. Lost to the raiders were a few bras, panties and wastebaskets. As the men beat a retreat, the co-eds ran to the balcony and chanted a 'Goodnight boys,' to the tune of 'Goodnight Ladies,' and the boy's retaliated with 'Take It Off, Take It Off.[57]

For Jackson women, panty raids facilitated interactions with men outside of the narrow boundaries of accepted sexual behavior. The 1952 panty raid illustrated how Jackson students engaged with the male raiders. The women sang flirtatious songs and doused the men with water in a coordinated defense. Jackson women broke the mold of the protected co-ed by engaging the men as fellow participants rather than accepting their role as simply the object of the raid.

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[56] Lowry, Cynthia. "'Spring Madness' is Nothing New." *Salina Journal,* May 24, 1957.

[57] "Tufts Men Go Bra-Hunting, but Get Wetting Instead." *Daily Boston Globe,* May 20, 1952.

While Jackson women pushed the boundaries of behavior during panty raids, within their dormitories they were contained by parietals and watched carefully by their housemother. The parietals at Jackson College included exclusionary guest policies, early curfews, and strict security.[58] The "Faculty Resident," or the housemother, was in charge of enforcing the parietals and nurturing the students.[59] The housemother's purpose was to serve as a parent throughout a young woman's time in college, an idea known as in loco parentis.

Throughout the 1950s Jackson women resisted the parietals. As early as 1953 students published articles in the *Tufts Weekly*, the student newspaper shared between Tufts University and Jackson College, that openly questioned the need for parietals. An article published in 1953 called the practice of chaperones "ignorant," saying that the "entire idea of an undergraduate education is lost in the infantile handling" of the students.[60] While the *Seventeen Magazine* saw college as the step between a young woman's parents' home and her husband's, women at Jackson College wanted the freedoms that the parietals prevented.

The varied relationship Jackson women had with the parietals demonstrated the complexity of the ideal. The disciplinary records at Jackson College revealed how some Jackson women enforced the parietals, while other students challenged the parietals.

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[58] Jackson College. Medford, Massachusetts. Jackson College Handbook UP076 Box 001 from 1953-1954.

[59] Dorothy Johnson, "Housemothers Devote Lives to 'Being Around in Case'," *Tufts Weekly*, December 11, 1952.

[60] Walder. "Chaperones Or Not?." *Tufts Weekly,* May 14, 1953, Volume 57 Issue 25.

For a larger discussion of parietals in American colleges during the postwar era read: Beth Bailey, "Responsible Sex," in *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

Curfew violations were a frequent occurrence, suggesting that some Jackson women rejected the authority of the housemother.[61] On the other hand the Jackson Student Council was in charge of supervising the disciplinary hearings for women illustrating how some Jackson women not only obeyed but also perpetuated the parietals.

The Student Council minutes illustrated the complicated relationship between Jackson students and the parietals. It was not unusual for Jackson students to be disciplined for minor infractions, such as missing curfew by their fellow students. In 1946 Janice Campbell was called in before the council because she was five minutes late to curfew, while a week later Elizabeth Hubers was called in for being four minutes past.[62] The *Tufts Weekly* criticized the parietals, which underscored the student culture pushing back against them. With the context of Jackson College's resistance and the national narrative of student rejection of the parietals, Janice and Elizabeth seem to be making an implicit statement against the parietals.[63] Their violations were small; however, with the backdrop of student opposition to the parietals the four and five-minute violations take on a more empowered edge.

The case of Jaele Block, from April 23rd, 1946 underscored the pattern of pushing boundaries and resisting limits. Called before the council while on probation for another

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[61] Jackson College. Medford, Massachusetts. Jackson Student Council Minutes UAO33 Box 004, on April 23, 1946.

[62] Jackson College. Medford, Massachusetts. Jackson Student Council Minutes UAO33 Box 004, on April 23 and 30, 1946.

[63] The rejection of the parietals went beyond Jackson College. In the postwar era, women questioned the administrative control and challenged the legitimacy of the parietals' authority. For more reading: Beth Bailey, "Responsible Sex," in *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

offense, Jaele's secondary violation reinforced the intentionality of her tardiness. Jaele's violation deliberately challenged the boundaries of female behavior.

While some Jackson women oversaw the disciplinary hearings illustrating their support of the parietals, their enforcement was not as strict as the administration's. The minutes detail the case of Elinor Comrau, a freshman who was called before the committee on May 11th, 1952:

> Offense: On Friday, May 8th, Elinor came in late on a 12:15. She signed the book incorrectly by stating that she was one minute late when in reality, her house mother and house president said that she was two minutes late. She ordinarily wears glasses, but didn't have them on.
> Action: She was excused with recommendation to look at the clock more closely.[64]

The dismissal of the offense with the recommendation to "look at the clock more closely" by the Jackson Student council illustrated how the students, even those who enforced the parietals, took the rules less seriously than the administration. The investigative effort placed into a two-minute curfew violation underscored the importance the administration placed on the parietals and on protecting the female students in their charge.

Not all the disciplinary hearings were for minor curfew violations. However, the frequency with which Jackson women were disciplined for tiny infractions underscored two aspects of Jackson student life. The first was that housemothers, the administration, and some Jackson students took the parietals very seriously. The second was that some

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[64] Jackson College. Medford, Massachusetts. Jackson Student Council Minutes UAO33 Box 004, on May 11, 1952.

Jackson students actively subverted the parietals. The young women called before the council could have hurried to sign in on time, but they took their time, arrived a couple of minutes after curfew, and pushed the boundaries to articulate their disdain for the parietals.

The parietals enforced expectations of female behavior on all of Jackson women, while Greek organizations created microcosms within the Jackson community that perpetuated the ideal of female containment in different ways. Sororities at Jackson College reinforced the gendered expectations of women through their emphasis on formals, mixers, and femininity. Like the women of the Jackson Student Council, sorority women did not reject traditional markers of feminine behavior.

Candle passing was a sorority custom that celebrated traditional female milestones: when a sister was lavaliered, when a sister got engaged, and when a sister became pregnant.[65] While the logistics of the candle passing ceremony varied with the organization, the ceremony entailed the entire sisterhood coming together to recognize and celebrate sisters who have moved into a new stage of their romantic relationship.[66] The emphasis on lifecycle events relating to marriage and motherhood came from the national organizations, rather than the individual chapters. The use of traditions such candle passing, represented that mainstream standards of female behavior that persisted within the student culture at Jackson College.

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[65] A lavaliere is a necklace given to a sorority woman from her boyfriend that signifies a deep commitment, like a promise ring.

[66] The Alpha Omicron Pi candle passing ceremony entailed the entire sisterhood gathering in a circle and literally passing a candle around the room. Each sister handled the candle as is passed around the circle. In the first circuit a recently lavaliered sister would blow out the candle. During the second circuit a recently engaged sister blew out the candle and in the third circuit a pregnant sister blew out the candle.

The customs of sororities and fraternities in the 1950s reflected the sexual double standard. While the fraternities instigated panty raids, sororities reinforced appropriate female romantic behaviors. The sorority experience underscored the expectation of marriage. It was not uncommon for Jackson sorority women to marry while still in college. In 1958 Thalian Sorority's memory book celebrated the weddings of their sisters through the individual wedding invitations featured.[67] The memory book held six wedding invitations from a sisterhood of only thirty-three women. The majority of the sisters married while in college or soon thereafter because they embraced young marriage as the goal of womanhood.

While sororities reproduced traditional expectations of women, the sororities at Jackson College also provided a space for female empowerment. Like parietals, sorority traditions presented a narrow view of womanhood that was received, considered, and adapted by the Jackson women. In 1959 Thalian Sorority hosted an open rush party with the theme "Woman's World" that celebrated female agency.[68] The party featured skits about powerful women, the stories of Adam and Eve, Helen of Troy, and Samson and Delilah.[69] Open rush parties served to showcase the values of the organization and to attract like-minded women. Thalian's decision to feature three influential women indicated that they valued female agency and pushing the expectations of female behavior. However, all three influential women were placed in the context of their relationship to men,

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[67] Jackson College. Medford, Massachusetts. Thalian Memory Book Fall PC 1958-9 1956-1965 memory book. MS075 Box 090

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

underscoring the conservative belief in marriage. Jackson sorority women fostered a community that empowered women to action through their recruitment of like-minded women.

Not all rejection of the ideal focused on social life. In the midst of segregation and the civil rights movement, Jackson sorority women engaged with social issues as well. Sororities gave women the opportunity to be leaders and learn leadership skills. With female members, female executive officers, and female advisors, the organizations empowered women to take initiative and to shape their organizations into what they wanted socially and politically.

In the fall of 1956 sorority women at Jackson deviated from appropriate female behavior when they came together to challenge the racial segregation of Greek life. The women of Sigma Kappa and Alpha Chi Delta pledged black women into their sisterhoods in an explicit rejection of their national organizations' policies of segregation.[70] The Jackson women in Sigma Kappa and Alpha Chi Delta challenged the status quo and pushed the boundaries of acceptable female behavior through their actions. The sorority women made their decisions to accept black pledges aware of the larger civil rights, segregation, and racial climate with the explicit intent to take a stand against racism.

The decision reflected a sorority consciousness of race issues and an awareness of national politics at Jackson College. The Jackson sorority women made the active choice to reject the national narrative of race. This discussion revealed that Jackson women were empowered to reject the rules and redefine their organizations. Sigma Kappa had their

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[70] Sanford James, "AXD withdraws from national group," *Tufts Weekly*, September 28, 1956. Elsa Dorfman, "Fate of Sigma Kappa Remains Undecided," *Tufts Weekly*, September 21, 1956.

national charter revoked, while Alpha Chi Delta withdrew from their national organization because they rejected their national organization's "discriminatory policies."[71]

Both Jackson College organizations fostered a community of womanhood that transformed into a source of social action and empowerment. Jackson women engaged outside of their gender roles lens, breaking the mold of passive young women thinking exclusively of marriage. Greek life provided an outlet for Jackson women to create organizations that fit their definitions of womanhood. In November 1956, the Thalian Sorority was established at Jackson, made up of the former Sigma Kappa women. Jackson women created an entirely new organization that would better fit their ideals of what a sorority should be, inclusive and empowering to all women.[72] The creation of Thalian Sorority reflected the agency of the Jackson women as leaders and role models. While Greek organizations reinforced gendered behaviors, sorority life at Jackson empowered women to challenge social expectations and to push the boundaries.

The expectations of female behavior shaped life at Jackson College, but the women were not controlled by the ideal. Through individual and organizational actions, Jackson women revealed that they were empowered to challenge expectations of female behavior on social and political levels. Breaking curfew and panty raids were two tangible ways in which the Jackson women pushed back against the limiting parietals. The political activism in regards to race of the Jackson sorority women demonstrated how Jackson women engaged beyond the mainstream expectations of women. Student life at Jackson revealed how women's colleges could be spaces that inspired thought and empowered women.

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[71] Ibid.

[72] *Tufts Weekly*, "Jaxon Council Initiates New Sorority Policy," November 17, 1956.

CHAPTER THREE

ASSIMILATING THE IDEAL AT RADCLIFFE COLLEGE

> The last thesis in, the last meeting held, we think of college in the past tense now. We'll spend a lot of time reminiscing about Radcliffe; we'll even remember things that never happened, but should have.
> Some of us consider ourselves tomorrow's hope; others just hope to be tomorrow's housewives. When we come back for reunions, we will probably resemble closely the graduates at the 75th reunion. The suspense is in which of us will resemble whom.[73]
>
> Radcliffe College Yearbook, 1955

In the 1950s women at Radcliffe College of Harvard University conceived of womanhood differently. With an eye towards their futures Radcliffe women historically eschewed marriage and focused on their education and their careers. However, in the postwar era Radcliffe women incorporated the traditional Radcliffe College commitment to education into the postwar ideals of womanhood. The assimilation of the ideal with education underscored the complexity of the female experience. In the 1950s even Radcliffe women, who typically sought independence outside of marriage, sought to adhere to the ideals of beauty and marriage.

Radcliffe College's reputation for producing career women attracted young women who shared that vision. However, during the postwar era expectations of womanhood intertwined with Radcliffe's career focus, creating the rhetoric of the working mother. In

[73] Radcliffe Yearbook, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1955, p. 75.

the beginning of the postwar period, Elizabeth Weichel Moore observed the transition as Radcliffe students wanted to be seen as more feminine and desirable, diverging from the former tendency to eschew marriage that left Radcliffe women with a reputation of being mannish and ugly.[74]

Since the mid 19th century, women were torn between marriage and careers. Premier female lawyer and suffragette, Catherine McCullough, spoke of the importance for women to find the right man.[75] The challenge of finding a supportive husband persisted and confronted the women at Radcliffe in the 1950s. Cecile Tannenbaum, a lawyer in the 1950s, echoed McCullough's sentiment, "The question of a career is strictly up to the individual woman she must decide if it means enough to her and if she's willing to face the problems it involves. If she marries, an encouraging husband is vital."[76] While the debate of career versus marriage was the foundation of Radcliffe's early reputation, the Radcliffe students in the postwar era began to change the reputation. In the 1950s at Radcliffe College balancing work and home life was promoted in order to encourage Radcliffe women to marry.

In the postwar era, domesticity for women reigned, causing Radcliffe College and their career focus to stand out. Radcliffe presented the working mother ideal as accessible and achievable, assimilating the ideal of domesticity with the career-centric culture. The

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[74] Elizabeth Weichel Moore, The Radcliffe Years, 1942-1946. Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library, Cambridge, Mass, Elizabeth Weichel Moore Papers, 1929-2007. SC 134, folder 1.3v.

[75] Virginia Drachman, *Sisters In Law: Women Lawyers in Modern American History* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998). 106.

[76] Eli Ginzberg and Alice M Yohalem, *Educated American Women: Self-Portraits* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), 29.

Radcliffe Alumnae Questionnaire sent out in 1956 emphasized the institutional rhetoric of balancing motherhood with a career. The Questionnaire stated: "Never underestimate the Power of a Woman,' the Journal says. We agree – many combine full-time careers with husband, children, housework, and community activities…"[77] Radcliffe women learned through their time at Radcliffe College how to incorporate their career aspirations into their lives as women.

Radcliffe students integrated the 1950s ideal of marriage and marriage-ability into their student culture through the rules and the publications. In 1956, the Radcliffe Alumnae organization proudly announced that 86 percent of the class of 1946 had married, declaring that it dispelled "the old wives tale that Radcliffe girls seldom marry."[78] Radcliffe College and the Radcliffe women who ran the Alumnae organization encouraged and celebrated the trend towards marriage. The assimilation of the 1950s expectations was a conservative trend at Radcliffe College that incorporated the mainstream ideals into the student culture. The student emphasis on marriage-ability emerged over the course of the 1950s as Radcliffe women measured personal goals against the prescriptive expectations.

Even as Radcliffe women began to embrace the ideal of marriage, the predominant culture at Radcliffe College promoted the goal of women having careers and marriage. Students at Radcliffe practiced maintaining careers and personal lives, while in school as they balanced academics and busy social calendars. Elizabeth Weichel Moore reflected on

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[77] Elizabeth Weichel Moore, The Radcliffe Years, 1942-1946. Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library, Cambridge, Mass, Elizabeth Weichel Moore Papers, 1929-2007. SC 134, folder 1.3v.

"Never underestimate the Power of a Woman" is the slogan starting in 1941 of Ladies' Home Journal and referred to the power of a woman to lead a man through sly suggestion and moral correction rather than overt power.

[78] Ibid.

her social life saying: "In addition to studies and volunteering… the social life was almost overwhelming."[79] Beginning in orientation week, Radcliffe women had mixers with Harvard men to facilitate dating that the women were highly encouraged to attend.[80] The 1956 Alumnae questionnaire noted that more than 30 percent of the class was married to Harvard men.[81] The questionnaire demonstrated how the administration encouraged Radcliffe and Harvard unions through its celebration of intermarriage. Young women at Radcliffe filled their social calendars with fraternity parties, concerts, dinners, and lectures in order to actively pursue marriage.

Previously Radcliffe women's reputation of mannishness discouraged the attention of Harvard men; however, in the postwar era the reputation evolved to reflect Radcliffe women's attention to beauty and marriage.[82] Radcliffe women paid more attention to beauty and eligibility for marriage, reflecting the conservative trend of Radcliffe women pursuing marriage. The *Harvard Crimson,* Harvard University's student newspaper, reflected the growing irrelevance of the Radcliffe stereotype of mannishness. The article "A New Kind of Freshman Comes to Radcliffe" featured Sue Hagler, a pretty Radcliffe freshman who demonstrated the desirability of a Radcliffe woman.[83] The celebration of the "New Kind of Freshman" emphasized the explicit rebranding Radcliffe women underwent in order to reshape their reputation as young women who were eligible for marriage. In the

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[79] Ibid.

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

1950s Radcliffe women began to pay more attention to their social lives and beauty as they were influenced by the mainstream expectations of marriage and motherhood.

Radcliffe women's focus began to extend to social lives; however, academics remained an important part of the Radcliffe College experience. While Elizabeth Weichel Moore had an active social life, her academics and ultimately her career took precedent. Elizabeth met and married her husband after she began her career.[84] In high school Elizabeth set herself the goal of being Phi Beta Kappa at Radcliffe College: "In my Belmont High School yearbook I had noted my ambition as Phi Beta Kappa. It was an academic goal I had set for myself."[85] Elizabeth stuck to her goal and was invited to join the honors society early on in her college career.

Elizabeth's academic and professional decisions reflected her opportunities at Radcliffe College. Her 1950-1951 Fulbright Fellowship to the Netherlands and her advanced degree in crystallography from Massachusetts Institute of Technology were products of her ambitions that were encouraged at Radcliffe College. Despite the growing influence of the *Seventeen* ideal of womanhood, Radcliffe College still empowered Elizabeth to plan her future. The young women at Radcliffe College responded to the mainstream cultural pressures and incorporated it into their unique student culture. The assimilation of the *Seventeen* ideal with the traditional career focus of Radcliffe College underscored the spectrum of the lived female experience in the 1950s.

To encourage the prescriptive ideal, the college reproduced the rhetoric of proper female behavior. Radcliffe students' values reflected the ideals of motherhood and

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[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

marriage in the 1950s. The expectations of womanly behavior remained as Radcliffe women embraced the *Seventeen* ideal of marriage. The Radcliffe Student government published an instructional manual for all students on the appropriate ways to navigate the social scene. The pamphlet, titled "Do you know the answers?" instructed Radcliffe women on how to go on dates, how to accept invitations, and how to keep up a public appearance.[86] Through these instructions, the pamphlet illustrated the expectations of female behavior at Radcliffe College and how the women themselves reproduced the ideal.

The instructions, both official and unofficial, reflected the integration of the wider 1950s expectations of womanhood into Radcliffe's student culture. Upon arriving at campus, Elizabeth Weichel Moore was given two things: the Red Book, a booklet full of the official rules of life at Radcliffe College, and a "Senior Sister," who was full of the unofficial rules.[87] The Red Book was published by the administration, while the "Senior Sister" reflected the attitudes of the students. Both sources enforced the expectations of appropriate female behavior and educated Radcliffe women on how to date and to represent the college.

Radcliffe customs reinforced the 1950s expectations of beauty and comportment and emphasized the importance of marriage. The 1950 Red Book encouraged marriage: "The first girl in each class to be married following graduation is presented with a set of Radcliffe China by the other members of the class."[88] This Radcliffe tradition reflected the

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[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Radcliffe Red Book, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951-1952, p. 84.

administration's desire for Radcliffe women to meet their husbands in college and created an incentive for young marriage. The Radcliffe Yearbook from 1958 senior page discussed the concerns facing the graduating seniors: "Why in the world did I plan my wedding for the day after commencement?"[89] While Radcliffe women competed for the china set, the wording of the award, "The first girl in each class to be married following graduation," underlined the importance of graduation. Plenty of women married during college and then dropped out, but at Radcliffe College the administration still encouraged women to graduate.

Similarly the Radcliffe administration encouraged motherhood in the student culture: "The first baby girl to be born to a member of each class following graduation is presented with a silver spoon, and become *[sic]* the mascot of her mother's class."[90] Through the award, Radcliffe encouraged women to start families soon and incorporate them into their professional futures, rather than to eschew family life altogether. The customs presented in the Radcliffe Red Book cement the ideal of Radcliffe students as successful women, who graduated with both a degree and a marriage.

Customs and instructional manuals reinforced the postwar expectations of womanhood; however, simultaneously Radcliffe College contradicted the ideal as it supported Radcliffe women as they pursued careers. Radcliffe women in the 1950s embraced marriage, yet they also resisted the pressure from the mainstream culture to abandon their career aspirations. The *Radcliffe Promoter* was a publication started in 1951

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[89] Radcliffe Yearbook, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1958, p. 70.

[90] Radcliffe Red Book, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1951-1952, p. 84.

that encouraged women to think about their careers after college. The *Radcliffe Promoter* published job opportunities and interviews with working women that made the balance of marriage and career tangible and achievable.

Radcliffe College supported students' ambitions and fostered an environment that encouraged women to have professional careers in addition to marriage, which was stood out in the 1950s. While other institutions discouraged women from pursuing careers because it stole opportunities from men, Radcliffe College and the *Radcliffe Promoter* empowered women to pursue careers.[91] Radcliffe women were encouraged to take advantage of career planning resources and to decide their paths as demonstrated through the presences of publications such as the *Radcliffe Promoter*.

The *Radcliffe Promoter* was published for over a decade and provided more content in the form of interviews with young Radcliffe alumnae, job opportunities, and career planning resources as it grew in popularity. The continued publishing of the *Radcliffe Promoter* indicated that the women of Radcliffe College desired more than just marriage. Elizabeth Weichel Moore's career in crystallography reflected the nurturing environment Radcliffe College provided for students who wanted to pursue professional futures. While many colleges actively subverted female career aspirations through curriculums that focused on domestic skills and raising children, Radcliffe openly empowered women to plan for their futures outside of the home.

The *Radcliffe Promoter* exposed the tension between the 1950s ideal and Radcliffe culture. Radcliffe College fostered an environment that encouraged women to think about

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[91] Ginzberg and Yohalem, "*Educated American Women: Self-Portraits* ," 129.

their futures outside of marriage, while simultaneously reinforcing the ideal of marriage. The purpose of the *Radcliffe Promoter*, as articulated by the founding student contributors, was to create "a new publication devoted to the Special Interest of the Senior who hopes to amount to something in the Job World."[92] The *Radcliffe Promoter* cultivated a supportive environment for career-oriented women to come together, learn, and plan their futures.

Typically, female graduates went into the workforce as secretaries or other traditionally female positions to support husbands and supplement family income until they no longer needed to work. Jean Wells' studies of female college graduates for the Women's Bureau demonstrated the spike in female employment following graduation as women entered the workforce to support husbands. 85 percent of the class of 1957, Wells reported, was in the workforce within six months of graduation.[93] Of the 85 percent, over half were teachers and secretaries, which were common feminine jobs because they were seen as temporary.[94] During the postwar era many women viewed their jobs as temporary until motherhood and marriage came along; however, Radcliffe women did not fit this mold.[95]

While the *Radcliffe Promoter* featured temporary jobs and secretarial skills, the publication also encouraged future orientation and planning careers early on during college experience. The publication and the popularity of the *Radcliffe Promoter* reflected

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[92] The Radcliffe Promoter, 1952, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[93] Jean A Wells, "Employment of June 1957 Women College Graduates," *Monthly Labor Review* 62, no. 6 (June 1959): 663-666.

[94] Jean A Wells, "Employment of June 1957 Women College Graduates," 663-666. Jean A Wells, "Women College Graduates 7 Years Later," *Monthly Labor Review* 90, no. 7 (July 1967): 28-32.

[95] Jean A Wells, "Employment of June 1957 Women College Graduates," 663-666.

one way in which the Radcliffe environment encouraged students to have careers. Women at Radcliffe distinguished themselves from the wider American population of women in their desire for more substantive careers in the government, sciences, or abroad. The variety of recruiters that came to Radcliffe demonstrated that many Radcliffe women saw their jobs as careers, rather than placeholders until marriage and motherhood.[96]

The *Radcliffe Promoter* featured opportunities for women that were outside the traditionally accepted female careers of teaching, nursing, or secretarial work illustrating the complexity of femininity at Radcliffe. While Radcliffe women wanted to be perceived as feminine, their definition of feminine behavior did not limit them to specific fields. The January 1955 issue of the *Radcliffe Promoter* informed Radcliffe women about a wide variety of positions spanning from working as a stewardess for American World Airlines to an apprenticeship with the Episcopal Church.[97] A section titled "February Activities" listed the recruiters who came to meet with Radcliffe women that month. The list included recruiters from the National Security Agency on February 1st, "a government security agency" on February 2nd, Harvard University and Harvard Medical School on February 8th, and MIT on February 28th.[98]

The *Radcliffe Promoter* lent tangibility to the idea of integrating careers with domesticity because it celebrated Radcliffe women who got jobs. The "Recent Placement News" section of the *Radcliffe Promoter* reinforced the reality that Radcliffe women did get

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[96] Ibid.

[97] The apprenticeship was the entry-level position for young women who wanted to get involved in the Episcopal Church on a management or administrative level. It was an opportunity for leadership and management training. For more specifics about the position read the listing in: The Radcliffe Promoter, 1955, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[98] The Radcliffe Promoter, 1955, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

jobs and did have careers. The *Radcliffe Promoter* provided a source of concrete positive reinforcement of career effort that encouraged Radcliffe women to pursue their goals in spite of outside pressures.[99] January 1954 issue updated readers about what members of the Class of 1952 were doing since graduation:

> Nancy Barrow Wainwright is a member of the Junior Management Assistant Program in Washington. Mary Blanchard assumed the duties of an analytic aide in the capital, while Dorothy Welch works for the Dept. of the Interior.[100]

The *Radcliffe Promoter*'s emphasis on the achievements of these women suggested that these women planned to stay in their jobs and wanted to inspire other Radcliffe women to follow in their footsteps. The *Radcliffe Promoter* reinforced Radcliffe's career-oriented culture and openly created a forum to discuss opportunities.

Through the interviews with alumna, the *Radcliffe Promoter* emphasized the Radcliffe value of having a career and presented an attainable reality for Radcliffe women, even if they were married. One of the featured women, Ann O'Leary, was a Radcliffe alumna who was a code clerk for the Foreign Service. A code clerk in the Foreign Service encrypted and decrypted messages requiring advanced language skills and security clearance. The training involved in this position required individuals who were committed to their job long term. During her interview the alumna expressed her experience entering the working world.

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[99] The Radcliffe Promoter, 1953, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[100] The Radcliffe Promoter, 1954, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

> This all started last February when the State Department recruiting team was in town. I was in my 'International Mood' and it sounded like a good opportunity to get overseas quickly. I filled out the preliminary application forms, took a clerical test, and was tentatively accepted by the Dept…. In May I received a telegram stating that I was accepted by the Foreign Service for the position of Code Clerk, and went to Washington in July.[101]

The alumna's experiences reinforced the attainability of a career because she focused on Radcliffe College's support and resources. Helen Margolis, another featured woman, recounted finding a new job after following her fiancé to England.[102] The interviews centered on the ease of the working world and emphasized its accessibility.

The *Radcliffe Promoter* made career information widely accessible to Radcliffe women and it made beginning the process less daunting. The "Job Hunting Tips" section of the *Radcliffe Promoter* in the January 1954 issue reinforced the attainability of a career. The *Radcliffe Promoter* presented career advice in way that was practical and accessible to the Radcliffe women. The January 1954 edition of the *Radcliffe Promoter* included information about the correct attitude to have while job hunting and appropriate interview behavior.[103] Both *Seventeen* and the *Radcliffe Promoter* created etiquette for success, although *Seventeen*'s success was directed at getting married and the *Radcliffe Promoter*'s was focused on getting hired.

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[101] The Radcliffe Promoter, 1953, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[102] Ibid.

[103] The Radcliffe Promoter, 1954, Radcliffe College, Schlesinger Library. Cambridge, Massachusetts.

While the *Radcliffe Promoter* emphasized careers in all disciplines, it also recognized the reality that many women did not wish to compete in male dominated careers and were looking for teaching or secretarial work following college. In 1954 the *Radcliffe Promoter* featured a special issue dedicated to the "Radcliffe Summer Secretarial School."[104] The secretarial school prepared women to enter the workforce directly after completion of the course. This reveals the complexity of the Radcliffe student culture. Radcliffe students were split between women who wanted to challenge gender roles in the professional sphere, such as Elizabeth Weichel Moore and her career in crystallography, and those who wanted to enter traditionally feminine career paths.

Radcliffe College placed an emphasis on the postwar ideals of femininity and marriage; however, the expectations of female behavior at Radcliffe College did not limit women to domesticity. Traditionally Radcliffe women arrived looking to pursue a career; however, in the 1950s that impulse was incorporated into the national expectations of marriage. Radcliffe empowered its students to balance personal and professional lives, a distinct departure from the mainstream ideal of womanhood presented in *Seventeen Magazine*. Previously the tradition at Radcliffe was to eschew marriage altogether, therefore the movement towards balancing a career with marriage reflected the influence of the pressure to marry. The predominant culture at Radcliffe promoted women having careers and marriage because the emphasis was to encourage women to marry at all. The narratives of the Radcliffe women, such as Elizabeth Weichel Moore and Ann O'Leary, and student publications, such as the Radcliffe Red Books and the *Radcliffe Promoter*, reflected

[104] Ibid.

the unique Radcliffe articulation of female behavior as it combined the traditions of Radcliffe student culture and the larger social pressure.

CHAPTER FOUR

SPARKING INTELLECTUALISM AT BARNARD COLLEGE

> I guess that's the way I feel about every class this quarter, and it is something that is so marvelous a thing, to be in a place where great minds are with you in the classroom and hear you when you want to learn. It makes me wonder if I shouldn't go and prepare myself to really take advantage of it all.[105]
>
> Susan Delattre, January 16, 1958

> The Barnard Student is serious, sincere, and interested in her work. She questions rather than accepts blindly. She is aware of the present, of the value of the past, and of the future problems her generation will face. No matter how small her chosen field of study may be, her interests extend to the community at large.[106]
>
> Ronnie Myers, *the Barnard Bulletin*, June 5, 1952

Barnard women demonstrated another dimension of the 1950s female experience, one of intellectual engagement. The women who attended Barnard College of Columbia University arrived intending to fulfill the expected goal of marriage and motherhood; however, through their education they were empowered to consider definitions of womanhood beyond that ideal. While the women at Jackson College pushed boundaries of behavior within the narrative of marriage and Radcliffe women adapted the marriage

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[105] Susan Delattre, personal letter, January 16, 1958. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 92-M120, 92-M152, 94-M13 Box: 7.

[106] Ronnie Myers, "Barnard Forum: Gradutating Senior Evaluates Four Years at Barnard," *Barnard Bulletin*, June 5, 1952: 2.

narrative to fit their career-minded values, Barnard women broke out of the prescriptive female narrative through intellectualism. Yearbooks, student newspapers, and private letters illustrated how Barnard women interacted with the expectations for women in the 1950s.

As an institution, Barnard College cultivated female intellectualism against the pressure of the 1950s ideal of womanhood. Barnard College taught "the value of intellectual freedom" which contradicted the prescriptive expectations of women in the postwar era.[107] The Barnard College yearbook, called the *Mortarboard*, illustrated the values of the student body that contradicted *Seventeen*'s ideal of womanhood.[108] In the 1959 *Mortarboard*, students on the yearbook committee reflected on the purpose of the yearbook. "Our purpose in printing these individual expressions is to show how the classroom, the library – the intricate maze itself – can serve as a stimulus to further thinking, enabling us to continue our quest for knowledge beyond the walls of college."[109] The yearbook staff reinforced Barnard's identity as an institution that encouraged women to think critically about the world around them. Barnard College's culture explicitly rejected the limited definition of womanhood that saturated the 1950s.

Typically in the 1950s, women's colleges had specialized female curriculums to prepare young women for domesticity. Because many young women set their sights solely on marriage and motherhood in the postwar era, they only wanted education that was an

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[107] Mortarboard, Barnard College, New York City, New York, 1954.

[108] A mortarboard is the cap worn traditionally at graduations. Calling the yearbook the Mortarboard, further emphasized Barnard's dedication to higher education and graduation as an achievement, rather than seeing college as only an expedient to marriage.

[109] Mortarboard, Barnard College, New York City, New York, 1959.

expedient to that end.[110] Domesticity and motherhood-focused education developed in response to young women wanting to plan for their marital futures and not consider alternatives. The gendered curriculum that was developed to teach women how to manage homes and raise children further reinforced the mainstream definition of womanhood.[111]

While the gendered curriculum became common in the postwar era, not all women's colleges embraced the trend. Barnard College had comprehensive and in some instances co-educational curricula.[112] The divergence of Barnard from other colleges underscored the spectrum of female education in the 1950s. While some college women eschewed liberal arts educations fearing it would make them unattractive or unappealing, other women, such as those at Barnard embraced their education.

Rather than limiting students to a domesticity-centric curriculum, Barnard College featured a rigorous and diverse academic course load. In the 1950 Mortarboard, the yearbook staff remembered the time spent studying fondly.

> From nine in the morning till five (or even six) in the afternoon and sometimes on Saturdays, our time is primarily taken up with classes. As we look back on college twenty years from now, our most vivid memories will be the lectures when our pen ran dry in the middle of the Crimean war, those frantic battles with the law of gravity in lab, and the seminars where

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[110] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 2001), 228.

[111] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique,* 237.

[112] In the 1950s all three colleges, Jackson, Radcliffe, and Barnard, had co-educational curricula. Jackson College and Radcliffe College also valued female learning beyond the typical college in the 1950s, choosing to give women liberal arts educations, rather than one aimed at creating only a future housewife. For more discussion on sex-directed education in the 1950s read: Betty Friedan, " The Sex-Directed Educators" in *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 2001).

> we settled all the problems which ever disturbed Marx and Milton, Freud and Aristotle.[113]

Coursework in many disciplines from physics to philosophy defined the college experience for Barnard women. While *Seventeen* told women to focus on beauty, dating, and marriage, Barnard women focused on getting a strong liberal arts education.

Susan Delattre transferred to Barnard College in 1957 from Stanford University. She immediately took to the intellectual environment. Writing to her family friend, Susan enthusiastically recounted her coursework.

> Have you ever read Camus' The Plague? When I read the book, it was so thoroughly confused about what pain meant that I didn't know whether I was coming or going. The main character is a doctor, and so I thought it might be particularly interesting to you.[114]

Her struggle with the meaning of Camus' *The Plague* underscored her inquiry outside of classroom and her excitement over her newfound intellectualism.

Barnard did not give its students a womanly education; instead it focused on teaching young women how to think independently and critically. In addition to her interest in dating, Susan embraced the intellectualism of Barnard and shared her feelings.

> I guess that's the way I feel about every class this quarter, and it is something that is so marvelous a thing, to be in a place where great minds are with you in the classroom and hear you

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[113] Mortarboard, Barnard College, New York City, New York, 1950: 10.

[114] Susan Delattre, personal letter, January 16, 1958. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 92-M120, 92-M152, 94-M13 Box: 7.

> when you want to learn. It makes me wonder if I shouldn't go and prepare myself to really take advantage of it all.[115]

Susan's letters illustrated the academic culture created by Barnard College that emphasized intellectual ability.

Barnard women were committed to their academics, unlike many other college women in the 1950s who were focused on finding their future husbands and approached academics halfheartedly. The *Barnard Bulletin*, Barnard College's student newspaper, suspended production of the newspaper so that the staff could better prepare for finals.[116] *The Barnard Bulletin* article "Finally Finals" revealed a snapshot of life during finals period at Barnard.

> As exam time approaches students everywhere bow their muddled heads in silent prayer that they will survive the dreaded ordeal. The method of approach to finals may differ according to the individual. There are those efficient few who plan their course of study so come exams, an intensive review of carefully compiled notes is all that is needed to extract an A from even the most dyspeptic professor. But on the other hand the majority of students striving toward a goal of higher education find that with the advent of final exams they are almost totally unprepared. Cramming is the inevitable outcome and coffee growers and drugstores do a land-slide business with black coffee and Pep tablets the sole menu for long nights of study, study, study.[117]

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[115] Ibid.

[116] *Barnard Bulletin*, "Finally Finals," January 12, 1950: 1.

[117] Ibid.

The singular determination described by the article emphasized the sincerity with which Barnard women approached academics. Barnard students placed their social lives on hold in order to spend more time studying during finals.

While Barnard students valued their academics over their social lives, their social lives were still important. Social life at Barnard reflected the persistence of the mainstream ideal of womanhood and the expectation of marriage. The 1950 Mortarboard had pages that featured numerous dances and teas between Barnard women and Columbia men.[118]

Susan Delattre had an active social life throughout her time at Barnard, revealing the complexity of the female experience. While she adored her coursework, Susan also was influenced by the expectations of women in the 1950s. Even as she embraced her intellectualism, Susan did not separate entirely from traditional female behaviors. On New Year's Eve in 1958, Susan broke up with her boyfriend of two years and within two weeks she was out dating again.[119] In her letter to a family friend written on January 16, 1958 she implied that her dating life was tragic. "As for the opposite sex, well, I've got a blind date with one of them for Saturday night. That just about shows you the status of my social life, which is nothing to brag about, I'm afraid."[120] Susan's long-term relationship and her quick return to the dating pool illustrated that she valued her social life and her hunt for a boyfriend.

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[118] Mortarboard, Barnard College, New York City, New York, 1950.

[119] Susan Delattre, personal letter, February 1, 1958. Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 92-M120, 92-M152, 94-M13 Box: 7

[120] Ibid.

The female experience at Barnard College revealed the contradiction between the reality at Barnard and ideals that young women typically subscribed to at women's colleges. While on some college campuses "shop talk" was unofficially banned because women wanted to appear feminine and uninterested in masculine subjects such as religion, sex, and politics, Barnard women embraced the intellectual impulse and participated in extracurricular activities that furthered their intellectual engagement.[121] As members of the science club, pre-med society, and math club, Barnard women engaged with like-minded women outside of class and founded communities that encouraged academic curiosity.[122] These clubs, featured in the 1950 *Mortarboard*, underscored the intellectual communities that Barnard women fostered.

Barnard women were intellectuals who enjoyed the pursuit of knowledge and higher education beyond the classroom; their time at Barnard prepared them to engage with those ideas throughout their lives. Unlike other women's colleges, Barnard College prepared women to take on the world with eyes wide open. There was no single definition of female success at Barnard; instead students were encouraged to ask questions, to be critical, and to shape their own lives. The women championed their education and the awareness it gave them to choose their path. A *Barnard Bulletin* article from 1952 articulated how students viewed their education.

> We recognize that the relative paradise in which we have lived as students is only a relative one, that within our own sphere there is much which needs to be amended. But we also

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[121] Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique,* 231.

[122] Mortarboard, Barnard College, New York City, New York, 1950: 34-35.

> recognize that which we find good here – the kind of freedom of thought and behavior which we have enjoyed – has inherent in the philosophy which we must carry out with us after graduation: the philosophy that man *[sic]* is capable of thinking and acting in good faith. We believe that this is the only philosophy capable of coping with the manifest problems inherited by our generation, and we urge the graduating seniors to go out into the world and act upon it. We ask them not to stand in disgust as they view what has been left to them, but to grapple with it, and produce a more positive world than the one which they have come upon.[123]

Barnard College educated the whole woman to be an active participant in the world around them. Barnard College encouraged its students to be aware of the social and political problems around them, to engage with social issues, and to ask philosophical questions. Barnard's ideal of female intellectualism was a fundamentally different aim than most women's colleges had in the 1950s.

Barnard's commitment to female education stood out in the 1950s when women typically were treated as auxiliary students. "At Barnard I thought women could conquer the world, have children, and be great professors."[124] Beth Isaacs entered Barnard College in 1947 already married and primed for a career in motherhood. Previously Beth attended the University of Michigan. During her time at the University of Michigan, she adhered to the traditional 1950s path of womanhood; she married a fellow student in her sophomore year and studied English literature. Then Beth transferred to Barnard College, following

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[123] *Barnard Bulletin*, "A Positive Program," June 5, 1952.

[124] Ginzberg and Yohalem, *Educated American Women: Self-Portraits*, 130.

her husband who came to Columbia University to get his doctorate.[125] Upon arriving at Barnard, Beth began to see her future differently. Growing up, Beth planned on being a housewife: "I did feel that I would want to be home with my young children."[126] Beth's trajectory aligned with *Seventeen*'s ideal of marriage. Beth arrived at Barnard College having married young and on a clear path to domesticity; however, her expectations changed.

Barnard professors fostered Beth's intellectual spirit. Upon arriving at Barnard College, Beth embraced the academic environment. Beth changed her major to economics because it was more "scientific," which illustrated the impact Barnard College had on her educational interests.[127] Beth worked closely with her economics professor who encouraged her to pursue graduate work. "One important influence at that time was a professor at Barnard with whom I participated in a later-published study. She managed to combine teaching, research, and motherhood in a remarkable manner."[128] Inspired by her professor, Beth went on to get her Master's degree in 1951 and swiftly entered an economics Ph.D. program at Columbia University.[129] Beth's transformation underscored the intellectualism that Barnard fostered in the students and how Barnard encouraged women to push their vision beyond marriage.

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[125] Ibid., 128.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

Once at Columbia University for her Ph.D., Beth Isaacs encountered professors who passed her up for opportunities because she was a woman and they did not want to invest in a career that probably would not happen.

> When I was at Columbia I learned how 'disadvantaged' a woman can be. Because of her future 'time-out' from work… these jobs (in undergrad courses) were for graduate student males. Once I asked a professor for such a 'practical assistantship'... and he said to me, 'I can't, Beth. You're a very bright student but you'll have children and quit working in the field and not be publishing papers which redound to the credit and illustrious name of the university. So I will choose a male assistant.'[130]

Beth's treatment at Barnard College versus her treatment at Columbia University revealed the attitudes that limited women in higher education. The expectation of women pursuing marriage and motherhood limited her achievement. Beth's experience underscored the impact the mainstream expectations of women had on young women's lives even as they tried to aim beyond it.

Barnard College encouraged academics and celebrated achievements outside of the path of marriage and motherhood. The *Barnard Bulletin* featured a full-length column on the first page of the commencement issue to celebrate four Barnard seniors in 1952 who were awarded Fulbright scholarships.[131] Additionally the *Barnard Bulletin* noted that twenty-one Barnard students between 1949 and 1951 received Fulbright scholarships. By

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[130] Ibid., 129.

[131] Jane Were-Bey, "Award Fulbrights For Foreign Study To Barnard Seniors," *Barnard Bulletin*, June 5, 1952: 1-2.

featuring the successes of students outside of the mainstream role of womanhood, the *Barnard Bulletin* – much like the *Radcliffe Promoter* – reinforced the accessibility of the alternatives and encouraged women to make their own path.

In addition to academic careers, Barnard supported women who wished to have professional ones. The Barnard Placement Office was a great resource for Barnard women who wished to have careers after graduation. The January 12, 1950 issue of the *Barnard Bulletin* advertised summer job opportunities.

> The Barnard Placement Office announces that the Civil Service Commission has notified them of examinations for Student Aid Trainees in the fields fo *[sic]* chemistry and physics. There will be openings for the summer of 1950 and sophomores and juniors who are majoring or planning to major in those fields will be eligible.[132]

Barnard College encouraged women to pursue substantive careers after graduation by making them accessible. Summer job opportunities introduced Barnard students to different fields. The advertisement of jobs, specifically jobs in the hard sciences, demonstrated that Barnard women took their studies seriously and planned to go far with them.

While the *Barnard Bulletin* advertised careers, some Barnard women chose to become housewives after graduation. Their decision emphasized the complexity of the female experience in the 1950s. Despite the encouragement to pursue other paths, some

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[132] *Barnard Bulletin*, "Summer Jobs Available ," January 12, 1950: 1.

women stuck to the ideal presented in *Seventeen*. Beth Isaacs initially entered Columbia University's graduate school; however, not long after she left her program to raise a family.

Beth's ultimate return to domesticity reflected the tension between her experience at Barnard College and sexism of Columbia professors. While Barnard College sparked her intellectual ambitions, the expectations of domesticity remained with her. Once she left Barnard College she realigned with the mainstream expectations of women.

> All of my credits for the Ph.D. were completed and qualifying exams passed by 1952. All that had to be done was the thesis. However, my husband had obtained his Ph.D. and was leaving Columbia for post-graduate work at California Institute of Technology. Of course, I went with him.[133]

Beth abandoned her doctoral studies to follow her husband. Shortly after that Beth began having children and returned to domesticity. "Their needs and happiness have effectively shunted aside all my former work goals, although the inner desire to do creative research… remains."[134]

While Beth's career ambitions remained, she followed the traditional route of womanhood. Beth's choice demonstrated the contradiction of the female experience in the 1950s. There was no one path or experience for young women. Upon graduating Barnard College, Beth chose to break out of the ideal of domesticity through her graduate work, however, her original social destiny of marriage and motherhood soon returned. Beth's path underscored the complexity of the female experience.

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[133] Ginzberg and Yohalem, *Educated American Women: Self-Portraits,* 129.

[134] Ibid., 130.

Marriage and domesticity saturated the postwar era, complicating the experience of women at Barnard College. Once arriving at Barnard, students encountered a completely new environment seemingly removed from the 1950s ideal that cultivated female agency. In the 1950s women at Barnard College stood apart from the mainstream ideal of womanhood, presenting an alternative path of intellectualism and questioning. The clubs, Mortarboard, and the *Barnard Bulletin* articles underscored the academic identity that Barnard women shared. However, as demonstrated by the experiences of Beth Isaacs and Susan Delattre, Barnard women were not free of *Seventeen*'s ideal of womanhood. The influence of the mainstream narrative of female behavior persisted within the Barnard experience illustrating another incarnation of the female experience in the 1950s.

CONCLUSION

In the 1950s the expectation was that young women planned solely for marriage and remained within the boundaries of appropriate behavior; however, this ideal was not the reality. Throughout the postwar era young college women pushed boundaries and found agency within the confines of the ideal. While young women's futures were informed by society's expectations, young women were not without agency.

Seventeen Magazine presented the standard of female behavior by which the average young woman measured herself in the 1950. *Seventeen* defined the mainstream perception of the appropriate behaviors of young women and shaped how young women saw their future. While *Seventeen* hinted at an alternative experience, revealing the complexity and the contradictions of the postwar era, traditionally *Seventeen* reinforced the prescriptive narrative of female behavior in the 1950s through articles, advertisements, and advice columns.

At Jackson College, the expectation of marriage and maintaining the appropriate female education dominated student life. As demonstrated through the parietals and comportment expectations, Jackson women publically maintained the highest standards of female behavior in order to align themselves with the ideal presented in *Seventeen*. Jackson culture celebrated the ideal presented in *Seventeen* with housewifery being the end goal for the students. However, within the student body there was a division between the young women who adhered to the rules and the women who challenged them. The schism within the Jackson student population echoed the complexity of the female reality in the 1950s.

Alternatively, Radcliffe College reshaped the expectations of womanhood, through the celebration of the working mother. Radcliffe College, unlike Jackson College, attracted

career-oriented women; therefore the addition of marriage to the ambitions of Radcliffe women was a conservative effort. The era's emphasis on marriage influenced the Radcliffe woman's career-oriented plans, illustrating the complexity of how the ideals of the era mixed with female realities.

While Jackson College and Radcliffe College encouraged the 1950s vision of womanhood in their students, at Barnard College women learned to be critical of the expectations of women and to actively choose their path. Barnard College fostered intellectualism as it encouraged women to engage fully with their coursework and their futures. Despite their education and the emphasis on careers, many Barnard women became housewives demonstrating the complexity of the interaction between Barnard's ideals and the expectations of the 1950s. The experience of young women at Barnard College underscored the contradictions inherent in the reality of the female experience in the postwar era.

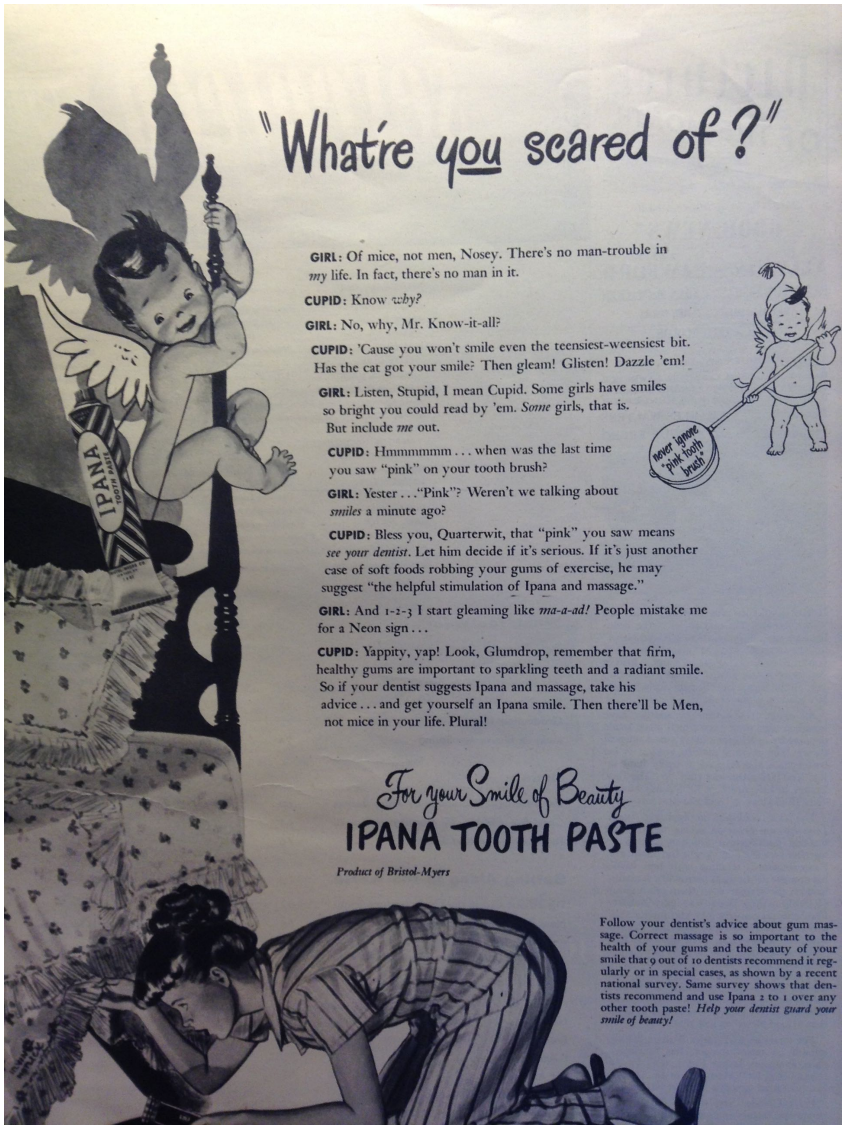
Although the 1950s defined a strict public expectation of womanhood, the realities of young women reflected the individual agency women had to shape their futures. While *Seventeen* presented a concrete ideal of female behavior, young college women experienced a complex reality. Through the case studies of Jackson College, Radcliffe College, and Barnard College the lived behaviors of young women come to light. Jackson women were empowered within the ideal, shaping them to be leaders, advocates, and housewives. Alternatively Radcliffe women interpreted the ideal in the context of their own paths balancing motherhood with careers, while Barnard women were taught to be critical of the expected path and choose for themselves. While *Seventeen* illustrated how young women publically consumed the ideal of womanhood, the experiences of the Jackson, Radcliffe, and

Barnard women revealed the complexity and contradictions inherent in the female experience during the 1950s.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

IPANA TOOTHPASTE ADVERTISEMENT IN *SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE,* JANUARY 1948



APPENDIX B

KOTEX SANITARY NAPKIN ADVERTISEMENT IN *SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE,* JANUARY 1948

APPENDIX C

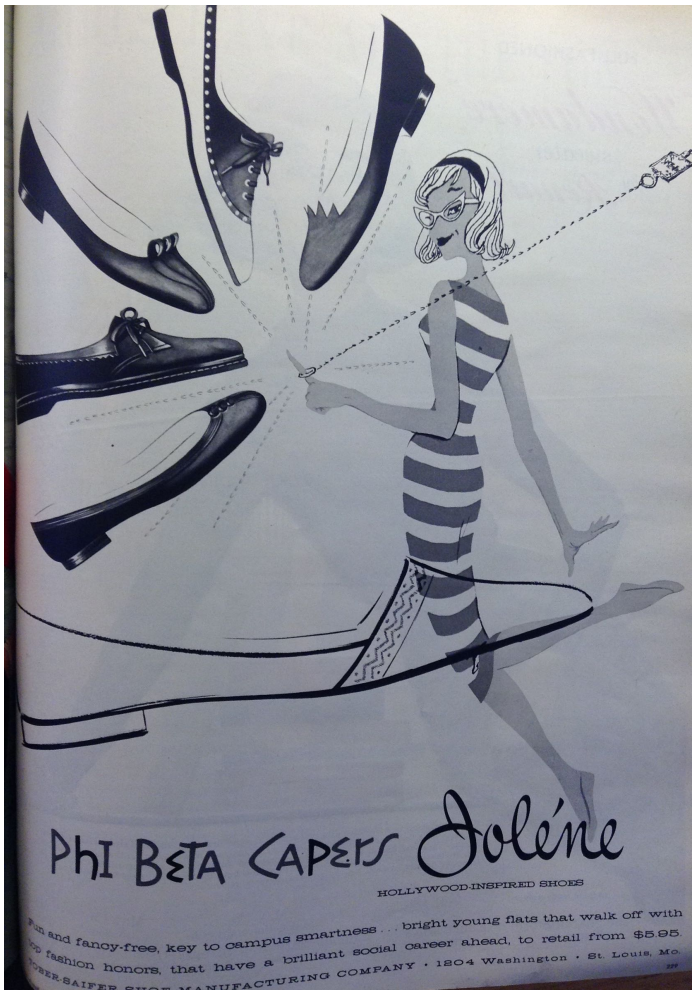
IVY LEAGUE FASHION IN *SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE*, AUGUST 1956

APPENDIX D

JOAN MARIE SWEATER ADVERTISEMENT SET IN *SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE*, AUGUST 1956

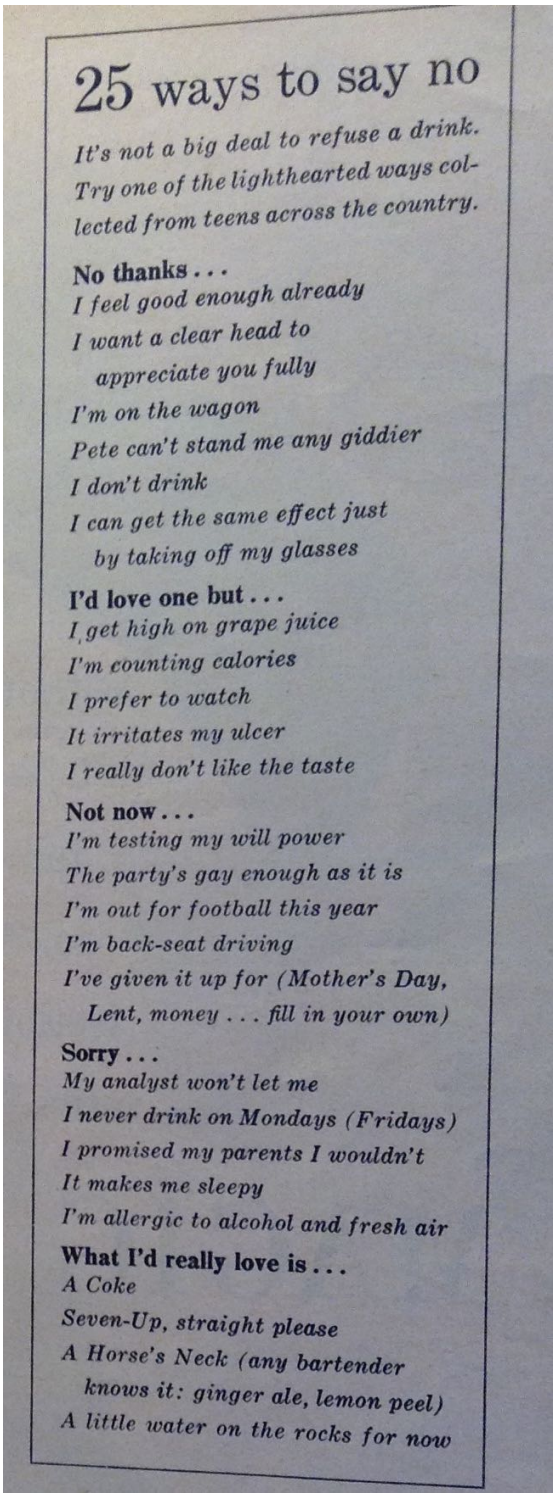
APPENDIX E

JOLENE SHOES ADVERTISEMENT IN *SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE*, AUGUST 1956



APPENDIX F

"DRINKING: WHAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU?" *SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE*, JULY 1960



25 ways to say no

It's not a big deal to refuse a drink. Try one of the lighthearted ways collected from teens across the country.

No thanks . . .
I feel good enough already
I want a clear head to appreciate you fully
I'm on the wagon
Pete can't stand me any giddier
I don't drink
I can get the same effect just by taking off my glasses

I'd love one but . . .
I get high on grape juice
I'm counting calories
I prefer to watch
It irritates my ulcer
I really don't like the taste

Not now . . .
I'm testing my will power
The party's gay enough as it is
I'm out for football this year
I'm back-seat driving
I've given it up for (Mother's Day, Lent, money . . . fill in your own)

Sorry . . .
My analyst won't let me
I never drink on Mondays (Fridays)
I promised my parents I wouldn't
It makes me sleepy
I'm allergic to alcohol and fresh air

What I'd really love is . . .
A Coke
Seven-Up, straight please
A Horse's Neck (any bartender knows it: ginger ale, lemon peel)
A little water on the rocks for now

APPENDIX G

CAMAY SOAP ADVERTISEMENT IN *SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE*, JANUARY 1948

APPENDIX H

LINEN TROUSSEAU CLUB ADVERTISEMENT IN *SEVENTEEN MAGAZINE,* JANUARY 1948

APPENDIX I

"CADET CUTIE ENHANCES AIR SCIENCE CURRICULUM,"

TUFTS WEEKLY, DECEMBER 14, 1965.

TUFTS WEEKLY

Cadet Cutie Enhances Air Science Curriculum

By DOROTHY KALLIS '57

Marion Lloyd, a Jackson freshman, is currently the only girl enrolled in the air science course, and only the second girl to have done so in the history of the Tufts Air Force ROTC.

She is not, however, officially in the AFROTC, but is taking the course for credit. She could probably, on completion of the basic course, apply for and get a commission in the Women's Air Force, but her ambitions lie in a different field entirely.

The daughter of a physiologist, Marion's ambition is to go into research. She graduated from Great Neck, New York, High School, and is majoring in biology and chemistry here.

Always interested in aviation, Marion was in the Ground Observer's Corps in Great Neck for three years. It was this interest in aviation that prompted her to enroll in the air science course. As well as aviation, this course covers the contemporary world situation and international tensions, and the role which the airplane plays in the modern world scene.

Marion, of course, does not have to drill along with the other members of the AFROTC. She does office work, decorating, and similar duties instead. She still has the option of signing up to receive a commission officially.

Other universities have allowed women in the AFROTC, and there has been interest expressed in starting a women's unit here, if enough interest is shown.

Marion took the course because of her basic interest in flying, and because she wanted to learn about current events from the point of view of the Air Force. The course, she says, gives an outlook on life which no other course at this college would give, and it is a good course for anyone living in this day and age, because in our times we are all dependent upon the airplane.

MARION LLOYD

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