

ABSTRACT

BARR, KRISPIN WAGONER. The Historical Legacy of a Secret Society at Duke University (1913-1971): Cultural Hegemony and the Tenacious Ideals of the “Big Man on Campus.” (Under the direction of Dr. Audrey Jaeger).

Collegiate secret societies, as distinguished from Greek-letter fraternal organizations, enjoyed prominence within many American campus communities from the early nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century (Baird, 1879; Hitchcock, 1863; Slosson, 1910; Veysey, 1965). The establishment of these elite groups preceded the maturation of university administrative structures responsible for managing students’ extracurricular life, as well as the mass democratization of American higher education which occurred after World War II (Rudolph, 1990; Cohen, 2010). The presence of prestigious secret societies is documented and celebrated in college yearbooks and newspapers, reflecting a period in higher education’s past when the hegemony of the white, male prevailed in student culture and fostered the composite ideal of the “Big Man on Campus” (“B.M.O.C.”) – the handsome varsity athlete, fraternity man, and club president destined for success in American public life.

Although collegiate secret societies “disappeared” on many campuses in the Civil Rights Era amidst accusations of elitism and reactions against established white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant norms, their legacy lingers into the twenty-first century, along with many unanswered questions about their historical role as a source of student power on campus. Their roots can be traced to the prestigious all-male boarding schools of the Northeastern United States in the late nineteenth century where patterns of upper-class masculine socialization developed. Due to a dearth of historical research on this topic, however, institutional leaders are challenged to understand the origins, purpose, and legacy of this type

of student association that still holds meaning for students and other stakeholders in some campus communities.

This study utilized critical social theory from Bourdieu and Gramsci and the emerging scholarship of whiteness studies to provide an historical analysis of the rise and fall of the Order of Red Friars senior class secret society that was active at Duke University (Trinity College prior to 1924) between 1913 and 1971. Student leaders who manifested the “B.M.O.C.” ideal were tapped for membership in this group and collaborated with presidents, trustees, administrators, and select faculty on an agenda for student life (Durden, 1993). Utilizing archival research methods and oral history interviews, I was able to explore the involvement of the Order of Red Friars in the administration of student affairs at Duke University for sixty years during the twentieth century. This study provided basic knowledge about the phenomenon of the collegiate secret society and a deeper understanding of the cultural hegemony from which they emerged that continues to influence campus cultures today.

The history of American higher education literature documents how faculty discarded their *in loco parentis* responsibilities for managing student behavior as their field professionalized in the late nineteenth century (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011; Veysey, 1965) and how specialization of the student affairs profession coalesced four decades later in the 1930s (ACE, 1937; Biddix & Schwartz, 2012; Lloyd-Jones, 1934; Schwartz, 2003). Yet, the historical role of students in the campus power structure of the early twentieth century, and particularly their role in sustaining their extracurricular affairs during this period, has been largely unexamined. This study addresses the gap that exists in the history of higher education literature about collegiate culture in the early twentieth century in the South, as

well as the phenomenon of the collegiate secret society as a source of power on campus.

(Thelin, 1982; Veysey, 1965).

© Copyright 2013 by Krispin Wagoner Barr

All Rights Reserved

The Historical Legacy of a Secret Society at Duke University (1913-1971): Cultural
Hegemony and the Tenacious Ideals of the “Big Man on Campus”

by
Krispin Wagoner Barr

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of
North Carolina State University
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Educational Research and Policy Analysis

Raleigh, North Carolina

2013

APPROVED BY:

Dr. Audrey Jaeger
Committee Chair

Dr. Alyssa Rockenbach

Dr. Karrie Dixon

Dr. Paul Umbach

Dr. Daniel Prosterman

DEDICATION

To Michael Barr, Bridget & Patrick,

the loves of my life

BIOGRAPHY

As a scholar of American higher education and a student affairs practitioner whose career began in the 1980s, I have experienced firsthand the diversification and globalization of higher education in this country over the past quarter century. Due to my role as a dean of students at a small, liberal arts college for women in the Southeastern United States, in the midst of this growing student diversity, I have been educated by the strengthened voice of students from historically underrepresented backgrounds regarding the power of social class and privilege in the college setting and the impact it has had on their college experience. I have become increasingly aware of my obligation as a student affairs practitioner in a position of power to work on behalf of students from underrepresented backgrounds to build a more inclusive campus community true to the democratic purpose historically espoused in American higher education.

I am fully aware that my perspective in studying collegiate secret societies is rooted in my personal experience as a college student at Appalachian State University in the mountains of North Carolina in the 1980s. As an undergraduate, I was actively involved in what historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (1987) refers to as “college life” – the organized aspects of campus life. I participated in Greek life and found membership in a sorority to be a transformational experience. Having grown up in a culturally homogeneous small town in western North Carolina, my sorority experience introduced me to people from different parts of the country with different religious backgrounds. I developed many social skills and expanded my worldview through interaction with my sorority sisters. Because of my

sorority's emphasis on leadership, scholarship, and service (as well as social life), I did well academically and enjoyed my time in college. I majored in history, thus returning to this approach for my doctoral dissertation is like coming home. I also wrote for the student newspaper and served on the editorial board for three years which, ironically, are activities Horowitz associates with iconoclastic students who are "rebels" opposed to "college life" and more interested in rectifying social injustices.

My insider perspective is further informed by my work as a student affairs practitioner with more than 25 years of experience in diverse campus settings. I have worked at both private and public institutions of varying sizes in three different regions of the country – the South, Midwest, and Northeast. I have worked in student activities and as a dean at colleges for women (Queens College – Charlotte, North Carolina; Cedar Crest College – Allentown, PA, and Salem College – Winston-Salem, NC) which of course has heightened my awareness of gender in the higher education setting. I also worked in Greek Affairs at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania – a predominantly male institution known for its engineering programs and for having one of the largest Greek systems in the country, which served to temper my perspective on gender issues. My graduate assistantships in student life at The Ohio State University and my work in new student orientation at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro round out my extensive exposure to diverse student cultures and subcultures which shapes my approach to this topic.

Finally, as a scholar-practitioner, I approach the world as a "transformative intellectual" (Foster, 1989). I recognize that all of my experience as a student and an

administrator is from predominantly white institutions where the norms of the majority have dominated student culture and traditions. The thrust of my research is about the social phenomenon of collegiate secret societies which presumably perpetuated the norms of dominant social groups on many American campuses through much of the twentieth century. Because these groups are still functioning on some campuses today, I think critically about my obligation as an administrator to better understand aspects of student culture that are socially reproduced and rooted in the values of students from a historical period characterized by students' white, male, middle to upper class, Protestant homogeneity.

I believe that by studying the early twentieth-century origins of a collegiate secret society whose members exemplified the "BMOC" ideal, I might illuminate other aspects of the uniquely American extracurriculum, such as varsity athletics, fraternity membership, and student government, which were established amidst the cultural hegemony of that same period. For college administrators around the country who may be unaware of secret societies on their campuses or believe that their presence is inconsequential, I would argue that the known existence of these groups on our campuses (whether extant or active) provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the tenacity of the cultural hegemony which produced not only collegiate secret societies celebrating the "BMOC ideal, but similar aspects of college life that are visible all around us if we dare to look.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks are in order for Mr. Stimp Hawkins, Virginia Cavalier extraordinaire, Class of 1960 and Charlottesville native, who first piqued my interest in the mysterious phenomenon of collegiate secret societies. After several expeditions to “Mecca” to uncover the secrets of groups like the “Seven Society”, the “Purple Shadows”, and the “IMPS”, I was hooked. Walks to the Corner and time spent at Mr. Jefferson’s University helped prepare me for the long road ahead.

I would also like to thank Dr. Sue Wasiolek, assistant vice president for student affairs and dean of students (and campus legend) at Duke University, for the inspiration she has been to me as the consummate student affairs professional and for her encouragement to study the rich and fascinating history of student culture at her beloved alma mater. I am grateful to Amy McDonald, archivist and curator of the Order of Red Friars organizational records collection at the Duke University Archives, for the assistance and insight she offered me as we searched for clues to 100-year-old questions about the origins of the mystic seven.

My sincere appreciation goes out to Dr. Audrey Jaeger, my advisor and chair of my dissertation committee. May she always know how I hung onto her words of encouragement on the days when the going got tough and how she helped me believe in myself and see this project through to its completion. The graduate students at NC State are exceedingly fortunate, myself included, who have had her as a professor, for they have learned to push themselves to accomplish more than they could have ever envisioned. She sets the bar high, and for that I am grateful.

Special thanks also for the members of my dissertation committee for their questions and feedback that have helped shape my study. To Dr. Alyssa Rockenbach, I am so appreciative of the support and encouragement she has offered me over the past six years. She has inspired me with her kindness and her interests as a scholar. To Dr. Paul Umbach, what an honor to have him on my committee, for he is an outstanding scholar, but his teaching transformed my thinking about higher education and complicated my work as a student affairs professional in meaningful ways. To Dr. Karrie Dixon, I am thrilled to benefit from her perspective as a seasoned administrator with a broad view of how systems of higher education impact students, with an eye towards the future and making things better for those who will come along through the course of our lifetimes engaged in this work. And a special thank you to Dr. Daniel Prosterman, my colleague at Salem College, for the generous giving of his time and sharing of his expertise in historical research. I am so grateful for his efforts to lead me to discover for myself patterns of culture otherwise obscured and simply for his help that has allowed me to experience the joy of doing historical research.

I would be remiss if I did not thank the college and university administrators who have served as mentors throughout my career. To Dr. Mark Erickson, former dean of students at Lehigh University and recent past president of Wittenberg University, I am grateful to him for his enthusiasm for college life and for instilling in me the importance of interacting with students in the gym and on the campus grounds. To Dr. Cherry Callahan, vice chancellor for student affairs at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, I am grateful for what she taught me about making a large campus small, because she called

everyone by name, and they knew that they mattered. And to Dr. Ann McElaney-Johnson, former vice president for academic and student affairs at Salem College and current president of Mount St .Mary’s College in Los Angeles, I am forever indebted to her for believing in me and encouraging me to pursue my doctorate in higher education.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would like to thank my family for their enduring love and support throughout this academic marathon. To my sister Kara, for the long runs and encouragement that have gotten me through each trying semester. To Mom and Dad, for supporting me to follow my dreams to study at Ohio State and to work in student affairs in Pennsylvania, and for all of their visits that made me realize how much their love gave me the confidence to do what I wanted to do with my life.

Above all, I want to thank my husband Michael Barr, for all of the sacrifices that he has made year in and year out when I needed to study, or write a paper, or go out of town to do research. I know that he will be happier than anyone when this dissertation process is completed, but I do love him for the support he has given me, especially in these last few months, when he has been the “best daddy ever”, because I couldn’t have done it without his love and support. To Bridget and Patrick, may you always know that you have been the real reason that I was inspired to finish this research, for I will love nothing more than to spend more time with you. Thank you for your sweet bedtime prayers for mommy to “finish her big paper.” You bring me more happiness than you will ever know, and now I am ready for us to write a new chapter together as a family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Background of the Study	1
What is “Known” About Collegiate Secret Societies	4
The “Big Man on Campus” Phenomenon.....	11
Collegiate Secret Societies at Duke University	23
Statement of the Problem.....	27
Purpose of the Study	30
Research Questions	30
Theoretical Orientation: Critical Social Theory	31
Bourdieu.....	32
Gramsci	33
Whiteness Studies	36
Significance of the Study	39
Limitations	40
Delimitations.....	42
Definition of Terms.....	43
Historical Method	45
Chapter Summary and Organization of the Study	47
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	50
A Progressive Era Problem for American Higher Education	51
Contemporary Historical Studies	65
Anthropological Studies about American College Student Culture	76
Gaps in the Literature.....	79
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	82
Interpreting Messages from the Past.....	82
Research Design: Making the Case for History.....	83
Applied History.....	86
Historical Research Strengthened by the Anthropological Tradition	88
Site Selection	92

Data Collection	94
Archival Documents	94
Interviews.....	100
Data Analysis	101
Research Validity and Reliability	103
Ethical Issues	105
Chapter Summary	107
CHAPTER 4: ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE RED FRIARS: 1913-1943.....	110
The Formative Years.....	110
Higher Education and Institutional Context	111
Origins and Founding Purpose of the Secret Order	115
Early Friars and Collegiate Manhood.....	131
Major Projects and Pursuit of Prestige.....	147
Marching Towards Conflict.....	187
Memories of a Red Friar SGA President from the World War II Era	191
Chapter Summary	197
CHAPTER 5: THE “BIG MAN ON CAMPUS” UNDER ATTACK: 1949-1971	201
The Secret Order in a Changing Society.....	201
Higher Education and Institutional Context	204
The “Crisis” of 1955	209
Memories of a Red Friar from the 1950s Who Would Become a Dean.....	228
The Irony of Defeat.....	233
Memories of a Red Friar Editor of the <i>Chronicle</i> during the Civil Rights Era	249
Chapter Summary	260
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION	264
Implications for Theory and Practice.....	283
Ideas for Future Research	294
REFERENCES	298
APPENDICES	312
My Perspective as a Researcher: A Transformative Worldview	313
Pilot Study #1: The “Big Man on Campus” as a Cultural History Phenomenon	320

Pilot Study #2: Collegiate Secret Societies Active in the Twenty-First Century 334
Document Analysis Guide 354
Interview Guide for Red Friars Members 357

LIST OF FIGURES

<i>Figure 1.</i> Iconic markings of the “Z” and “IMP” societies in front of Thomas Jefferson’s Rotunda at the University of Virginia, K. Barr (2010).....	9
<i>Figure 2.</i> “Athletics” section divider, <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Trinity College 1915, Illustration by Red Friar J.H. Burris, Trinity, ‘17	20
<i>Figure 3.</i> “Secret Societies” section divider in <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Trinity College, 1912	25
<i>Figure 4.</i> Order of Red Friars’ public tapping ceremony, <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Duke University, 1955.....	27
<i>Figure 5.</i> “B.M.O.C.” vestment dangles in <i>The Front Line: Materials for a Study of Leadership in College and After</i> , (Patrick, 1942).....	36
<i>Figure 6.</i> “Secret Societies” section divider in <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Trinity College, 1921	98
<i>Figure 7.</i> Order of Red Friars, page in <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Trinity College, 1913	117
<i>Figure 8.</i> “Tombs” photo in <i>The Chanticleer</i> , “Victory” issue, Trinity College, 1919.....	119
<i>Figure 9.</i> “Basketball Team?”, photo in <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Trinity College, 1912.....	124
<i>Figure 10.</i> Red Friar Hendrix Siler Beal (bottom), senior yearbook photo, <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Trinity College, 1915	135
<i>Figure 11.</i> Duke campus used for Navy V-12 officer training and Army Finance School, <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Duke University, 1943	146
<i>Figure 12.</i> “Student Government” caricature in <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Duke University, 1924..	164
<i>Figure 13.</i> Bloody Order of Sophomores: “Informal Initiation”, Chapel lawn in front of James B. Duke Statue, <i>The Front Line</i> , April 30, 1938.....	167

<i>Figure 14.</i> Miss Marjorie Arthur, <i>The Chanticleer</i> Beauty Court representative, 1951	172
<i>Figure 15.</i> “Red Friars” yearbook page with portrait of Herbert J. Herring, first dean of students (upper right-hand position), <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Trinity College, 1922.....	175
<i>Figure 16.</i> Tombs initiation on East Campus, <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Trinity College (1923)	178
<i>Figure 17.</i> Clay model of Red Friars’ monastery, ORF Records, n.d	183
<i>Figure 18.</i> ODK new member ceremony, Duke University News Service (April 17, 1951)	202
<i>Figure 19.</i> Red Friars’ tapping ceremony, Duke University News Service (May 5, 1952).....	211
<i>Figure 20.</i> “TOP TAPPING”, <i>The Chronicle</i> , Duke University (May 8, 1953)	214
<i>Figure 21.</i> “Order of the Chair”, mock tapping ceremony, Duke University News Service (June 1957).....	225
<i>Figure 22.</i> “The ‘Crimson Clan’ taps six new members”, <i>The Duke Chronicle</i> (May 2, 1969)	246
<i>Figure 23.</i> Board of Trustees Executive Committee/ <i>Chronicle</i> staff, <i>The Chanticleer</i> , Duke University (1970).....	249

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Imagine the surprise of a college dean in 2008 upon the discovery that a secret society founded by students had been operating *sub rosa* for nearly a century. That seasoned practitioner and scholar interested in the history of American higher education was me, and I soon learned that I was not alone. Although contemporary fraternities and their escapades are familiar to campus officials, student societies for which secrecy is most salient have enjoyed a clandestine presence on many campuses that in recent decades has been overlooked and underexamined by campus administrators and historians of American higher education.

Collegiate secret societies, as distinguished from Greek-letter fraternal organizations, enjoyed prominence within many American campus communities from the early nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century (Baird, 1879; Hitchcock, 1863; Slosson, 1910; Veysey, 1965). The establishment of these elite groups preceded the maturation of university administrative structures responsible for managing students' extracurricular life, as well as the mass democratization of American higher education which occurred after World War II (Rudolph, 1990; Cohen, 2010). The presence of prestigious secret societies is documented and celebrated in college yearbooks and newspapers, reflecting a period in higher education's past when the hegemony of the white, male prevailed in student culture and fostered the composite ideal of the "Big Man on Campus" ("B.M.O.C.") – the handsome varsity athlete, fraternity man, and club president destined for success in American public life.

Although collegiate secret societies “disappeared” on many campuses in the Civil Rights Era amidst accusations of elitism and reactions against established white, Anglo-Saxon Protestant norms, their legacy lingers into the twenty-first century, along with many unanswered questions about their historical role as a source of student power on campus. Their roots can be traced to the prestigious all-male boarding schools of the Northeastern United States in the late nineteenth century where patterns of upper-class masculine socialization developed. Due to a dearth of historical research on this topic, however, institutional leaders are challenged to understand the origins, functions, and legacy of this type of student association that still holds meaning for students and other stakeholders in some campus communities.

This study utilized critical social theory from Bourdieu and Gramsci and the emerging scholarship of whiteness studies to provide an historical analysis of the rise and fall of the Order of Red Friars senior class secret society that was active at Duke University (Trinity College prior to 1924) between 1913 and 1971. Student leaders who manifested the “B.M.O C.” ideal were tapped for membership in this group and collaborated with presidents, trustees, administrators, and select faculty on an agenda for student life (Durden, 1993). Utilizing archival research methods and oral history interviews, the involvement of the Order of Red Friars in the administration of student affairs at Duke University for sixty years during the twentieth century was explored for basic knowledge about the phenomenon of the collegiate secret society and a deeper understanding of the cultural hegemony from which they emerged that continues to influence campus cultures today.

The history of American higher education literature documents how faculty discarded their *in loco parentis* responsibilities for managing student behavior as their field professionalized in the late nineteenth century (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011; Veysey, 1965) and how specialization of the student affairs profession coalesced four decades later in the 1930s (ACE, 1937; Biddix & Schwartz, 2012; Lloyd-Jones, 1934; Schwartz, 2003). Yet, the historical role of students in the campus power structure of the early twentieth century, and particularly their role in sustaining their extracurricular affairs during this period, has been largely unexamined. This study addresses the gap that exists in the history of higher education literature about collegiate culture in the early twentieth century in the South, as well as the phenomenon of the collegiate secret society as a source of power on campus (Thelin, 1982; Veysey, 1965).

Collegiate secret societies have received little attention from historians and scholars since the Progressive Era (circa 1880-1920) when they were a subject of critical importance to campus leaders, and thus, they present an important topic for historical study in the twenty-first century (Baird, 1879; Welch & Camp, 1899; Sheldon, 1901; Slosson, 1910). The Progressive Era denotes a time in United States history when social and educational reform was pronounced. It represents an historical period when the purpose of American higher education was actively debated as many institutions, including Trinity College, made the transition from small liberal arts colleges to large, modern research universities (Dewey, 1916; Sinclair, 1922; Veblen, 1918; Veysey, 1965). A review of the scholarly literature produced since the study of American higher education matured in the 1960s reveals sparse

research on the topic of collegiate secret societies, both as an historic phenomenon of student culture and as an historic problem for institutional leaders (Thelin, 2002).

Grounded in the epistemology and methods of cultural history, this study utilized the case of the Order of the Red Friars to understand how the prevailing social norms of the white, male student shaped student life in the early to middle decades of the twentieth century. Guided by foundational scholarship in whiteness studies (Jacobson, 1998; Painter, 2010; Roediger, 2005) and Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony (Borg, Buttigieg, & Mayo, 1994) which asserts that the norms of dominant social groups will prevail within a particular cultural setting (such as a school) until subordinate groups act to resist their dominance, this study rediscovered basic knowledge about the origins and functions of the Red Friars secret society which played an influential role in managing the extracurriculum in the advent of student affairs' administrative oversight at Duke University.

What is “Known” About Collegiate Secret Societies

Due to the clandestine and mystical nature of collegiate secret societies such as Yale's Skull and Bones, much of what is “known” about these organizations is an accumulation of generations of campus storytelling, legend, and lore on their particular campuses. They are shrouded in variations of secret association invoking iconography from the occult and ancient civilizations and sometimes maintain complete concealment of members' identities. Many collegiate secret societies bear closer resemblance to the legendary mystical associations of such groups as the Freemasons than to the Greek-letter student fraternal organizations whose members' identity is known to the campus community

and whose charters are beholden to a national office, typically in conjunction with official collegiate institutional recognition.

Nonetheless, historical works from the Progressive Era, along with a few contemporary studies, provide a smattering of clues to explain what scholars know about the origins and functions of American collegiate secret societies. Secret societies associated with religious movements, political revolts, and crime can be traced back to the oldest of the world's civilizations (Pike, 1939). Many secret societies, such as the Italian Mafia, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and groups inspired by the French Revolution, organized in periods of social breakdown and ideological conflict, when new ways of life were emerging (Mackenzie, 1967). Collegiate secret societies of various types became a part of the distinctive American extracurriculum that students established on campuses throughout the United States during the nineteenth century (Rudolph, 1990). The first groups emerged when the secrecy and mystique associated with Freemasonry captured the imagination of the American public, and the values of American society were in transition from the supernatural and religious to the more secular and materialistic (Carnes, 1989; Clawson, 1989; Rudolph, 1990).

Phi Beta Kappa, a political discussion society founded in 1776 in a Williamsburg tavern by students from the College of William & Mary, is recognized as the first collegiate secret society in the United States; but after establishing chapters at several of the colonial colleges, it succumbed to pressure from the anti-Masonic movement of the 1820s and became thereafter a non-secret student organization (Baird, 1879; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson,

2005). Secret literary societies, usually two at each institution, were founded in abundance throughout the nineteenth century in the young nation's colleges, but a desire for more fulfilling social interaction led to the popular Greek-letter fraternity movement that began to supplant the literary societies in the 1820s, replete with secret membership selection and ritual, modeled after the Masons whose secrets had been revealed (Baird, 1879; McLachlan, 1974; Rudolph, 1990; Torbenson, 2005).

Perhaps the best known collegiate secret society in the United States today is Yale's legendary "Skull and Bones". Founded in 1832 and the subject of popular film and novel, "Skull and Bones" is rumored to claim three U. S. presidents among its members and to be the "entrée to the inner sanctum of the American elite" (Adler & Talbot, 1991; Groff, 2009). *The Chronicle of Higher Education* has reported on its membership as representing prestigious families of the Northeast, as well as the controversy surrounding their decision to admit women in 1991 after more than 150 years as an exclusively male secret organization ("*Yale's skull and bones,*" 1991; Magner, 1991). Secret societies similar to Yale's Skull and Bones enjoyed a curious prominence on many campuses around the country into the early decades of the twentieth century, an historical period which coincided with the rise of the modern university (Sheldon, 1901; Slosson, 1910; Veysey, 1965), yet a 1968 *Wall Street Journal* article reporting that membership in Yale's secret societies was still highly sought after claimed these groups were unique to Yale (Grover, 1968).

Secret student organizations of all types, but especially the Greek-letter fraternities and exclusive societies like those at Yale, endured periods of intense scrutiny throughout the

nineteenth century from faculty who viewed them as anti-intellectual, and others, including the general public, who viewed them as elitist and anti-democratic (Aiken, 1882; Brubacher & Rudy, 1968; Stearns, 1976). Tensions stemmed from faculty resistance to recognizing the legitimacy of the popular extracurricular activities the students created and students' resistance of the *in loco parentis* control of the faculty that threatened their activities (Brubacher & Rudy, 1968; Coulter, 1928; Stearns, 1976). The social importance and influence of the secret societies that originated in the prominent Eastern colleges and spread to hundreds of colleges across the nation prompted many institutions to ban student membership in secret groups; Some states passed laws prohibiting the existence of secret groups on college campuses (Brubacher & Rudy, 1968; Stearns, 1976; Thwing, 1878; Torbenson, 2005). Scholars have asserted the secrecy associated with these groups was a mechanism employed by students to evade faculty control of their activities (Coulter, 1928; Stearns, 1976; Torbenson, 2005).

A review of institutional histories and a survey of documents available in the archives of several universities in the Southeastern United States (Duke University, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Virginia) revealed that students who were actively involved in campus life were tapped for membership in groups that resembled Yale's "Skull and Bones". Archival evidence indicates that these "big men on campus" had special access and collaborated with presidents, faculty, and administrators, shrouded in secrecy, while the professional positions in student affairs responsible for managing extracurricular activities and student behavior were coming into being.

Student newspaper and yearbook depictions of secret societies reveal that on some campuses, due to mounting accusations of elitism and changing attitudes towards the conformity associated with the “B.M.O.C.” ideal, these groups endured a period of decline in the 1950s and 1960s. Many groups eventually submerged within campus cultures before century’s end. After several decades of elusive existence since the 1970s, college administrators around the country are either unaware of their existence or challenged to understand the origins and functions of these groups and why their presence and legacy as a type of student organization lingers today.

In addition to campus legend and the extant scholarly literature on this topic, student media archives offer great insight into what is known about collegiate secret societies on their respective campuses. Evidence of the presence of secret societies on the campuses of diverse types of higher education institutions in the United States abounds in the annals of student newspapers and yearbooks. An archival search for information on secret societies in the University of Virginia’s student newspaper *The Cavalier Daily* revealed articles that described the charitable donations of members of the benevolent Seven Society – a legendary secret society whose members’ identity is revealed upon their death when a wreath of black magnolias in the shape of a seven appears at their funeral (Cooper, 2003).

The members’ financial contributions to the university endow fellowships, campus buildings, and student programs. Substantial monetary gifts have been delivered by skydivers during football games and announced during basketball games, commencement, and other public gatherings of the university community (Cooper, 2003; Mead, 2009). A

student member of the IMP secret society explained that these groups are concerned with keeping the history of the university alive while they serve as a level of student self-governance and expect student leaders to make a contribution to their alma mater (Cooper, 2003). I have seen for myself and photographed the prominent display of the iconic markings of student secret societies throughout the university grounds, even on the steps and landing in front of Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda (See *Figure 1*: Iconic markings of the "Z" and "IMP" societies in front of Thomas Jefferson's Rotunda at the University of Virginia, [2010]).



Figure 1. Iconic markings of the "Z" and "IMP" societies at the Univ. of Virginia, K. Barr, 2010.

In stark contrast, The Machine, a secret society at the University of Alabama, has developed a sinister reputation as a racist political organization comprised of elite members

of historically-white fraternities. The alleged purpose of The Machine is to orchestrate the election of a white male for the Student Government Association presidency through the intimidation of female and racial minority candidates (Anonymous, 2009; Russell, 2009; “The Machine Today,” 2007). The Student Government Association (SGA) was disbanded for four years in the mid-1990s following the issuance of a threat and an assault made on a female who ran for SGA president after disregarding the insistence of The Machine that she drop out of the race (Anonymous, 2009). The Seven Society and The Machine provide just two examples of student secret societies with considerable informal power and influence on their respective campuses, albeit with divergent missions – one presumably for charitable contributions to the scholarly community and one for political manipulation.

Casual knowledge of the existence of collegiate secret societies such as the Tiger Brotherhood at Clemson University, and others at The University of Tennessee, The Ohio State University, Baylor University, Pennsylvania State University, and the College of William and Mary indicates that this distinctive type of student organization is widespread on campuses throughout the United States, both as historic artifacts and active groups. An internet search for information about collegiate secret societies reveals dozens of web pages dedicated to storied organizations at diverse institutions alleging membership of prominent deans, members of the faculty, administrators, alumni, trustees, and even presidents. Examples of secret societies with provocative names include the Raven’s Claw at Dickinson College, Order of the Greek Horsemen and Trust of the Pearl at the University of Georgia,

Cap and Skull at Rutgers, Sphinx Head and Quill & Dagger at Cornell, and the Spade Society at Auburn University.

Apart from one study of college student societies in antebellum Georgia (Rose, 1984) and Groff's (2009) dissertation positing Yale's Skull & Bones as a stepping stone to national office, contemporary scholarly inquiry regarding the origins and functions of this type of collegiate secret society is relegated to brief coverage in the canon of the history of American higher education literature. It is generally addressed and necessarily entangled with the nineteenth-century emergence of their better-known Greek-letter fraternity counterparts (Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965), as well as discussion of students' development of the "extracurriculum" during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Horowitz, 1987; Rose, 1984; Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965; Thelin, 2011). Although contemporary Greek-letter fraternities and sororities are familiar to campus officials, and their members have been the subjects of extensive higher education research (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), the more mystical collegiate secret societies remain an historical puzzle for scholars and administrators alike.

The "Big Man on Campus" Phenomenon

Although the phrase "Big Man on Campus" is a widely recognized cliché in the American collegiate vernacular, this conceptualization of a masculine student ideal can be located in works of college fiction spanning from the late-nineteenth through the early twentieth century. This popular literary genre is credited for spreading the norms and traditions of college life, mostly associated with Yale, to the American public (Thelin, 2011).

In particular, the “Big Man” phenomenon was tied to stories about the ideal type of student at the pinnacle of the social hierarchy who was sought after for membership in the most prestigious of the secret senior honorary societies at Yale.

One of the earliest novels in the collegiate fiction genre was a memoir about college life at Yale written by Lyman Bagg (1871), who was a student there in the years following the Civil War. Historian John Thelin (2011) explained that Bagg’s *Four Years at Yale* provided an exhaustive description (713 pages long) of Yale’s distinctive student traditions and customs, including varsity sports teams, literary and debating groups, eating clubs, college songs, fraternities, and other secret societies that comprised a highly-organized system of extracurricular activities. He further explained that Bagg’s novel essentially became the model and guidebook for the pattern of collegiate life that was emulated by students around the country.

Although Bagg (1871) did not coin the phrase “Big Man on Campus”, his use of the terms “big man” and “big men” described the students who predominated over their fellows in athletics and other clubs and were favored in election to Yale’s most prestigious secret senior societies. This notion of the “big man” who achieved social status on campus based on his talents and activity rather than the pre-existing advantages of wealth and social class, served to establish a meritocratic “college system” that codified the types of activities most highly valued by the old-money upper-class and their aspirants (Dean, 2001; Thelin, 2011). Rudolph (1990) explained that the distinctive American extracurriculum that students adopted in the late-nineteenth century manifested a new masculinity embodied in such

activities as football and fraternities, while it transcended the pious, religious values of the past:

“(The male student)...discovered muscle, created organizations for it; his physical appearance and condition had taken on new importance. Man the image of God became competitive, boisterous, muscular, and physically attractive. Man the image of God became the fine gentleman – jolly, charming, pleasant, well-developed, good-looking. He became an obvious candidate for fraternity membership” (p. 150).

Given the homogeneity of Yale’s student body, the masculine collegiate ideal as presented in Bagg’s novel indeed was based on the evolving norms of the white, Protestant Anglo male of some privilege, and it reveled in the vision of a “muscular Christianity” bent on acquiring status in an increasingly secular society (Thelin, 2011). The new collegiate masculine ideal celebrated the physicality of the varsity athlete, the worldliness of the popular club man, the strong, moral character of the Christian warrior, and loyal campus service that bolstered the reputation of one’s alma mater.

The “big man” phenomenon had emerged from an elite system of social class indoctrination that was rooted in the culture of the New England boarding schools whose students populated the colleges that came to be known as the “Ivy League”; The pattern of upper-class masculine socialization that developed in institutions like Yale, Harvard, Dartmouth, and Princeton validated a self-conscious “ruling class” with the reward of membership in exclusive fraternal organizations and secret societies; The development of this type of system of overlapping, exclusive male-only fraternal organizations spread to other elite institutions around the country (including Duke) and persisted in some form into

the 1960s, contributing to a sense of upper-class masculine privilege and power (Dean, 2001).

By the early twentieth century, Theodore (Teddy) Roosevelt's creation of a brash image of the worldly, active outdoorsman had come to epitomize the vision of a new white masculinity that pervaded American society with an emphasis on a strong, but civilized physicality in a growing nation fueled by industry and urbanization (Bederman, 2008; Dean, 2001; Wilkie, 2010). In 1910, Edwin Slosson, writing about student life at Yale in his comprehensive anthology *Great American Universities*, confirmed that criteria for membership in Yale's most prestigious senior societies fostered conformity to a prototype collegiate ideal that valued student participation in activities that brought "glory" to the college, but especially the athletic prowess and physicality associated with intercollegiate athletics, especially football.

The conceptualization of the American collegiate ideal established on the aristocratic norms of the white, male prep school student was further reinforced in popular culture in 1911 through the serialized publication of Yale graduate Owen Johnson's novel-in-progress *Stover at Yale*, which appeared in monthly installments in *McClure's* periodical. Johnson's (1912) novel told the story of Dink Stover, a member of Yale's "football eleven" and class leader who, along with his prep school buddies, wrestled under pressure from upperclassmen to participate mightily in organized student activities and athletics for the glory of Yale, with the goal of gaining membership in one of the prestigious secret senior societies. From the opening pages of the novel, Dink is described as "the big man" prep-school athlete arriving

in New Haven by train, and thus his journey at Yale continues in an ambitious, three-year quest to become one of the college's "big men". He navigates the cultural rules of Yale's society system to excel in athletics and get to know the "right crowd", all the while seeking an election to "Bones", an honor he eventually attains (p. 2, p. 27, p. 35).

The durability of the patterns of college life that were created by the privileged, white males of the late-nineteenth century was evident on campuses around the country well into the twentieth century (Horowitz, 1987). Late-nineteenth century fraternity men who pursued leadership positions in extracurricular activities as a means of acquiring prestige and social status on campus personified and perpetuated what came to be a "Big Man on Campus" stereotype (Syrett, 2009; Thelin, 2011). Use of the term "Big Man on Campus" and its "BMOC" acronym became universally understood in the American collegiate vernacular and continued to be associated with the prototype of the Ivy League male, but it was clearly predicated on the description of a real phenomenon of defined masculinity, a real "type" of student who could be identified by his peers as a campus leader and "decision maker" – one of the Big Men who "ran things" (Syrett, 2009; Thelin, 2011).

In a mid-century autobiographical essay, 1920 Yale graduate and renowned playwright Thornton Wilder (2012) reflected on the "herd instinct" in the fraternities and secret societies comprised of "the big men" at Yale. Wilder elaborated that his peers attending Yale in the era of the Great War [World War I] strove to "edit publications, to captain teams, to get elected to fraternities and societies, to sing in the Glee Club or the Whiffenpoofs, to act in the Dramat [Yale's drama club, still named so today]...to be

popular...to be ‘a big man at Yale.’” He reminisced that the members of the most exclusive senior society were ultimately the “big men”, in fact “the biggest in college. They pretty well ran Yale.”

Interestingly, during the period of democratization that occurred in American higher education around the turn of the twentieth century when college-going became fashionable as a means of social uplift, scholars and leaders like Teddy Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, Henry Cabot Lodge, and Ralph Waldo Emerson promoted the belief in the natural superiority of northern Europeans, especially the English (Bederman, 2008; Painter, 2010; Palmeiri, 2007). White manhood came under threat during this period, particularly in the South, due to the emancipation of African American men following the Civil War and the moral superiority represented in women leading Progressive Era campaigns for suffrage and temperance (Painter, 2010; Wilkie, 2010).

While social Darwinism dominated scientific and popular discourse, white men asserted their intellectual and physical dominance in all realms of social, economic, and political life (Wilkie, 2010). Teddy Roosevelt famously warned higher-educated Anglo-Saxon Americans of the dangers of “race suicide” if they failed to reproduce, lest increasing numbers of immigrants from central and eastern Europe overtook leadership of the nation with their incumbent inferior intellectual capacities (Bederman, 2008; Palmeiri, 2007). Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson, in particular, had become iconic figures in terms of their representation of a masculine collegiate ideal during this period due to their association

with Harvard and Princeton, respectively, and their image of active involvement in collegiate athletics (Thelin, 2011).

During this era of the rise of the modern university, when “race” in this country was conceptualized as organized by national origin, the nation’s first immigrants, the western European Anglo-Saxons, asserted their dominance and categorized those who came thereafter as inferior (Painter, 2010). A socially-constructed racial framework conflated national origin with religion and referred to immigrants from southern and eastern European countries in subjection to the superiority of the English race by such terms as the Greek race, the Italian race, the Irish race, and the Jewish race. It was not until the 1940s when the horrors of the atrocities of the Nazi treatment of the Jews in Europe raised awareness of the American public that the notion of “ethnicity” was introduced to describe cultural heritage and background (Painter, 2010; Roediger, 2005).

For several decades into the twentieth century, in an effort to protect their prestige, American colleges instituted restrictive admissions practices that further compounded the exclusivity associated with the white, male ideal of the “Big Man on Campus”; As separate institutions were established that served minority religious, racial, and ethnic populations, their students emulated the extracurricular patterns of the old-time American college (Thelin, 2011). The national offices of the white, Protestant fraternal orders began to implement racial and religious barriers to membership that led to minority groups founding their own separate Greek-letter fraternities (Johnson, 1972; Syrett, 2009; Thelin, 2011). These restrictive membership and admissions policies were part of a larger “enclosure movement”

associated with the White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) establishment that sought to protect who in America had “insider” status amongst the social elite (Dean, 2001).

The first Jewish fraternities were established at colleges in New York in the early twentieth century due to the large Jewish population in the state; Two of the first Black Greek Letter Organizations (BGLOs) were founded at white institutions where black students were essentially barred from membership in fraternal organizations and excluded from the system of college life that validated the “Big Man”; Alpha Phi Alpha was established at Cornell University in 1906, followed by the founding of Kappa Alpha Psi at Indiana University in 1911; Five BGLOs were established at Howard University, a black institution, between 1908 and 1920 (Torbenson, 2005).

As the conceptualization of collegiate masculinity associated with the “Big Man on Campus” ideal spread beyond Yale and the prestigious northern universities to all types of institutions, its direct association with the type of man who would be selected for membership in the secret senior class honorary societies became more generalized to emphasize the qualities of athleticism, sociability, involvement in campus politics, and attractiveness and popularity with women (Syrett, 2009; Horowitz, 1987). This broadening conceptualization of the “Big Man on Campus” coincided with an expanding conception of whiteness in the United States as new waves of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe sought to assimilate into white American ways, enroll in college, and participate in fraternities and athletics - driven by race as a form of consciousness and a “desire to be defined as white” (Roediger, 2005, pp. 8-9). Participation in college athletics and the

opportunity to become a hero on the college track, field, court, or baseball diamond became a great democratizing agent for the sons of the Irish, Italians, Greeks, Russians, and Poles who were enrolling in American colleges alongside the increasing numbers of sons of the rich (Rudolph, 1990).

In 1926, Thomas Arkle Clark, dean of undergraduate men at the University of Illinois, remarked that, “The athlete is the undergraduate idol. He is the big man in college, the god whom the freshmen worship, and to whom the young women offer incense and to whom they write congratulatory notes” (Syrett, 2009). An illustration drawn by a member of the Red Friars for the Trinity College student yearbook in 1915 illuminates the infatuation of college men with the personification of the Greek gods in the collegiate athlete which elicited a powerful vision of the male body conflated by his sexuality (See *Figure 2: “Athletics”* section divider illustration by Red Friar J.H. Burris who became editor-in-chief of the yearbook in 1917, *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1915, p. 253).

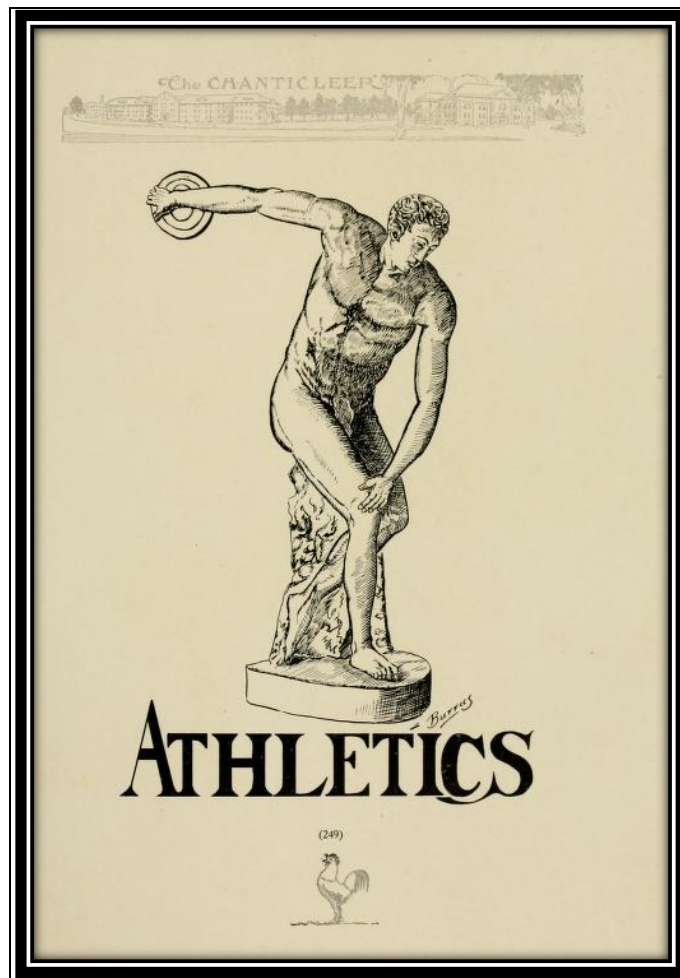


Figure 2. “Athletics” section divider, *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1915, Illustration by Red Friar J.H. Burris, Trinity, '17.

College students in the 1920s were exposed to an updated treatment of Dink Stover’s “Big Man on Campus” in F. Scott Fitzgerald’s popular novel, *This Side of Paradise* (1921). Fitzgerald’s loosely autobiographical protagonist Amory Blaine was a prep school hopeful set to become a “Big Man” at prewar Princeton (World War I). For Fitzgerald’s Blaine, *Stover at Yale* “became somewhat of a textbook”, and he pondered the qualities necessary to

achieve the status of the “Big Man” who “goes out for everything from a sense of duty” (p. 36; p. 39), but unlike Stover at Yale, Blaine expanded the boundaries of the collegiate male ideal and enjoyed fast cars and sexual play with women, becoming a popular “anti-hero” of sorts for a generation of American college students enamored by the carefree mood of the Roaring ‘20s (Horowitz, 1987).

From the 1920s through the 1950s, the collegiate culture created by wealthy, white, male students from an earlier era continued to hold great appeal for middle-class young men who went to college to acquire contacts and style for a successful career in capitalist America; The values of the American fraternity dominated the American college, and fraternities pushed their men to participate in extracurricular activities, especially athletics and student government leadership, which lent individual members the accumulated prestige of the group (Horowitz, 1987). The pursuit of prestige on the part of the individual male student was encouraged by the potential for becoming a “BMOC”. A late-1950s article in *The Harvard Crimson* student newspaper (Alcott, 1958) compared student life at Harvard and Yale and determined that becoming a “Big Man on Campus” was easier at Yale due to the emphasis on undergraduate extracurricular activities there. The article included a stereotypical description of a Yale man who might be president of his class, varsity football captain, and a member of Skull and Bones.

From the 1860s through the 1910s, 1920s, and into the 1950s, the concept of the “big man” was consistently associated with a white, masculine collegiate ideal and a prestigious social title bestowed upon students who achieved distinction amongst their peers in the areas

of athletics, campus leadership, and overall participation in campus life. This concept that was originally tied directly to the exclusive secret senior class honorary societies at Yale spawned senior honorary societies on campuses around the country that rewarded men for their cumulative accomplishments in college activities (Thelin, 2011). The “Big Man on Campus” was the socially-constructed composite of the collegiate ideal of masculinity created by privileged white, male college students concerned with attaining status at the pinnacle of their social hierarchy. The “BMOC” eventually became an American colloquialism and served the purpose of affirming the norms of the dominate social group on the American college campus throughout much of the twentieth century.

According to Duke professor emeritus Dr. Robert Durden who wrote an institutional history of Duke University in 1993, the Order of Red Friars was a men’s secret society comprised of the most prominent student leaders on campus. Durden spoke of the “cult of the Big Men on Campus” as an important feature of campus life from the 1930s to the early 1960s at Duke (p. 232). He revealed that, “The pinnacle of success to which all BMOC’s on West (campus) aspired was the highly secret organization known as the Red Friars.” He went on to explain that the women who lived on East campus and mirrored the men as leaders of their major campus organizations comprised the membership of the White Duchy secret society.

The confirmed presence of secret societies at Duke University during the twentieth century offers valuable insight into this phenomenon beyond Yale’s secret societies which often have been presumed to be unique in their existence (Grover, 1968). The related

phenomenon of the “cult of the Big Man on Campus” recognized by scholars as prevalent in American higher education during this same period can be examined more closely through the profiles of the individual members of these student groups. In the end, the patterns of upper-class masculine socialization that characterized the elite educational settings of institutions like Yale and aspirant institutions like Trinity College around which Duke University would be formed can be much better understood.

Collegiate Secret Societies at Duke University

“The Order of the Red Friars”, an all-male student organization, first appeared in the 1913 Trinity College yearbook *The Chanticleer*, in a section entitled, “Secret Societies”. (For an example of the provocative section dividers in the early yearbooks, see *Figure 3*: “Secret Societies” section divider, *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1912). Other groups featured in the “Secret Societies” section of the yearbook during that era included the “Tombs”, a group associated with the college’s star athletes, and an academic honorary group with the mysterious numerical name of “9019”. Trinity College, a small, liberal arts institution located in Durham, North Carolina, was founded as Union Institute Society in 1839 and would become Duke University in 1924, upon receiving a large endowment from James B. Duke, a wealthy philanthropist whose family had made its fortune in textiles, tobacco, and electrical utilities.

Also in 1924, the Order of Red Friars secret society founded a secret group for female students named, “The Order of the White Duchy”. This group appeared in *The Chanticleer* in 1925. Both of these secret societies enjoyed favorable student media coverage in the

yearbook and newspaper through the middle of the twentieth century and outlasted the “Tombs” and their lesser counterparts as secret student organizations. The White Duchy and the Red Friars voluntarily disbanded in 1968 and 1971, respectively, and their organizational records were eventually donated to the University Archives. Both groups’ records are accessible for researchers as part of the University’s Special Collections. Famous members of Duke’s collegiate secret societies include Elizabeth Dole, former United States senator from North Carolina, and former president Richard M. Nixon, a Duke law school graduate who was made an honorary member of Omicron Delta Kappa in the early 1950s.

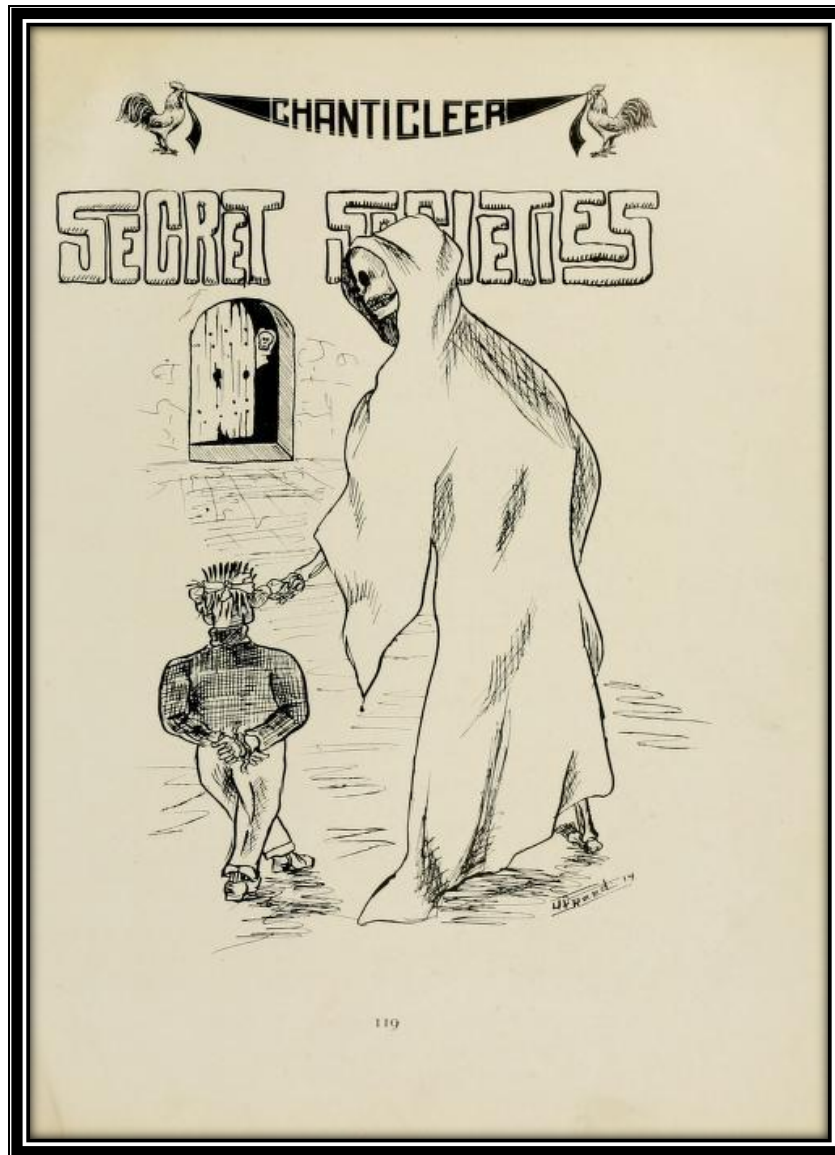


Figure 3. “Secret Societies” section divider in *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1912.

The Duke University Archives website provides extensive descriptive information about the Red Friars organization and their influential involvement in university administration from 1913-1971. The group is described as a “senior men’s secret honorary

society” that was important to the presidents and deans of the university as a means for gaining information about the student body and for influencing student opinion about various campus activities and policies. According to the Duke Archives’ description of their organizational records, the members of the Red Friars were leaders in student government and social life and were able to use their positions to support student life agenda items without being detected: “The Friars held meetings with members of the faculty and administration to discuss campus situations and plans for action.”

Curiously, beginning in 1923, the Red Friars held a public tapping ceremony in the spring when they selected new members, but their activities and proceedings remained secret. (See *Figure 4: Order of Red Friars’ public tapping ceremony, The Chanticleer*, Duke University, 1955). According to the Archival records and articles in the student newspaper, the *Chronicle*, the secret societies faced mounting charges of elitism in the 1960s and experienced difficulty in finding students who would accept membership. After failing to tap new members in 1970, the Red Friars voluntarily disbanded in 1971 (University Archives, Duke University).



Figure 4. Order of Red Friars' public tapping ceremony, *The Chanticleer*, Duke University, 1955.

Statement of the Problem

Historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (1987), known for her seminal work on undergraduate cultures spanning from the end of the eighteenth century to the 1980s, claimed that, "...an understanding of the past frees us from its unconscious hold" (p. xiv). Indeed, substantial evidence of the presence of collegiate secret societies on many campuses today along with implications of their covert power and connections to influential members of their campus communities points to the vulnerability of institutional leaders who seek to understand the dynamics related to historic power relationships within the culture of their particular institutions. Due to vast gaps in the scholarly literature related to collegiate secret

societies as distinguished from their Greek-letter counterparts, college administrators and higher education researchers are poorly equipped to discern their historical significance.

It is problematic that most of what is known about collegiate secret societies is a product of campus legend and lore, higher education news publications, student media, and the popular media. Their resemblance to the mystical Freemasons and groups like the Illuminati which have captivated the imagination of the American public in recent years as evidenced by the popularity of the movie, *National Treasure* (2004), and the New York Times bestselling book, *The DaVinci Code* (Brown, D., 2003) serves to embellish their image in the mythology of American college life. Although substantial evidence of collegiate secret societies exists, the absence of contemporary scrutinized historical research points to the vulnerability of scholars and administrators who seek to understand the presence of this type of group within the history of American higher education (Tosh, 2002).

This problem of an abundance of casual knowledge unchecked by empirical scrutiny is compounded by the fact that most scholarly writing about collegiate secret societies was completed over a century ago and has been largely forgotten. Interestingly, an obscure body of literature exists that was written by college presidents, alumni, and faculty around the turn of the twentieth century when secret societies of many types were causing concern due to their rising prominence and increasing importance to students seeking social status through their college activities. Greek-letter fraternities, with their secret rituals and meetings, already had become established over the course of the 19th century as a distinguishing characteristic of the American collegiate extracurriculum (Rudolph, 1990). Senior class

honorary societies, such as Yale's Skull and Bones, were emerging on many campuses later in the century as an even more prestigious type of secret student association that transcended membership in the Greek-letter organizations and further distinguished college men as achieving the pinnacle of success in the social system of their particular campus setting.

During this historic period associated with the rise of the modern university that began in the decades following the American Civil War, institutional governance on most campuses consisted of a "strong president" and a governing board whose membership was increasingly comprised of successful alumni businessmen (Baird, 1879; Cohen, 2010; Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). The power and influence attributed to the networks of students and alumni involved in fraternal secret societies had already been identified as a legitimate administrative concern for nineteenth-century college presidents because of their growing intrusion in college affairs (Hitchcock, 1863). Scholars writing about American higher education around the turn of the twentieth century observed that students during that period seemed to regard membership in the exclusive secret class societies similar to those at Yale as more important than their academic pursuits (Hadley, 1895; Sheldon, 1901; Slosson, 1910; Thwing, 1878). An historical study that rediscovers extant scholarly literature about collegiate secret societies and incorporates it into an archival study about one of these groups with accessible organizational records from 1913 through 1971 will make a significant contribution to the vast gap in the knowledge base that has developed in the past 100 years.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to generate basic knowledge about the origins and functions of a collegiate secret society that was active at Duke University (Trinity College prior to 1924) for much of the twentieth century. This study used the case of a secret society at a college in the southern United States to achieve a better understanding of why students established this type of group and what its function was within a provincial campus community that grew into a prestigious international university. It explored how a collegiate secret society assumed responsibility for managing the extracurriculum prior to the professionalization of student affairs in the early twentieth century and, more specifically, prior to the student personnel movement of the 1920s and 1930s (Biddix & Schwartz, 2012).

In addition, the purpose of the study was to explore how the values of the “big men on campus” who comprised the “Red Friars’ collegiate secret society served to instill the values of the dominant social group in the creation of cultural traditions, expectations, and rewards of social status for participation in campus life. Furthermore, the study can be utilized to provide insight into how the cultural norms established by the homogeneous students of the early decades of the twentieth century have been passed down to successive generations of students from increasingly diverse backgrounds.

Research Questions

Institutional leaders and higher education scholars are faced with a historical puzzle that calls for fundamental research questions designed to generate basic knowledge about the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies. Therefore, the following broad research

questions have been developed for a historical study grounded in archival research and oral history:

- 1) What were the origins of the Order of Red Friars secret society? (Why was the Order founded? What was the purpose of the secret order? Who were the founding members? What was their social position amongst other students? What were the criteria for membership? [*Whose* criteria were utilized?] What was going on in society and American higher education that might have contributed to the founding of the secret order?)
- 2) What were the functions of the Red Friars within student culture, and how did their functions change over time? (What were their major projects and activities? What social forces external to the secret order impacted their functions and criteria for membership? How were the Red Friars involved in the administration of student affairs at the university?)
- 3) What values, norms, and beliefs related to a white, male collegiate ideal are observable in the activities of the individual members of the Red Friars and of the group itself? (*Whose* values, norms, and beliefs are reflected?)

Theoretical Orientation: Critical Social Theory

Inspiration for a historical study about student culture at Duke University was drawn from the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Antonio Gramsci, two critical social theorists known for their concern with culture, power, and social stratification, as well as the emerging

scholarship of whiteness studies (See Appendix A: “My Perspective as a Researcher: A Transformative Worldview”).

Bourdieu

Bourdieu analyzed higher education systems in France and theorized about the role of cultural, social, and symbolic (honors, prestige) capital in relationship to reproduction of the social order (Bourdieu, 1977; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Bourdieu (1984) also introduced the theory of distinction which asserts that social identity lies in the ability to create difference – that people seek strategies to distinguish themselves as culturally superior to those most similar to themselves (Burke, 2004). This theory offered an interesting hypothesis to explore regarding students’ creation of secret societies comprised of the “Big Men” on campus from a relatively homogeneous student body.

Although Bourdieu’s theories have been criticized for being too rigid and deterministic (Burke, 2004; Holland & Eisenhart, 1990; Long, 2010), his conceptualization of the human desire for distinction amidst homogeneity was useful for understanding the social organization of the student body at Trinity College from which the Red Friars emerged. Trinity’s student body was homogeneous and provincial, yet many students were engaged in efforts to attain social status through involvement in campus organizations and athletics (Durden, 1993; Patrick, 1942). About half of the senior men at Trinity belonged to a Greek-letter fraternity when the Red Friars were founded, which was typical of American college students during this era and served to further minimize their social distinction from each other (Durden, 1993; Torbenson, 2005).

Gramsci

In keeping with Bourdieu's theoretical approach which integrates structural and humanistic interpretation, Italian Marxist philosopher and sociologist Antonio Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony provided an interesting orientation for exploring changes in the dominant social norms in the student culture at Trinity College/Duke University that occurred as the student body became more diverse during the twentieth century. Cultural hegemony as defined by Gramsci is the theory that a dominant social class (ruling class) – represented by the “Big Men” of the Red Friars - can impose its values and worldview as the societal norm, which serves to perpetuate their dominance (McLaren, Fischman, Serra, & Antelo, 2002).

What makes Gramsci's cultural theory particularly interesting for this study is that it was developed following the rise of industrial capitalism in the late nineteenth century when Marxist concerns about society's social structure and class struggles were profound, and intellectuals were reacting against conspicuous consumption and the new prestige values associated with the rise of the modern American university (Rudolph, 1990; Sinclair, 1922; Veblen, 1918). Gramsci's cultural hegemony theory offers explanatory power because it builds upon Bourdieu's social reproduction theory to posit that social actors who are not part of the dominant social group can challenge and affect change in the social order by discarding obedient acceptance of the established social norms. As the students at Duke University became more diverse over the course of the twentieth century, and especially after

World War II, the notion that students from increasingly diverse backgrounds might impact the dominance of the secret societies was a provocative proposal to explore.

Important theoretical concepts attributed to Gramsci include the notion that hegemonic control extends beyond the traditional Marxist economic concerns to include a struggle for control over symbolic capital that leads to status in a society (McLaren, et al., 2002). This concept of a struggle to acquire symbolic capital is especially applicable for the homogeneous and aspirational student culture of Trinity College and Duke University through the first half of the twentieth century. The trappings of the status of the “Big Man on Campus” that included narrative in the college yearbook and fraternity pledge pins and dangles worn to designate club membership and other collegiate honors offered compelling examples of the acquisition of symbolic capital in the status system that students created (Patrick, 1942; See *Figure 5: “B.M.O.C.” vestment dangles in *The Front Line: Materials for a Study of Leadership in College and After*, [Patrick, 1942]*).

Gramsci explained that for a dominant class or alliance to obtain hegemonic power in a particular setting requires both coercion sustained by political repression and consent of the subaltern strata (McLaren, et al., p. 155). This scenario describes precisely the dynamics chronicled in the history of Duke University when the fraternities voted in blocks to maintain dominance and control over student government elections which escalated during the 1930s (Durden, 1993), a form of popular control only to be dissolved once a resistance against the dominant social force was mounted at the onset of World War Two. This example of the power of the “collective will” and “consciousness” of students that led to resistance and

resulted in counterhegemonic change in cultural control illustrates Gramsci's belief in the power of "praxis" – that the action of social actors assuming their agency can bring about change in the social structure (pp. 168-9). McLaren, et al, (2002) further explained that counterhegemonic resistance of the masses does not have to be a violent movement but rather can be observed as the "decentering of the dominant discourse" through performative or intellectual means, such as political journalism and theatre, both of which forces led to the decline of the Red Friars' esteemed status in the student social system.



*Figure 5. "B.M.O.C." vestment dangles in *The Front Line: Materials for a Study of Leadership in College and After*, (Patrick, 1942).*

Whiteness Studies

Acknowledging that the idealized profile of the "Big Man on Campus" was first manifested in the white, male members of the exclusive secret societies at Yale College in

the nineteenth century and that students around the country thereafter emulated the organizations and traditions at Yale (Thelin, 1982; 2011), the emerging scholarship of whiteness studies offered insight into the phenomenon of the “B.M.O.C.” as it was embraced by students from increasingly diverse backgrounds well into the twentieth century.

Whiteness studies is a branch of critical race theory that dates back to the early 1990s (Jacobson, 1998; Painter, 2010; Roediger, 2005). Pioneers in the field have explained that scholars who study race as an evolving social construction and the pursuit of characteristics associated with whiteness as the American normative condition, with its related privileges and social status, can understand much about our country’s history (Roediger, 1991; Jacobsen, 1998).

David Roediger (2005), a renowned historian and pioneer in the field of whiteness studies, explained that the pursuit of a “white American” identity by waves of the nation’s immigrants led them by the early twentieth century to embrace education as a means of becoming more “white” and transcending an inferior social status. Conceptualizing attainment of a college degree and the associated acculturation process as a means of acquiring the qualities of American “whiteness” in the early twentieth century was particularly salient for this study. American higher education prior to that time had been almost exclusively the domain of the white male (Cohen, 2010; Thelin, 2011).

According to historian Nell Irvin Painter (2010), America in the nineteenth century had come to be considered a “white man’s country”, growing out of a colonial society rooted in African slavery, with only adult white men having the right to vote through much of the

nineteenth century (p. 107). Prominent Victorian thinkers Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry Cabot Lodge had established the profile of the white, American male ideal as a physically strong and handsome man with the superior intellect of the educated New Englander of their own elevated social position (Painter, 2010). The history of higher education in this country, therefore, must consider how the uniquely American extracurriculum that developed in the nineteenth century was shaped by the values and beliefs of the white American male who promoted the racial superiority of northern Europeans over the masses of new immigrants who would enter the United States in waves by the millions through about 1920 (Painter, 2010).

The application of a critical lens therefore illuminated how the presumed democratic agenda of American higher education has been cloaked within the fabric of student cultures that are sustained apart from the official administrative structure of colleges and universities. Critical researchers typically share “a value orientation...and interest in a common set of social-theoretical concepts, like ‘social structure’, ‘culture’, and ‘social reproduction’ (Carspecken , 1996). Historical work in the college setting can be enhanced by “borrowing” techniques from critical cultural research methods to interpret the deeper social meaning of rituals, traditions, architecture, and institutional saga (Thelin, 1982; Wolcott, 2008). A critical approach was used to question *whose* rituals, traditions, architecture, and institutional saga comprised the culture associated with Duke University in the twentieth century.

An important concept for me to acknowledge regarding conducting a study with a critical lens is the common accusation that critical theory is biased towards the negative

(Pasco, 2003). On the contrary, I believe that asking new questions about what once was taken for granted as the accepted way of doing things in the historic context of a homogeneous college community can be a positive way to study the structural and humanistic aspects of the educational setting. Critical educational scholarship can be a process of directing one's work towards positive social change by encouraging reflection on the impact of practices within educational systems that are reproduced over time (Pasco, 2003).

Significance of the Study

This research is significant because it addresses a tremendous gap that exists in the history of American higher education literature. Specifically, this study explored the origins and functions of a collegiate secret society that was actively engaged in the administration of student affairs on its campus throughout much of the twentieth century. Plentiful evidence exists in the popular media and online regarding the historical presence of collegiate secret societies with varied levels of subliminal power and influence at diverse types of higher education institutions in the United States; However, this study provided rare in-depth scholarly inquiry into the emergence, prominence, and disappearance of a collegiate secret society embedded in the social context of twentieth-century American higher education at an institution in the South. It illuminated the collegiate secret society as a source of institutional power that has heretofore defied rational organizational analysis.

This study about the function of a collegiate secret society in an early-twentieth century university setting has rediscovered much basic knowledge about this historic

phenomenon of student culture that simply had been buried in institutional memory. The prevailing evidence that would argue this ancient species of student organization has survived and remains active on many campuses in the United States into the twenty-first century is quite remarkable and has been proven credible by the detailed accounts of interaction between student members of the Red Friars and university officials at Duke University in the recent past. The presence of active secret societies on college campuses today implies either tacit endorsement of college officials or the persistence of groups subsisting “under the radar” of the campus community, both of which prospects have been made plausible by this study. For the campus administrator, the potential practical implications of this study for applied knowledge are immense.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) claim that due to the organic nature of campus cultures, administrators cannot presume to manage the culture on their campus, but rather they would be wise to seek a greater understanding of campus culture to better equip themselves to navigate it. For campus administrators and institutional officers who have responsibilities related to student life, fundamental awareness of the collegiate secret society as a distinct type of student organization with a significant historical legacy and function in American higher education is imperative. This study offers a trustworthy account of the history of one of these groups and how their function evolved over time.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study was the secret nature of this type of collegiate student association. The foremost limitation related to these secret groups is that the scope of

the population of interest – undergraduate student secret societies at colleges and universities in the United States – cannot be known. However, this limitation made the option of a qualitative historical analysis advantageous due to the ability to study case histories in depth.

Access to documents and records created by collegiate secret societies presented another limitation for this type of study, but for the Order of the Red Friars, this limitation was overcome by the generous accessibility of their organizational records and membership rosters in the Duke University archives. Organizational records were accessible for the Red Friars from the time of their founding in 1913 until they voluntarily disbanded in 1971. Official membership rosters and meeting minutes provided valuable sources for triangulating information about individual members and their participation in campus life as represented in student yearbooks, the student newspaper, alumni magazines, university news service articles, and personal memorabilia and correspondence donated to the University archives.

The limitation of there being few living individuals who could speak about their experiences during the formative decades of the Red Friars' existence at Trinity College/Duke University (1910s-1940s, approx.) was summarily acknowledged, but fortunately, I was able to locate a member of the Order who graduated during the World War II era and whose memory was very sharp about his time in college. The wealth of primary source material available in the University Archives for this same historical period nonetheless provided a virtual treasure trove for the cultural historian. The limitation of individuals who could speak about the early period of this study ultimately served to affirm

archival research as the optimal approach for exploring this otherwise daunting social phenomenon.

Delimitations

The delimitations of this study were guided by my decision to study the case of one collegiate secret society in depth through the lens of cultural history rather than conduct a comparative study of collegiate secret societies (at one or more campuses) or a large survey about the secret societies presumed to be in existence in colleges and universities around the United States. The scholarly traditions associated with both history and the study of culture emphasize the strength of studies that focus on one site or case in depth rather than comparative studies (Creswell, 2007; Tosh, 2000; Wolcott, 2008). Based on this scholarly bias towards “thick description” inspired by cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) – the practice of pursuing deep interpretation of meaning within a cultural situation - I decided to identify one collegiate secret society with a promising body of accessible archival records as the focus of my study.

Another important delimitation of this study was my decision to study the history of a majority culture undergraduate male secret society, rather than attempt to broaden the scope of the study to include in-depth study of collegiate secret societies associated with women, race, ethnicity, religion, athletic teams, residence life programs, professional school students, or students from other affinity groups. This decision supports my interest in examining power on campus by utilizing a critical perspective to rediscover basic knowledge about the phenomenon of collegiate secret societies that emerged first in all-male institutions in the

early nineteenth century when white, Protestant males comprised nearly all of the students in American higher education. It follows the logic of the recognized pattern of the development of institutions of higher education in America that were first populated by white, male, Protestant students of some privilege, with female students and students from more diverse racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds entering American higher education thereafter and emulating the cultural customs associated with American college life that were established by the white male students (Rudolph, 1962/1990; Thelin, 2011).

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined for the purposes of this study:

Collegiate secret societies: Undergraduate student organizations that emerged on college campuses in the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when fascination with secret associations and Freemasonry, in particular, was popular; typically associated with names and iconography from the occult and mystical; some groups were comprised of student leaders tapped to manage agendas related to improvement of student life in covert collusion with institutional leaders; levels of secrecy within the organization can include complete concealment of members' identities.

Ethnography: methodological approach concerned with understanding culture; researcher undertakes goal of portraying culture in text (Thorne, 2000, p. 69).

Greek-letter fraternities and sororities: Student social organizations established primarily in the nineteenth century identified by Greek-letter names; groups practice secret initiation

rituals and membership selection, but members' identity is revealed; group activities are highly monitored by campus authorities and national organization offices.

Cultural Hegemony: Antonio Gramsci's cultural theory that explains a dominant social class (ruling class) can impose its values and worldview as the societal norm, which in turn serves to perpetuate its dominance as the ruling class; theory commonly used by critical scholars.

Historiography: a critical review of the historical literature on a particular topic that incorporates an analysis of the perspective and worldview of the historical period in which the piece was written; How historians review the literature in the field to illuminate the prevailing interpretations of history and how they change over time.

Manuscripts: personal papers and other published or unpublished documents typically held in institutional archival collections.

Oral history: use of in-depth interviews to make meaning of the past; could include tales, sagas, and anecdotes (Barzun & Graff, 2003, p. 119).

Primary sources: type of sources most highly-valued by historians for scholarly research; original documents (personal, organizational, and institutional); created during the time period being studied; oral history utilizing narrators with first-hand experience of the events and time period studied (Tosh, 2002).

Progressive Era: 1890s – 1910s; historical period that coincides with the rise of industrial capitalism, rise of conspicuous consumption, rise of concern with social class, rise of the modern university, and period of debate over higher education reform

Records: a type of historical evidence that documents the activity of an organization or institution.

Secondary sources: interpretations of events for time period studied.

Historical Method

Historical research presented the optimal approach for exploring the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies and the challenges they pose for institutional leaders. Although historians may be criticized for being “presentists” if they pursue answers to current issues through the study of history (Eisenmann, 2007), historians of higher education have asserted that “historical puzzles” connected to present issues in higher education may be well-addressed through historical inquiry and provide great insight for educators and policymakers (Eisenmann, 2007; Horowitz, 1987; Rousmaniere, 2004; Thelin, 1982). Historian John Tosh (2002) calls upon historians to use their rigorous, critical methods to interpret the events of our recent past (the twentieth century) to counter the acceptance of casual knowledge about a social phenomenon uncontested by the scrutiny of scholarly work. Acknowledging the absence of significant scholarly study about collegiate secret societies in the past century, a higher education study utilizing historical research methods to explore archival documents and conduct interviews provided the optimal means for accessing information about this phenomenon of student culture.

Given the plentiful data college students have created to represent their own culture in student newspaper and yearbook articles and photographs, evidence of the imposition of the norms of the dominant social groups as proposed by Gramsci could be observed. Research

practices associated with cultural history were utilized to identify evidence of cultural hegemony in the narratives and images the students produced (Burke, 2004). Analytical methods associated with cultural research, such as visual anthropology (the use of photographs as data sources), were employed to pursue an understanding of the cultural values represented in archival photographs of student life (Collier & Collier, 1986; Prins, 2002). Therefore, the compatibility of historical and cultural research methods informed by a critical approach offered great explanatory power for this study designed to explore how aspects of the social structure at Duke University were reproduced through the first half of the twentieth century while the hegemony of the white male held it firmly in place (Apple, 1971; Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Carspecken, 1996; Pasco, 2003).

Data collection and analysis necessarily involved a critical assessment of original sources such as manuscripts, documents, photographs, and organizational records which illuminated the purpose, goals, and saga of the Red Friars secret society, the motivations of its members, and their influence within campus culture. In addition, I incorporated interviews of Red Friars from three different eras when the group was active to enhance the collection of data about this interesting phenomenon and to serve as a sort of “member-checking” process to insure the trustworthiness of my narrative explanation of the group’s function and purpose over time. Above all, I am confident that the methodology associated with historical research provided the optimal approach for exploring the topic of collegiate secret societies because current social situations can best be understood as the product of an ongoing historical process (Tosh, 2000).

Chapter Summary and Organization of the Study

The forthcoming chapters will feature an historiography in Chapter 2, a critical review of the historical literature on the topic of collegiate secret societies. As previously mentioned, the majority of the scholarly work on collegiate secret societies was produced during the Progressive Era when the emergence of secret societies presented a significant social “problem” for leaders in American higher education, so this body of literature is historically rich. The historiography will be followed by Chapter 3 in which I will describe the methodology and design of my study in detail. I will explain my rationale for selecting cultural history to study the Order of Red Friars secret society at Duke University. I will also explain how this approach will be informed by cultural research methods, such as photo elicitation and documentation, useful data collection and analysis tools for exploring meaning in photographs found in old student newspapers and yearbooks.

Regarding the design of this cultural history study, I will refer to the appendix which will include an overview of two pilot studies that allowed me to test various options for study design prior to making final decisions. I conducted a pilot study about student life and culture at Duke University prior to World War II to explore the utility, accessibility, and variety of primary and secondary sources available in the archives, which proved to affirm my choice of the Red Friars secret society as the focus of my dissertation (See Appendix B: The “Big Man on Campus” as a Cultural History Phenomenon). I also conducted a pilot study at another university in the Southeastern United States in a different state that is known to have more than 10 secret societies currently active (See Appendix C: Collegiate Secret

Societies Active in the Twenty-First Century). I was interested in investigating the potential for a study on a campus known for its contemporary secret societies, but I learned that the lack of knowledge that administrators and student leaders had about the origins and functions of these groups made all the more compelling the need for a foundational historical study rooted in archival research methods.

I discuss the study findings in Chapters 4 and 5 by separating the period of study into two cohesive historical eras marked by the time when the Red Friars were disbanded temporarily due to the disruption of World War II. Thelin (1982) advised higher education historians writing institutional history to be alert to dramatic incidents which directly impact a campus in addition to the usual attention paid to gradual change over time. At Duke University, as was the case at many colleges during the war, significant numbers of male students joined the armed services and female students assumed campus leadership positions that heretofore were unattainable due to their gender. Therefore, I divided the report of my findings into two historical periods: the formative period of the Order of Red Friars (from 1913 – 1943) and the decades after they were reorganized that reflect the waning of their esteemed status on campus (1949 – 1971).

In Chapter 6, I will summarize the findings of this historical research project in relation to the questions that were developed to guide the study. Theoretical and practical implications of the findings will be discussed, as they are inevitably entangled and inform the scholar practitioner. In conclusion, I will summarize the contribution this study makes to the

history of American higher education literature, and ideas for further research will be presented.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the scholarly literature on the topic of collegiate secret societies in the history of American higher education revealed a clustering of works in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century (the Progressive Era) and a dearth of scholarly literature from that time forward. Even in the decades since the 1960s when the scholarship of American higher education began to mature as an academic focus of study (Eisenmann, 2007; Thelin, 1982), scholarly research has scarcely mentioned this seemingly ancient and forgotten phenomenon of student culture. Given this challenging scenario for gleanng useful data from scholarly work to inform a study on this provocative topic, I conducted a historiographical review of the works that are available.

In the scholarly tradition of history, a review of the literature on a particular topic is typically conducted in the form of a historiography and primarily reviews books rather than articles, due to the nature of the genre. A historiography is a critical review of *interpretations of the past* that may include commentary and critique regarding the worldview and motivations of their author (Breisach, 1983). This review usually seeks to situate historical studies within the prevailing mode of historical explanation associated with the era of the scholarly work. For example, much of the history written through the mid-twentieth century was produced by men concerned with “great men” (kings, presidents, military leaders) and political history. Only in the late twentieth century have historians become more concerned with social and cultural history, exploring the lived experiences of

women and other people whose voices were largely absent in the written record of the past (Burke, 2004).

I found the practice of writing a historiography, a recognized practice associated with contemporary historical research, to be especially appropriate and supportive of the critical lens I applied to this study. Although the social sciences generally discourage the analysis of separate studies in succession, this literature review was conducted in the style of a historiography. I discussed separate studies in detail so that the significance of the socio-historical context of their author could be addressed.

A Progressive Era Problem for American Higher Education

As previously mentioned, the most relevant material about collegiate secret societies was written between the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early decades of the twentieth century when these groups were thriving and exerting their presence in many campus communities. The presence of works concentrated in this period reveals a concern on the part of institutional leaders and alumni with these groups which were characterized as prominent features of campus life on campuses from the elite colleges in the East to the newer universities that had been established in the Midwest and West. Although many works have been out of print for more than a century, digitization and open-source access in recent years has facilitated their rediscovery which begins to illuminate the origins of the secret society phenomenon.

The earliest studies that addressed the subject of collegiate secret societies were institutional histories written in the second half of the nineteenth century, concurrent with the

professionalization of history as an academic discipline (Smith, 1998). Contributors were scholars and amateurs alike – college presidents, faculty, students, and alumni seeking to chronicle the customs and traditions that would insure the distinctive historical legacy of their respective institutions. The proliferation of the founding of denominational colleges that spread higher education to the western regions of the country culminated around the time of the Civil War (Rudolph, 1962/1990). At the same time, historians representing many of the older institutions in the East began to assert the prestige of their institutions by documenting their distinctive histories, which included accounts of student life that featured secret societies.

In 1863, Edward Hitchcock, a geology professor, ordained minister, and president of Amherst College, published *Reminiscences of Amherst College: Historical, Scientific, Biographical and Autobiographical*, expressing a “duty” to write a history of the institutions where he had spent his entire academic career since its founding in 1821. Hitchcock was president of Amherst College from 1845-1854. He reflected that managing students’ secret societies was one of “the most perplexing subjects” he had faced as president of a New England college (p. 318). According to Hitchcock, “This system of secret societies was not confined to one college in the country, but extended to nearly all” (p. 321).

Hitchcock (1863) used the term “secret societies” as it was commonly operationalized during most of the nineteenth century – to describe the presence of Greek-letter fraternities and their co-mingling with the more exclusive secret societies that were based on the student’s class year. President Hitchcock surveyed college presidents in the North regarding

their stance on these controversial groups, and they affirmed that due to the popularity of secret societies and their strong ties to alumni, any attempt to eradicate these groups would serve only to strengthen their secrecy and resistance (p. 321-326). Students at Amherst established many of the same student societies (fraternities and class societies) that appeared at Yale College, Dartmouth College, and Harvard College during that period, usually upon authorization or in collaboration with the groups at the other colleges.

Hitchcock described the function of secret societies at Amherst as comprising an exclusive, student-run system of associations to which students ascribed great prestige and importance for “fixing” their social standing upon completion of college (1863, pp. 322-327). He explained that membership in these groups had come to mean a great deal to young men who had entered college to become ministers or missionaries in terms of potential success and “usefulness” as members of society, even more than the academic rankings assigned to them by their faculty. This view of students creating an aspirational peer culture captures the spirit of the rise of industrial capitalism in the North during this period and the shift among students from pursuing a college degree for the purpose of becoming clergymen and statesmen towards enrolling in college for more practical purposes and opportunities that afforded social mobility in an increasingly secular society. Writing a century later, historian Frederick Rudolph (1962) would define this era as a time of changing “prestige values” from the supernatural and religious to the more worldly and conspicuous concern with social status.

Further evidence that students in the second half of the nineteenth century utilized secret society membership as a means of acquiring status during college and for public life thereafter can be found in *Four Years at Yale*, a popular history written by Lyman Bagg, Yale class of 1869 (1871). According to higher education historian John Thelin (2011), the appeal of this book can be attributed to Yale's rising preeminent status amongst colleges at the time and the quest of students in colleges around the country to enhance the prestige of their institutions by emulating Yale's "robust" customs and traditions (pp. 94-95). Thelin explained that by 1870, Yale was the largest college in the country and that "its student life was a matter of national interest and aspiration." He added that students from Yale and Princeton were largely responsible for spreading the elite student customs of their institutions to the newer colleges in the South and West where they served as presidents and members of the faculty in predominant proportion to other institutions. Thelin (1982) noted that the popularity of college fiction novels, mostly about the experience of students at Yale in the late nineteenth century, helped to spread the notion of the "collegiate ideal" that would come to characterize the American college student experience.

Bagg (1871) portrayed Yale's secret societies (based on class year) as *the* distinguishing characteristic of Yale's institutional history and detailed students' desperate pursuit of membership in these groups. He proclaimed that Yale's class societies were original and superior to their "imitators" (p. 182). He offered the examples of "Axe and Coffin" at Columbia College, "Owl and Padlock" at Michigan University, and "Skull and Serpent" and "Owl and Wand" at Wesleyan University.

Bagg (1871) further explained that Yale's system of class societies was based on peer valuations of student contributions to campus life and bringing pride to their alma mater in athletics, literary, and social endeavors. Students' desire for membership in the secret societies certainly reflected the growing social ambition of students in the nation's colleges at the time, at least those in the North and expanding West, as well as it reflected the period of transition in American higher education from the regime of the "old time college" with its narrow focus on the mental discipline of the classical curriculum to the "research university" bent towards scientific and social advancement.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, colleges in the United States began seriously exploring the prospects of adopting the model of the German research university with its emphasis on scientific inquiry and graduate study (Veysey, 1965). Johns Hopkins was established in 1876 as the first modern American research university. Both Yale and Harvard made the transition to research university status in the 1880s, acknowledging that Yale, Harvard, and The College of New Jersey (renamed Princeton University in 1896) had established scientific schools decades earlier. Nonetheless, the traditions and customs associated with the American undergraduate college experience grew and fostered alumni devotion that has sustained the baccalaureate program as foundational to the American system of higher education (Rudolph, 1962; Thelin, 2011; Veysey, 1965).

According to Bagg (1871), "The senior societies, in theory, are composed exclusively of 'big men;' of those who...have become preeminent among their fellows in college repute" (pp. 143-144). He explained that election to one of the senior societies "is valued more

highly than any other college prize or honor” because the advantages of membership secured for the Yale undergraduate a social network of “the best graduates of the college” and essentially guaranteed his success in life upon graduation. *Four Years at Yale* is notable in this historiography because amateur and professional historians thereafter utilized it as a source for understanding the secret society system based on class year that eclipsed the prestige of the Greek-letter fraternity system on many campuses.

In 1879, William Raimond Baird, a member of a fraternity at the nascent Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey (founded 1870), compiled the first comprehensive history of the student societies that had been thriving on American campuses for nearly 100 years (with the obvious exception of the Civil War period when many colleges, especially those in the South, struggled to survive or closed). Baird’s *American College Fraternities: A Descriptive Analysis of the Society System in the Colleges of the United States With a Detailed Account of Each Fraternity*, later nicknamed *Baird’s Manual of American College Fraternities*, enjoyed popular success resulting in 20 revised editions through 1991. Baird estimated that 65,000 students had been members of the Greek-letter fraternities at the time of his first printing, with thousands more having been in the other types of secret societies (pp. 160-161).

According to Baird (1879), collegiate secret societies were prominent organizations on the campuses of many colleges and universities in the United States throughout the nineteenth century. He traced their emergence to the founding of Phi Beta Kappa at the College of William & Mary in 1776 and its expansion to Yale College and Harvard College

during the time of the American Revolution. He explained that what ensued in the early nineteenth century was the proliferation of secret literary societies at colleges in the East, typically two groups founded on each campus for the purpose of oratory competition and debate. He elaborated that these groups were eventually supplanted by the ascendancy of the Greek-letter fraternity system which began in 1825 at Union College (NY) and offered a more appealing alternative to the lackluster classical curriculum with opportunities for social engagement and membership in a brotherhood that practiced ritual veiled in mysticism and secrecy.

Baird utilized *Four Years at Yale*, as well as periodicals, fraternity manuals, constitutions, journals, and student and alumni interviews to research and publish *American College Fraternities* (1879). Baird's historical catalog included a section dedicated to the "class fraternities" that originated at Yale and their "host of imitators" on other campuses, such as "Elephant and Coffin" at the College of the City of New York and Theta Nu Epsilon (ΘNE), a sophomore class society with chapters at Wesleyan, Syracuse, Union, Cornell, and Rochester (pp. 148-150). Although Baird's primary interest was the history of the Greek-letter fraternity system, the history of the class fraternity system was necessarily entangled. Some of these groups eventually became Greek-letter fraternity chapters, and secrecy played a key role in both at the time. From the student's perspective, according to Baird, a major function of the secret fraternal organizations was to provide a social outlet from the otherwise stultifying nineteenth-century classical curriculum, arguing that, "...college life should

consist of something more than a study of dead Greek roots, mathematical puzzles, or investigations into the structure of obscure polyps and long-named fossils” (p. 201).

Baird (1879) explained that the secret class societies were “open” organizations in the sense that they served “to bring the leading spirits of each class together...whether they belonged to a fraternity or not”, creating an overarching status system in which fraternity membership was subsumed (p. 148). Baird added the term “open” meant that members could be drawn from different fraternities. In contrast, Greek-letter fraternities prohibited membership in more than one fraternity.

More historical works about collegiate secret societies written by professional scholars began to appear around the end of the nineteenth century as institutions struggled to establish their supremacy in the era of the modern university. With the rise of the university model in the United States came larger enrollments (Veysey, 1965) and concerns about changes in beloved student traditions that would inevitably result. In 1895, Yale professor and economist Arthur Twining Hadley contributed a chapter to *Four American Universities: Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia* and furthered Bagg’s earlier claims that Yale had become “the largest representative of the American college idea” (p. 80). He boasted that the characteristic of Yale life that distinguished it from other colleges was “a keener intensity of competition...in every form of effort” – especially the contest for election into one of the secret societies that became increasingly selective by class year (p. 80).

Professor Hadley had been the valedictorian of the Yale class of 1876 and would four years later become the first lay president of Yale University, after two centuries of clergy at

the helm (Schiff, 1999). He defended the merits of the exclusive class society system which Yale students had created to reward their peers for bringing honor to the college but worried aloud that increasing contact between the universities and the business world might render the society system “undemocratic” and “the domain of the rich” (p. 88).

Two prominent alumni who published a history of Yale in 1899, the year on the cusp of the new century when Hadley was inaugurated as president, shared his concern that the “ineradicable” system of class societies would be able to “keep her big classes together in the old Yale way and to favor the democratic spirit of the place” as the size of the student body grew larger (p. 88). Lewis Sheldon Welch and Walter Camp wrote *Yale: Her Campus, Classrooms, and Athletics* to celebrate “the manner of life and the state of health at Yale as she comes to her two hundredth birthday” (pp. xxv, 113). Welch, Yale class of 1889 and founding editor of the Yale alumni magazine, along with Camp, Yale class of 1880 and later recognized as “the father of American football” for his role in developing the forward pass and American football rules, noted changes occurring in student life within 10 years of Yale becoming a university due to a dramatic increase in enrollment. They lamented how the size of the student body having swelled to 1,200 allowed few men to be tapped for the prestigious senior societies, making them all the more exclusive, yet they celebrated the observation that an election to a society “was becoming recognized much less as a *sine qua non* of the college course” and that opportunities to distinguish oneself in other areas of extracurricular life were becoming more plentiful (p. 20).

Ushering in the Progressive Era, Henry Davidson Sheldon, a professor of history and education at the University of Oregon, represented the first professional historian to seek scientific explanations for the observable social phenomenon of collegiate secret societies that he identified as problematic. In *Student Life and Customs* (1901), Sheldon cited “a serious gap which exists in the literature of the subject” and “the lack of an extensive monographic literature treating critically of the different student societies in the colleges and universities” (p. xv.). He described the purpose of his work as making a contribution to pedagogical development for the sake of “educational progress”, which was in keeping with the spirit of reform that characterized Progressive Era educators. He enlisted emergent psychological and behavioral theories in an attempt to trace patterns in college student life from the early modern European universities to his present day to explain the evolution of student societies of all types.

Sheldon (1901) concluded that the purpose of a college education at its core was to overcome the “isolation of the uncultured individual”, thus offering a scientific explanation for why students formed associations with each other through the centuries (p. xv). Sheldon gave the examples of Harvard’s society system based on “sociality and congeniality” and Yale’s intensely competitive society system made up of the “best men of the year” to show how variations in student societies could reflect the culture and values of their particular student body (pp. 176-178). Sheldon utilized *Four Years at Yale* to illuminate the dramatic quest of Yale’s societies to pledge “the best men in terms of literary ability, scholarship, athletic prowess, good fellowship, or great wealth”. He described Yale’s two most secret and

prestigious senior societies – “Skull and Bones” and “Scroll and Keys” – as “perhaps the most unique student institutions in the country”, noting the identity of their members is kept absolutely secret (p. 175). He also cited the generation of “much animosity towards this type of group” between faculty and students around the country (p. 178).

This critical turn in the historical analysis of collegiate secret societies continued with the work of Edwin Slosson, a journalism professor from Columbia University with a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. In 1910, Slosson produced a masterful anthology of the most prominent of the new American research universities according to the rankings of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching which evaluated institutions based on money spent annually on instruction. Slosson’s 525-page *Great American Universities* reviewed the history and distinguishing institutional characteristics of Columbia University, Harvard University, the University of Chicago, the University of Michigan, Yale University, Cornell University, the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Illinois, the University of Wisconsin, the University of California, Leland Stanford, Jr. University, Princeton University, the University of Minnesota, and Johns Hopkins University.

For the writing of *Great American Universities* (1910), Slosson employed the new scientific tools of comparative statistics, along with the review of institutional documents and interviews of students, alumni, and faculty to identify the secrets of each university’s success and trends indicating commonalities. What Slosson produced was an ambitious report that created a profile of the nation’s most successful institutions, which serves to enhance an understanding of the context in which the collegiate secret societies functioned during the

age of the modern university: that the great universities were “more alike than different”; that there was “something about the American atmosphere...(that) compels to uniformity”, such that institutions grow in a type defined as “the standard American university”; they embodied “a widespread spirit of exclusiveness and arrogance”; they had grown too large for the classes to form meaningful friendship groups, thus the breakdown of the cohesive system of class rivalries; and most significantly, they fostered an anti-intellectual environment in which students valued their social life, athletics, and membership in the right clubs more highly than their intellectual pursuits; that students essentially “owned the university” in many places (pp. 522-525; 382, 502-523, 418, 506, 471).

Slosson’s (1910) taking the pulse of the nation’s most prosperous universities revealed how the exclusive values of student life and customs originating in the oldest Eastern colleges had spread throughout the nation and remained intact in the transmission. Among other things, he found exclusive student associations to be thriving at most of the schools he studied. The phenomenon of competition and imitation that Slosson identified has since been conceptualized as “institutional isomorphism” by contemporary organizational behavior theorists (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Slosson (1910) found that Cornell University, founded in 1865 as New York’s land grant institution, “more resembles Harvard, Yale, or Penn than other state universities”, explaining that, “It would be hard for a state university to thrive in the Eastern atmosphere of caste and exclusiveness, of wealth and family pride...” (p 314). He noted that young Cornell already had 35 fraternity houses – “a system more highly-developed than anywhere in the

country” – and “innumerable other secret societies of all sorts” (p. 336). He catalogued references to the aristocratic atmosphere he found persisting in the nation’s modern universities and declared, “The college world reflects in miniature, like a drop of ink, the world outside, and this is simply a manifestation of the dominant tone of the age” (p. 78).

Slosson (1910) characterized Princeton with its “luxurious, engrossing, and exclusive” lifestyle of junior and senior class “eating clubs” as “the pleasantest country club in the United States” (pp. 79-80). He chronicled then university president Woodrow Wilson’s frustration with his students’ “conviction that scholarship is valueless, and extra-curriculum activities are of paramount importance in securing a club election” (p. 103).

Thorstein Veblen, a leading intellectual of the Progressive Era, delivered a scathing critique of American higher education just a few years later claiming that institutional leaders had been co-opted by big business and had imposed the university model on a nation eager to attain academic credentials for social mobility (1918). Drawing upon his background in economics and sociology, Veblen wrote *The Higher Learning: A Memorandum on the Conduct of Universities by Business Men* in the midst of “The Great War” when the historic debate over the purpose of American higher education was at a fever pitch. Veblen disparagingly referred to university leaders as “captains of erudition” caught up in a culture of “conspicuous consumption” (both terms coined by Veblen).

Slosson (1910) found students’ pursuit of prestige to be as intact as ever at Yale, as well. Contrary to Welch and Camp’s report that the influence of the Yale society system was waning at the turn of the new century, Slosson’s interviews with students and alumni led him

to proclaim that it appeared to be “the ambition of every normal college man” to get into one of the three secret societies of the senior class: “Toward this all his efforts are directed from his Freshman year, and Tap Day (the day when rising seniors are selected for society membership) marks for him the success or failure of his college career” (p. 66). Slosson quoted one young alumnus as saying, “I would willingly have sacrificed a year of my life, if it had been necessary, in order to make Bones”. He concluded that the ideals of the senior societies reflected in their criteria for membership set the standards for student behavior at Yale and fostered conformity to Yale customs and traditions, the pursuit of leadership among classmates, and achievement in college activities that would bring “glory” upon the college (p. 67).

Perhaps the most fascinating finding of Slosson’s (1910) study was the revelation that a secret society existed at the University of California that functioned as a sort of shadow government whose membership included both administrators and students. Slosson provided a detailed account of “the Order of the Golden Bear”:

“The inner circle is the Order of the Golden Bear, composed of 12 men elected at the end of their Junior year, who add to their number, when they become seniors, three or more of their class. There are also several honorary faculty members, including the president, elected for life. The aim is to include in the Golden Bear representatives of various departments, and the leaders in all branches of student activity, athletics, journalism, debating, dramatics, even scholarship. The society is secret, keeps no records of its conclusions, and takes no official action in university affairs, but is able from its membership to initiate movements and to mold public opinion without the extent of its influence being fully realized by the students generally. It is not, however under an ostentatious taboo, like the Yale Senior societies” (pp. 171-172).

Slosson continued to explain that this secret society functioned in an unofficial capacity in the shadow of the official body in charge of undergraduate discipline and student affairs, the Student Control Committee. The official governing body was a student board comprised of seniors, and as Slosson mockingly revealed, “by something more than a coincidence, chiefly of members of the Golden Bear”.

Contemporary Historical Studies

Interestingly, Slosson’s (1910) provocative writing about the collegiate secret societies in America’s “great” universities would stand alone for nearly half a century before scholars again dealt with this topic in any significant way. Scholarly research on American higher education in general was sparse for several decades as the nation turned its attention to the two world wars bridged by the Great Depression. The mid-century expansion of higher education catalyzed by the G.I. Bill sent unprecedented numbers of Americans to college and generated scholarly interest in academic freedom and curriculum reform. Historians became interested in how our American system of higher education had come to develop its distinguishing characteristics, and a specialization in the history of American higher education finally emerged in the 1960s (Eisenmann, 2007).

Contemporary historical inquiry regarding the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies is relegated to brief coverage in the history of American higher education literature in association with the nineteenth-century emergence of their better-known Greek-letter counterparts (Horowitz, 1987; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2004; Veysey, 1965). Although the seminal works that provide comprehensive histories of higher education in the United

States reveal a dearth of information about the secret societies, they offer a patchwork of important clues and rich descriptions of the changing social context that supported their emergence and persistence since “Skull and Bones” was founded at Yale in 1832 (Adler & Talbot, 1991; Magner, 1991).

Historian Frederick Rudolph’s classic work, *The American College & University: A History*, written in 1962, included an extensive description of students’ development of the “extracurriculum” during the nineteenth century that contributed to the distinctive character of the American college. Rudolph explained that students’ development of literary and debating societies, Greek-letter fraternities, intercollegiate athletics, yearbooks, newspapers, drama troupes, and other clubs formed an identifiable pattern that first emerged in the aristocratic, white, male cultures of the oldest colleges in the Northeast and eventually spread to most of the colleges in the nation.

Rudolph noted that by the end of the nineteenth century, the Greek-letter fraternity movement and its counterpart the exclusive club system had institutionalized the “new prestige values” of an increasingly secular and success-oriented American society (1962/1990, p. 144). He further explained that in creating the college fraternities, undergraduates introduced a social system into American higher education that divided student cultures into “Greeks” and “anti-society men” who rebelled against their exclusiveness and secrecy. Regarding the history of students’ involvement in administration, Rudolph posited that students’ establishment of the extracurriculum eventually afforded them significant leverage within the power structure of the American college.

Rudolph (1962) explained that the authority and autonomy students claimed in their organized activities eventually resulted in administrative attempts to co-opt and manage their affairs, such as the libraries established by the literary societies, fraternities, and intercollegiate athletics. Writing nearly a century after President Hitchcock at Amherst, Rudolph described how baffling the development of the extracurriculum had been for institutional leaders: “Before they quite knew what had happened, most college presidents found that their undergraduates had ushered into the American college community a social system that they had neither invited nor encouraged” (p. 145).

With the advantage of retrospective, Rudolph offered a possible explanation for how and why the secret societies adopted the mystical ritual and secrecy associated with Freemasonry which was part of the larger social movement of volunteer association membership in Europe and the United States that spanned the nineteenth century (p. 147). According to Rudolph, the rise of the American college fraternity in the mid-nineteenth century coincided with an anti-Masonic movement during which many Masonic secrets were revealed, and the fraternity movement incorporated Masonic practices such as secret ritual and terminology into their organizational structure. Rudolph’s attention to the social transformation that occurred in the American college during the nineteenth century was perhaps aided by his perspective as a professor at Williams College, one of the “hilltop” colleges in New England known for educating the more humble sons of farmers, ministers, and teachers rather than the privileged elite assumed to represent all college students in that

era (Thelin, 1982). Rudolph was an undergraduate at Williams in the 1940s and spent most of his academic career there after receiving his Ph.D. from Yale in 1953.

Ultimately, however, Rudolph's (1962) discussion of the secret society phenomenon in student culture as distinguished from the Greek-letter fraternity movement was brief and vague. He confirmed that between the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century, a "senior honorary society movement" resulted in the establishment of groups at a number of disparate institutions in the United States, such as Emory, Columbia, Vanderbilt, Dickinson, Dartmouth, Illinois, Brown, Lafayette, Yale, and Iowa State (pp. 371-2); however, his simple explanation that these groups recognized select college men and women who best modeled loyalty to their alma mater through campus activities was incomplete. It begs further inquiry regarding the emergence and function of these "senior honor societies" in different campus settings and why other scholars described more specifically secret class societies that emulated Yale's "Skull and Bones" and imbued students with highly-valued social status amongst their peers (Hadley, 1895; Hitchcock, 1863; Thwing, 1906; Veysey, 1965).

Historian Laurence Veysey's *The Emergence of the American University* (1965) is recognized as the seminal work about the rise of the modern university in the United States (Thelin & Wells, 2002). Although Veysey's focus was on intellectual history related to the philosophical debates over the purpose of American higher education, as well as the organizational structure that developed in the age of industrial capitalism, the few references he included about collegiate culture and the secret societies were significant. According to Veysey, the pursuit of prestige by students and their institutions dominated the age when

Yale men established their “college system” that recognized the “big men” on campus who moved progressively through the ranks of collegiate activities – from team player and member to captain and leader (p. 167). He added that the capstone of the Yale experience was the “high stakes election” to one of the prestigious senior secret societies because it led to lasting social and business contacts, along with serving as an end in itself in establishing social status on campus (p. 286).

Glorification of the Yale version of the American college experience resulted in emulation of Yale’s customs and traditions by colleges around the country (Veysey, 1965). Veysey indicated that Yale’s secret societies dominated the elaborate social system the students had established. He stated that “the system of secret societies cast a spell of peculiar intensity upon the whole campus” (p. 285). He reported that Princeton had a senior society that was modeled after Yale’s, with only 15 men of social influence selected annually, along with an exclusive system of eating clubs (p. 245). He also described “the Palladium” at Michigan as a group that involved several fraternities that had a “degree of power on the Michigan campus comparable to the secret societies at Yale” (p. 101).

Although the study of the history of American higher education increased in earnest beginning in the 1960s, the topic of collegiate secret societies has not been addressed in a direct manner but for a few disparate studies since; however, piecing together available relevant information adds clues for answering the research questions related to the origins and functions of the secret societies and how they changed over time. A review of the

miscellaneous studies by decade at least provides some cohesion for understanding their context and contribution to critical inquiry on this topic.

The relevant works in the 1970s reflect the sentiments of the growing numbers of social historians concerned about interpreting historical events from the “bottom up”. In 1972, noted historian John Roberts from Oxford asserted in his book *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* that the social phenomenon of secret societies is worthy of scholarly study due to the documented theme of the public perception that secret societies exerted a powerful “shadow” influence over European government and church operations throughout the nineteenth century. Roberts’ explanation of European secret societies functioning in shadow governance served to corroborate Slosson’s narrative describing the function of “The Order of the Golden Bear” at Berkeley.

In 1974, James McLachlan contributed a chapter on “American Student Societies in the Early 19th Century” for a volume on the history of higher education produced via a research seminar sponsored by the Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies at Princeton University. The purpose of the seminar was to explore the relationship of the university to society. McLachlan, representing Yale, proceeded to study the two rival literary societies founded by students at Princeton that created substantial libraries and sponsored literary activities and debates that surpassed the intellectual offerings of the formal curriculum, a phenomenon of student culture deemed typical of most American colleges during the 1800s. McLachlan argued that due to students’ intensive role in the education of their peers outside the classroom, no complete history of the “total educational process” in

the nineteenth century could be written without intense study of the literary societies and the extracurriculum that the students themselves created. Regarding the value of literary society records as primary sources, he added, “In the records of these scores of societies is preserved not only the basic social and intellectual history of the American college student but of the college itself” (p. 485).

In 1984, Richard M. Rose, a doctoral student at the University of Georgia interested in addressing the lack of representation of students in the antebellum South in the annals of the history of higher education, wrote a dissertation about the collegiate secret societies in antebellum Georgia. In “For Our Mutual Benefit: Antebellum Georgia College Student Organizations”, Rose challenged traditional historians’ view that nineteenth-century students were “victims of archaic institutions” and claimed that students in the antebellum South were active in creating literary societies and other secret societies to establish social contacts for positions after graduation. He insisted that the role of the college in antebellum society was the same as it was in colonial America – to insure social stability through the development of an educated elite (pp. 2-3). Rose provided evidence of secret societies on college campuses throughout the state of Georgia that were active before the Civil War. Interesting themes were noted, including the incorporation of the number “7” in the names of student organizations found at the University of Georgia and at small colleges around the state, along with the incorporation of mystical imagery and occult iconography in their activities, which would seem to indicate some system of sharing organizational structure and ideas.

Likely the most-cited work on the history of student culture in American higher education, Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz' (1987) *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* illuminated how the romanticized view of American college students actively engaged in clubs and organizations, fraternity life and sporting events represented only the experience of *some* students. Horowitz' contribution to the study of secret societies is the postmodern conclusion that not *all* students participated in organized "college life"; some students were "outsiders", and some students were "rebels" against the norm (p. x).

Horowitz (1987) became interested in the "student subcultures created in particular historical moments" while teaching in the 1980s and observing students' preoccupation with grades and getting a job, absent an interest in engaging with faculty (p. xii). She drew from the emerging traditions of social and cultural history and likened her exploration of "commonalities" in student culture across a wide range of institutions in different historical periods to "aerial photography", noting that sometimes only from the perspective of a great distance can "the broadest features of the landscape be discerned" (p. xiii). Horowitz provided an epistemological warning for historians studying student culture. She cautioned historians to remember that, "...representatives who have left us the major accounts of college experience from the mid-19th century until World War I... presumed to speak for all students. They did not. They spoke for 'that wealthier, secular sector of male undergraduates who joined or wanted to join a fraternity or club'" (p. 32).

Horowitz (1987) theorized that when *some* students created the extracurriculum in the nineteenth century, they established subcultures that have persisted in some recognizable form into the present, a notion associated with social reproduction and hegemony theory. She claimed that “insiders” were ambitious college men and women who participated fully in college life and valued the judgment of their peers more highly than grades awarded by faculty. “Outsiders” were students typically from modest means concerned more with academics than extracurricular activities, and “rebels” were students who rejected the conformity and insularity associated with college life due to their concern for larger social issues.

As scholars began to become more interested in teasing out different perspectives on history by utilizing the lens of gender, two studies were published in 1989 about masculinity and men’s participation in the secret fraternal orders which sustained popularity in the United States throughout the nineteenth century. Mark Carnes (1989), a history professor at Barnard College, explained in *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* that millions of men joined such organizations as the Odd Fellows and Freemasons because these groups offered a counterculture in response to the Victorian ideals that prevailed during that period. Carnes asserted that men’s participation in secret fraternal orders provided a means of reconciling male uncertainty about gender roles, science, and the supernatural in an increasingly secular world.

Feminist sociologist Mary Ann Clawson (1989) added that scholars’ historic neglect of fraternal associations made it a topic worthy of study in terms of gender identity. She

claimed that the development of fraternal guilds, trade, social and political organizations dating back to early modern western Europe could be traced into nineteenth century America to inform us about how males across the centuries have sought to affirm their collective gender and class identities through membership in these organizations. In *Constructing Brotherhood: Class, Gender, and Fraternalism*, Clawson argued that fraternalism was especially appealing in America in the 1800s when men were struggling to reconcile the conflict between democratic and capitalist values as well as establish solidarity against threats of women's claims on moral authority.

Unfortunately, serious historical work on the topic of collegiate secret societies becomes lean again in the 1990s. From this period and leading to the present, according to the commentary of a Yale archivist in a 2004 Yale alumni magazine, most writing about the secret society system has been produced by "a cottage industry" capitalizing on the public's fascination with the legend of Yale's Skull and Bones and the rumored ties of prominent men to its solemn bond of secret affiliation, such as journalist Alexandra Robbins' *Secret of the Tomb: Skull & Bones, The Ivy League, and the Hidden Paths of Power* (2002).

Historian John Thelin wrote *A History of American Higher Education* in 2004 citing an intention to expand upon Rudolph's *History* (1962/1990) and to provide greater insight into the history of institutions other than the nation's established colleges and universities. Thelin also sought to correct the assumption that all students in the past were of elite social status. Thelin pointed out that students who attended the small denominational colleges founded during the nineteenth century (such as Trinity College) came from families with modest

backgrounds, while the state universities in the South were considered exclusive and expensive. As colleges became recognized by families as a tool for social mobility, Thelin claimed it was the small, church-related schools that created a new American elite (p. 155), and he affirmed they emulated the elements of student life they associated with the prestige of the nation's older colleges.

Thelin (2004) offered a theory of "institutional diffusion" to explain why the influence of Yale and Princeton was so profound in establishing similar student customs and traditions in the nation's increasingly class-conscious colleges. According to Thelin, an inordinate number of colleges in the United States were founded by alumni from Princeton and Yale, and elite families in the South would tend to send their sons to conservative Yale rather than heterogeneous "godless" Harvard (p. 64). Thelin noted secret societies were among the groups that comprised the American extracurriculum that had taken form by the early 1900s as a "male-dominated" culture with athletics at its pinnacle (p. 186).

Only one work thus far in the new millennium has direct relevance to the question of the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies and the import of Yale's role in their pollination of these organizations around the country. D.J. Groff wrote a dissertation for a Ph.D. at Drew University in 2009 entitled, "The Fraternity Factor: Secret Handshake to the White House". His thesis can be summarized by restating the title of his dissertation in the form of a question. It perhaps is an appropriate launching pad for further historical inquiry into the phenomenon of collegiate secret societies in the twenty-first century.

Anthropological Studies about American College Student Culture

Scholars have called for more research on the cultural aspects of colleges and universities to fill a significant gap in the literature and help administrators better understand institutional settings in all of their complexity (Clark, 1972; Thelin, 1982; Veysey, 1965). Veysey (1965) and Thelin (1982) cited the lack of studies about college student culture, in particular, and noted that more research in this area also would strengthen the literature about the history of American higher education. Sociologist Burton Clark (1972) argued that more cultural studies were needed to illuminate the nonrational and nonstructural dimensions of organizational life. Scholars have advocated that higher education researchers could apply the lens of complementary disciplines, such as history and anthropology, to better understand organizational culture (Eisenmann, 2007; Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

Several anthropologists have conducted studies about American college student culture and offered insight that would inform a historical study about a collegiate secret society. Rutgers professor and cultural anthropologist Michael Moffatt wrote *Coming of Age in New Jersey: College and American Culture* (1989) to learn about American youth culture by living amongst the “natives”. Moffatt lived in the residence halls at Rutgers in 1977 and 1984 and conducted fieldwork as a participant-observer of student culture.

Although Moffatt’s work is recognized most for its ethnographic methods that distinguish it from traditional interviews and questionnaires used to study college students, his explanation of the evolution of American college student culture introduces a provocative theory about the historical involvement of students in college administration during the

twentieth century and the management of their extracurricular affairs. Moffatt observed the strength of student participation in the Greek-letter fraternity system in the 1980s and noted that it was the one area of student involvement outside the classroom that appeared to be thriving due to the support of influential alumni, having survived more than 70 years of deans' unsuccessful intervention. His observation would seem to indicate a source of organizational power impervious to administrative oversight.

In *My Freshman Year: What a Professor Learned by Becoming a Student* (2005), anthropology professor Cathy Small (under the pseudonym of Rebekah Nathan) reprieved Moffatt's study with a feminist and decidedly clandestine twist. Small's use of deception perhaps overshadowed her findings related to students' lack of connection with each other outside of the classroom and their disinterest in the organized extracurriculum managed by student affairs professionals (Kuh, 2006); however, she made the astute observation that by the late twentieth century, college students had come to care more for the judgment of their professors (the allocation of grades) than the allocation of status established by "college men" of the nineteenth century for "those who led in sports and clubs" – a nod to the "B.M.O.C." ideal (Nathan, 2005, p. 109). Small remarked that increased diversity in American campus communities during the twentieth century contributed to the erosion of social status as determined by "college men". The implications for a study exploring the hegemony of early twentieth-century student culture are notable, especially regarding Gramsci's theory that allows for social actors to upset the social order by rejecting the ideals of dominant social groups (McLaren, Fischman, Serra, & Antelo, 2002).

Two other anthropological studies about student culture are worthy of mention. Anthropologists Holland and Eisenhart (1990) utilized a critical educational and feminist ethnographic approach to explore the relationship between the “culture of romance and attractiveness” in colleges in the 1980s and the reproduction of women’s subordinate positions in American society. In *Educated in Romance: Women, Achievement, and College Culture*, Holland and Eisenhart utilized the lens of gender to explore how the dominant social norms of American colleges had elevated the social currency of involvement in intensive heterosexual relationships and influenced college women competent in math and science to default on their career aspirations and ultimately their earnings potential. As feminist anthropologists, they insisted on the incorporation of the Gramscian notion that resistance by social actors could upset the hegemony of the prevailing social order.

In a more recent study, anthropology professor and archaeologist Laurie Wilkie utilized the excavation of a house that belonged to the first fraternity at the University of California-Berkeley around 1900 to conduct a study of material culture for understanding masculinity and changing gender roles in the early twentieth century. In *The Lost Boys of Zeta Psi: A Historical Archaeology of Masculinity at a University Fraternity* (2010), Wilkie defended collegiate male secret fraternal organizations as a legitimate subject for scholarly research. She offered that through “microscale history” (the focus on a particular place and group) the study of an all-male group could illuminate the historical hegemony of dominant male social norms that is foundational for understanding the evolution of gender roles in the twentieth century.

Gaps in the Literature

A historiography of the literature on the topic of collegiate secret societies certainly reflected a concentration of the most insightful work in the decades spanning the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. Historians of American higher education recognize this period as a time when students created a vibrant extracurriculum to correspond with the rise of capitalism and secular values denoting “success”, while the modern research universities led the charge to connect the mission of American higher education with the progress of science and business. Institutional histories and other studies produced during the Progressive Era generally offered the explanation that students sought membership in the secret societies to affirm their achievement of social status associated with a “Big Man on Campus” American collegiate ideal. Slosson’s (1910) survey of the *Great American Universities* provided important additional perspective into the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies, which would seem to direct scholars to explore the notion of the collegiate secret society as managing some type of shadow agenda related to the governance of institutions or at least the management of a clandestine plan to bolster the success of student affairs.

Nonetheless, no well-known studies in the contemporary literature about the history of American higher education feature the topic of collegiate secret societies or explore this phenomenon through the lens of gender, race, or power on campus. Several seminal works mention the phenomenon of secret societies in conjunction with what has become a traditional narrative about students’ development of the extracurriculum in the nineteenth

century (Horowitz, 1987; Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). The prevailing historical narrative features the establishment of secret Greek-letter fraternal associations, intercollegiate athletics, and all varieties of affinity clubs as a means of countering the oppressive lecture and recitation of the classical curriculum imposed upon them by faculty, yet the phenomenon of secret societies that endowed membership and social status on the select few remains underexamined.

This study addressed extraordinary gaps in the history of higher education literature, both in terms of the century that has passed since the topic of collegiate secret societies has been seriously explored, as well as the need to apply critical social theory to the traditional narrative about students' development of a distinctively American extracurriculum. It utilized theory from the emerging scholarship of whiteness studies and related conceptualizations of masculinity to explore the power of the secret societies within the context of changes in student demographics that have marked the history of American higher education. This study challenged and expanded the scope of the traditional historical narrative about students' shaping of extracurricular life. It investigated the historical phenomenon of the "Big Man on Campus" as a social construction manifested in the members of the Order of the Red Friars secret society that validated the norms and values of the dominant white, male social group that prevailed in American higher education from its inception through much of the twentieth century.

Although significant literature was written during the Progressive Era regarding the phenomenon of collegiate secret societies, most of the material produced dealt with groups at

Yale and other elite schools in the Northeast. This historical study about a men's secret society at a college in the Southeastern United States offered new insight into this phenomenon as it was manifested at a comparatively modest, provincial institution in a region of the country that has been largely neglected in the annals of the history of American higher education. This study about the origins and purpose of the Order of the Red Friars at Duke University from 1913-1971 addressed vast gaps in the literature that have existed for more than a century.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Interpreting Messages from the Past

Sit with me in the archives of Duke University as I turn the typewritten pages of a narrative gift from a time long forgotten and begin to read and interpret scattered messages from the past. I went to the archives in search of clues for understanding the habitus of undergraduate students and the social structure they created in the early twentieth century, a time when Greek-letter fraternities were thriving and several secret societies were active on this campus. What I discovered along the back wall of the archives was a book written in 1942 by a reporter for the Duke University News Service whose unassuming prose described a collection of historic records about student organizations and the phenomenon of “the Big Man on Campus” as “materials for a study of leadership in college and after”. The reporter expressed hope that this volume “might be of some interest to the historian a hundred years hence... Whether, when, or by whom the study will be completed is anybody’s guess in this year of confusion and shadow”.

Thus, nearly 75 years later in the year 2010, I entered into a “human-to-human” relationship with my research interest, which is characteristic of qualitative narrative research in the first decades of the twenty-first century (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 22). In reading the words in *The Front Line* (Patrick, 1942) and knowing my eyes were among the few to have scanned them, I accepted this gift of narrative as if it were written expressly for me – transcending time and space. I promised to do my best to honor and interpret these messages from the past authored by a member of the University community who anticipated their

potential value for a scholar many years removed from this setting. I imagined the innumerable clues awaiting my discovery left by other messengers from the past – the historians and students who had compiled the institutional histories and created the yearbooks on the adjacent shelves in the archives’ stacks.

I also wondered how I might tie this private research endeavor to the broader goal of my study which was to generate new knowledge about the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies embedded in the history of American higher education so that scholars and institutional leaders might better understand their legacy. My adventure into the field begun, the purpose of my research, my perspective as a researcher, and a plan for generating new knowledge about how students have shaped campus cultures began to coalesce within a grand scheme of historical inquiry.

Research Design: Making the Case for History

The tenacity associated with the traditions and culture that college students create and sustain on a particular campus provides an intriguing topic for historians of American higher education (Thelin, 1982). As a seasoned student affairs practitioner and higher education scholar, I am interested in understanding student culture and how it has changed over time, especially given the context of changing demographics in American higher education in these early decades of the twenty-first century. My scholarly curiosity is grounded in recent decades of diversification and democratization and future projections which promise tremendous shifts in the demographics of students who might attend American colleges and universities. The mysterious legacy and persistence of collegiate secret societies founded

more than a century ago offers tremendous potential insight into the historic role of students as shapers of the culture which defined their particular college communities. Following this logic, historian John Tosh argues that history is “a subject of practical social relevance”, useful for understanding social situations as part of a dynamic, continuing process (2000, p. ix). According to Tosh, “Our world is the product of history. Every aspect of our culture, behaviour and beliefs is the outcome of processes over time” (p. 9).

The Red Friars secret society that was active at Duke University (known as Trinity College prior to 1924) for much of the twentieth century was the focus of my dissertation. A study utilizing historical research methods provided the optimal means for accessing data about this phenomenon of student culture. The story of the rise and fall of this secret society merited critical analysis that may enlighten educators about how students in the early twentieth century created a tenacious social hierarchy rooted in the values of the dominant social group that is still familiar on many of our campuses today.

Questions related to the underexamined role of secret societies and the problem of their unknown reach in terms of informal power and influence in their campus communities are many. Through historical inquiry, I have rediscovered basic knowledge about collegiate secret societies by demystifying the origins and evolution of one of these groups in higher education’s recent past. I was searching for an understanding of this unique type of student association for which shared secrecy was most salient to their bond, along with an agenda to bolster campus life through covert communications with leaders in their academic community.

Historical research presents opportunities to draw from a scholarly tradition which boasts expansive use of primary (original, first-hand) and secondary sources for exploring research problems and their related questions (Tosh, 2002). The tools of the professional historian provided for an assessment of original sources such as manuscripts, documents, photographs, records, and oral histories which will illuminated the purpose, goals, and saga of the Order of Red Friars secret society, the motivations of its members, and its influence within campus culture. Historical analysis also embraces theory and methodologies from complementary academic traditions, such as anthropology, that can enhance an understanding of the past to better inform the present.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), researchers in the first decades of the twenty-first century are working in a new, “messy”, political age (p. 26) characterized both as a “moment of discovery and rediscovery” (p. 20) - a time when researchers in the social sciences and humanities must engage in critical conversations about social issues such as democracy, gender, class, and community (p. 3). They maintain that qualitative researchers who use multiple interpretive practices can provide rich descriptions of the social world far beyond the limitations of positivist and postpositivist quantitative researchers. Pinnegar and Daynes (2007, p. 4) claim that qualitative researchers’ use of narrative data advantages their approach in the pursuit of understanding human social experience over the approach of quantitative researchers who use numerical data in pursuit of prediction and control.

Applied History

Historian John Tosh (2000) asserts that history's dual association with the humanities and the social sciences qualifies it as a "hybrid discipline", rife with advantages for studying social situations. He explains that both orientations are necessarily entangled in the contemporary historian's work. According to Tosh, historical research in the tradition of the humanities seeks to describe and recreate cultural heritage which "offers insight into the human condition". This literary narrative approach in turn provides a sort of "preliminary explanation" for understanding how society worked during a particular historical period, which crosses into the purview of the social sciences – the academic disciplines oriented towards addressing social problems.

The call for scholars to challenge contemporary assumptions and explanations about past social situations bears great import for my design of a historical study about collegiate secret societies. Tosh warns against the tendency to assume people of the past thought and behaved as we do (2000). This point is especially relevant to my study of collegiate secret societies because little scholarly research has been done on this topic. Most of what is "known" about secret societies is the product of popular media (books, novels, movies). Tosh carefully distinguishes the methods and perspective of historical scholars from popular historical knowledge that is "shot through with present-day assumptions" and insists that the professional historian is therefore obligated to raise historical awareness by "reconstructing the past in all of its strangeness" (2000, p. 9) and "(opening) our eyes to the range of options that past experience places at our disposal" (2000, p.20).

According to Tosh, history indeed offers relevant social insight that can provide a much-needed perspective on some of the most pressing problems of our time (p. 35):

Society expects an interpretation of the past that is relevant to the present and a basis for formulating decisions about the future. Historians may argue it's not their job, but they are in fact the only people qualified to equip society with a truly historical perspective – to save it from the damaging effects of exposure to historical myth. (p. 32)

Tosh ultimately calls upon historians to use their rigorous, critical methods to interpret the events of our recent past (the twentieth century), lest crude myths go uncontested by the scrutiny of scholarly work (p. 33). A great challenge was posed due to casual knowledge that associates secret societies with elitism, exclusivity, and social status and conflicting evidence from pilot studies I've conducted that indicates some collegiate secret societies employed (employ) meritocratic practices when selecting their membership and have had leaders who are demographically diverse in terms of ethnicity, race, and gender, reflective of the changes in demographics that have occurred at their institutions.

Rousmaniere (2004, p. 35) further explained that educational historians are like “strangers in two worlds”, primarily rooted in the world of education but simultaneously interested in understanding the historical and contemporary nature of educational systems - which necessitates drawing upon disciplines outside of history to strengthen a view of structural and cultural conditions that persist over time. She added that the tradition of narrative inquiry which is germane to both the disciplines of history and anthropology

(Reissman, 2008, p. 17) provides common ground for the study of lived experience which can reconcile the conflicting and complementary emphases on humanistic versus structural cultural study (Clandinin & Rosiek, p. 69). Therefore, a higher education study utilizing historical research methods and influenced by the scholarly perspectives of cultural history best supported my investigation of the historical legacy of a collegiate secret society that emerged within the homogeneous student culture of Duke University in the early twentieth century.

Historical Research Strengthened by the Anthropological Tradition

Sociologist Burton Clark, perhaps best known by higher education researchers for his organizational saga theory (1972), recognized the value of studying the socio-cultural context of higher education institutions. He issued a call for more research based on the cultural and expressive aspects of institutions. He proclaimed that better understanding of the nonstructural aspects of higher education institutions could equip administrators to better handle problems of governance in colleges and universities. Renowned higher education historian John Thelin (1982) echoed Clark's sentiment that quantitative research is inadequate for understanding the complexities of colleges and universities as... "special places shaped by lore, architecture, monuments, and ceremonies" (p. 10). He argued that, "History is the discipline which can provide this perspective in institutional research."

Writing in the early 1980s, Thelin (1982) was describing the cultural turn that was happening in history with historians making a transition from traditional "literal-mindedness"

(Burke, 2004, p. 126) and Marxist social analysis to an approach that incorporated a search for meaning within particular cultural contexts (Davis, 1981). Thelin (1982) gives the examples of ceremony participation and campus architecture as opportunities for breakthrough historical interpretation using a cultural lens. He explained that by observing who participates in ceremonies, much could be learned about how the “ethos” of the college is transmitted to members of the campus community (p. 11). He added that campus architecture can be “read” to discern a university’s efforts to maintain a particular historic image and campus atmosphere (p. 13) which certainly reveals “dimensions of institutional life heretofore overlooked” (p. 14).

Thelin (1982) defines collegiate culture as “the collective and historic ways of doing things to which one ascribes as a member of a campus” (p. 156). His description is presumably based on culture in a traditional campus setting, a college or university with a residential undergraduate core which would have been the norm for higher education writing in the early 1980s. He offers that the institutional culture of a particular campus is transmitted to its newcomers via distinctive patterns, symbols, and norms – through observable “guidelines” for how to behave, dress, work, and play. Cultural historian Peter Burke (2004, p. 40) explained this notion of cultural “rules” came from the anthropological conception that people must learn about how things are done in a particular setting.

Although campus communities since the 1980s have become increasingly “nontraditional” with growing numbers of adult students and distance learners, Thelin’s description of the powerful influence of campus culture in a traditional university setting is

poignant for my study. I am concerned with unpacking the norms and values of the “collegiate ideal” at Duke University in the early twentieth century represented through the “B.M.O.C.” members of the Order of Red Friars secret society. Therefore, the compatibility of historical and cultural research methods offered great advantages for my study design.

According to anthropologist Bernard Cohn, a proponent of the complementarity of the disciplines of history and anthropology, the epistemological foundations of history and anthropology are quite similar (1980, p. 198). Cohn claimed that both disciplines utilize text and context to explore and explicate in narrative form the experience of “otherness”. While historians are concerned with studying the “otherness of time” or “otherness of the past” (Cohn, 1980, p. 198; Darnton, 1984; Tosh, 2002, p. 7), anthropologists construct and study the “otherness of space” (Cohn, 1980, p. 198).

Ultimately, at points of convergence, the disciplines of history and anthropology have embodied the ideal of “blurred genres” espoused by Geertz (1983) as an effective combination for seeking rich descriptions of the social world. Both disciplines can agree on the intersection of their focus of study as “otherness” – the practice of making exotic and strange the unfamiliar aspects of social situations in past historical periods (Tosh, 2002). Tosh further emphasized the importance of historians challenging socially-motivated misrepresentations of the past.

New Cultural History (NCH).

Burke (2004) explains that following the convergence of the disciplines of history and anthropology in the 1970s and 1980s, an encounter largely attributed to the appeal of Clifford

Geertz' (1973; 1983) emphasis on interpreting culture as text, a dominant form of cultural history emerged which came to be known as "New Cultural History" or "NCH". NCH is recognized as the dominant form of cultural history, and very likely all history, today (Burke, 2004). It is characterized by a concern for cultural theory, such as that of Bourdieu and Gramsci, and is therefore amenable to the Marxist-inspired tradition of social history (Burke, 2004; Hunt, 1989).

Burke (2004) confirms that anthropologist and sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is one of the most prominent cultural theorists embraced by cultural historians due to the relevance of his theories about cultural reproduction and distinction. As discussed previously, I intend to draw upon the cultural theory of Bourdieu and Gramsci as foundational to my conceptualization of the social and historical context in which the Order of Red Friars secret society reproduced itself in the Duke University setting for nearly 60 years. Understanding the processes of cultural reproduction that supported the celebration of the "Big Man on Campus" ideal for many generations of college students, along with students' mounting resistance to the cultural hegemony they established, is central to understanding the story of the persistence of the Red Friars secret society and their eventual demise.

Cultural research methods.

According to Creswell (2007), incorporation of cultural research methods in study design is appropriate if "the needs are to describe how a cultural group works and to explore the beliefs, language, behaviors, and issues such as power, resistance, and dominance" (p. 70). Cultural research methods can be described as research that undertakes the task of

portraying culture in narrative text, drawn from the anthropological traditions of interpreting cultural behavior (Thorne, 2000; Ingold, 2008). As I learned from my pilot study about active secret societies at a public university in the Southeastern United States (See Appendix C: Collegiate Secret Societies Active in the Twenty-First Century), “borrowing” insight from cultural research methods can strengthen an historical study (Thelin, 1982; Wolcott, 2008). I incorporated cultural research techniques such as archival photograph analysis and interviews into the design of my study, along with the customary practice of describing culture in narrative text.

Site Selection

I selected a secret society known to be active at Duke University for six decades during the twentieth century as the focus of my study. The research questions I designed to generate basic knowledge about the origins and functions of a collegiate secret society led me to assess the archival sources available at five different institutions within driving distance of my home in central North Carolina. Three of the institutions housed organizational records from secret societies in their archives, but the amount and accessibility of the documents in the Duke University archives far exceeded the others. All five institutions had collections of yearbooks and other student media that included information about the historic presence of secret societies; however, only the Duke Archives held the organizational records for two secret societies which had been made fully accessible for research. The accessibility to the Red Friars and White Duchy records spanning from 1913-1971 and from 1924- 1968,

respectively, was extraordinary, and they could be triangulated with a wealth of other archival documents available, such as institutional records, and alumni memoirs.

The fact that the organizational records for a male and female secret society were accessible in the Duke University Archives of course begs the question of why I am not making both organizations the focus of my study. Because the history of access to American higher education includes the observable pattern of privileged, white, male students first establishing what has come to comprise the “extracurriculum” (Rudolph, 1990), such as intercollegiate athletics and fraternities, I believed it to be most useful to create new knowledge about these groups by first seeking to understand them in terms of a white, male organization. I agree with cultural historian Lynn Hunt’s (1989) admonition that, “No account of cultural unity and difference can be complete without some discussion of gender”. Therefore, I utilized the data in the archives that recorded the relationship between the Order of Red Friars and the Order of White Duchy which they established as a means of learning about the gender dynamics inherent in the functioning of these groups.

I selected a sample of three alumni members of the Red Friars to be interviewed regarding their experience and memories related to the secret societies. I selected individuals for interviews once I sufficiently immersed myself in the archival data and could identify men who could represent their perspective from different decades within the period of study. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) recommend that purposeful sampling can be done based on the research questions (p. 486). I utilized my research questions and analyzed the membership rosters accessible in the Red Friars’ organizational records to determine which individuals

were still living who might be available to participate in an interview, either in person or by phone. I conducted interviews with alumni who represented the decades of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. The oldest individual was 91, but his memories of his college days were still lucid, and he could describe his experiences to me in great detail. I was able to triangulate portions of his interview with archival data to insure the accuracy of his memories.

Data Collection

For the purposes of this cultural history study, I capitalized upon the uniqueness of historical research which allows for the incorporation of a variety of data sources. I grounded my study in traditional historical archival research seeking clues for explanations of how and why the Order of Red Friars emerged and thrived within the culture of their campus community for six decades during the twentieth century. I conducted interviews with Duke University alumni who were members of the Order of Red Friars to learn about their experiences as students in the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s, and to use their interviews as an opportunity to verify the trustworthiness of my theories about the origins and functions of the Red Friars and how their purpose and membership evolved and changed over time.

Archival Documents

The strength of historical research hinges on a critical analysis of the usefulness of available sources (Tosh, 2002), and the documents in the Duke University Archives offered extraordinary material for this endeavor. According to the inventory of the Order of Red Friars records in the Duke University archives, materials maintained for this “men’s secret honorary society” include meeting minutes, a constitution, policy and procedure statements, a

history statement, ritual information, correspondence, financial records, invitations to sponsored events, photographs, membership and alumni lists, newspaper clippings, reports, initiation plans, and descriptions of campus projects. I reviewed thousands of pages of these documents, as well as presidential papers and the records of other individuals who had occasion to interact with the Red Friars. Higher education historian John Thelin (1982) advocates for the use of these “unorthodox” sources in university archives for applied research to make “dry institutional bones come to life” (p. 17), echoing the sentiment of Edwin Slosson who in 1910 published a report on the nation’s most successful new research universities and in so doing discovered the treasures inherent in their institutional records.

The historian’s immersion in the original sources produced during the period identified for the study is undoubtedly the most distinguishing characteristic of historical inquiry. Given the emphasis on using written documents as sources, historians have developed an elaborate system for classifying sources and weighting their historical value relative to their interpretive utility. Historians typically place higher value on documents that were not intended for publication or posterity (letters, meeting minutes) and those that were confidential (diaries, journals), as well as records of organized activity which leave significant evidence for discovery (Tosh, 2000). The organizational records of the Red Friars met the criteria for sound historical research because they were intended to be kept confidential and they included highly organized documentation written by the social actors themselves.

In addition to the records of the Order of Red Friars, I explored the records of the Order of White Duchy which contain comparable materials to that of the Friars for the years of their existence (1924-1968). As foundational sources for triangulating the data in these organizational records, I utilized issues of the student newspaper, the *Chronicle*, and the annual copies of *The Chanticleer*, the student yearbook published at Trinity College beginning in 1912 and continuing after Duke University was organized around Trinity College as its undergraduate college of arts and sciences in 1924. The value of the newspapers and yearbooks for historical and cultural research was immense because they were produced by students themselves, included both descriptive written narrative and photography, and were intended to represent student culture for posterity.

Wolcott (2008) noted that since the days of the early anthropologists Boas and Malinowski, the ideal pursuit of cultural research is to have the people tell their own story. Thus, in the form of “annuals” or student yearbooks, since the 1910s, students at “Old Trinity”/Duke University presented in their own words and photographs information about the people, events, and activities that were most salient to them for each academic year. Most of the older yearbooks include prominent sections dedicated to the secret societies. The student newspaper offered periodic glimpses into student opinion related to the public tapping ceremonies of the secret societies, especially in years when the editor of the paper was not a member of the Red Friars (See *Figure 6*: “Secret Societies” section divider in *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1921).

Ortner (1973) elaborates on how researchers must seek indicators of cultural meaning. She explains that the “natives” tell us that something is culturally important, something recurs and appears prominently in different contexts, and something receives elaboration in terms of vocabulary and treatment by the “natives” (p. 1339). In the case of student life at Duke University, the “natives” of course are the students, and their narrative and photographic representation of their experiences in the student yearbooks and newspapers were analyzed to determine what distinguished their particular cultural system during the period of interest for this study.

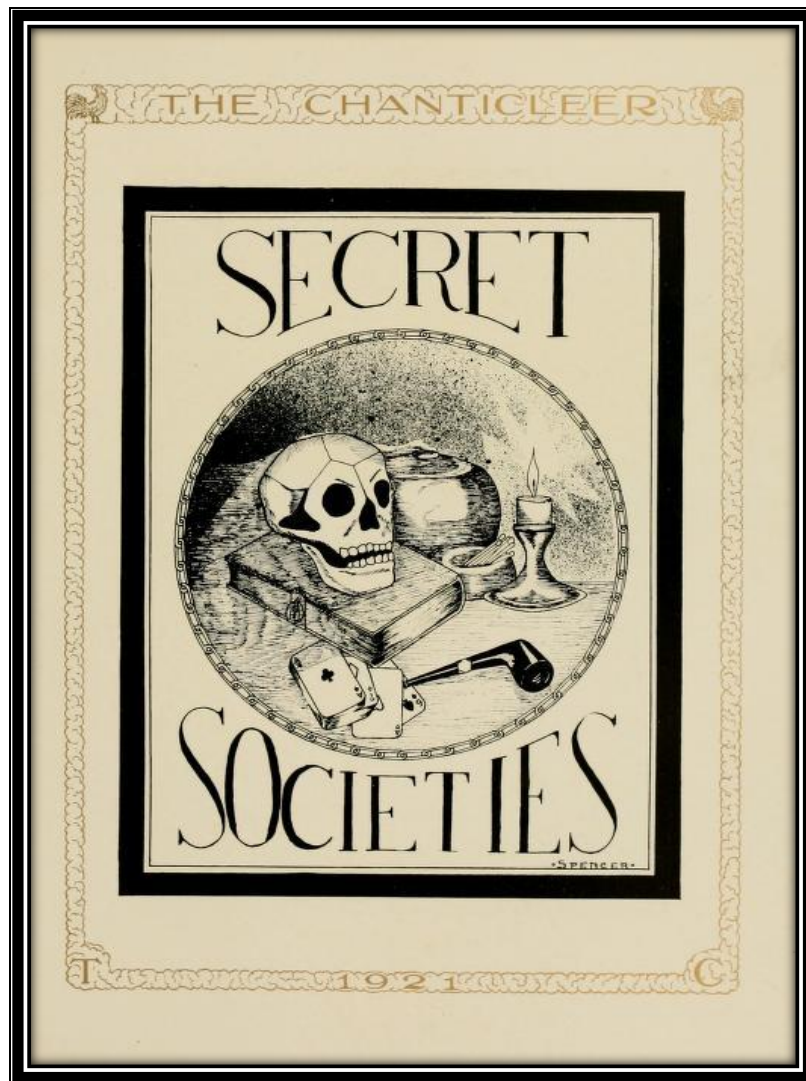


Figure 6. "Secret Societies" section divider in *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1921.

As I mentioned previously regarding the pilot study I conducted at Duke University several years ago, I spent months in the Duke University Archives at that time, and I was familiar with the process of handling archival records with restrictions necessary to prevent damaging the documents prior to beginning this study. Since the time I became interested in

researching the data in the student yearbooks, the oldest of which are more than a century old, the yearbooks have been digitized for the entire historical period that is the focus of my study. I was gratified that my intensive study of the yearbooks did not jeopardize the condition of the fragile original documents.

Another student media source, the archived copies of *The Chronicle*, the student newspaper, contained articles, photographs, and editorial commentary that documented the activity of the collegiate secret societies and the controversy that surrounded the Order of Red Friars and Order of White Duchy in the 1960s. I was able to locate old articles about the secret societies in the archives of the student newspaper that led to the discovery of photographs and narrative long forgotten compared to material in the student yearbooks presumably viewed periodically by alumni due to their function as nostalgic memorabilia.

I collected archival data from the personal correspondence of alumni members with the Red Friars, the organizational records of the Red Friars that included meeting minutes, membership rosters (including information about honorary members), initiation and tapping rituals and ceremonies, and institutional records from the deans' offices and the president's office. I found evidence documenting conversations the Friars had with the presidents and deans that I was able to triangulate with student media. Institutional histories in the form of books and other online publications served as important secondary sources of information about the historical period that was the focus of my study.

Interviews

I obtained permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at North Carolina State University to interview Duke University alumni who were listed as members of the Red Friars in the official membership rosters currently accessible to the public in the Duke University Archives. Upon receiving approval from the IRB, I made arrangements via email and phone to conduct the interviews in person, which was my preference. I thoroughly explained to each Friar alumnus the interview process and their ability to remain anonymous. I offered to provide transcripts of my interview for their review, but none of them were interested. One of the Friars, however, was interested in reading my dissertation upon completion to learn more about the history of the organization himself. I used a purposeful sample of former Red Friars based on the data I was able to collect about the men in the archival materials. I identified and located a man from each of the decades from the 1940s through the 1960s who could speak about his experience as a student at Duke.

Mindful of the exploratory purpose of my study, I developed a semi-structured interview guide comprised of open-ended questions to use during my interaction with each Friar alumnus, a standard convention for qualitative research pursuits (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Wolcott, 2008; See Appendix E for Interview Guide). I used the interview guide to insure that I would cover the issues related to the research questions for this study. I anticipated the need to be flexible and improvised the line of questioning and the order of questioning depending on the course the interviews took with each participant. I ended each interview by thanking the participants for their time and inviting them to contact

me should they have any additional insight they wanted to provide or if they had any further questions about this research project.

I utilized a digital recorder and a smartphone recorder to record each interview as they were conducted in person. Upon completion of each interview, I transcribed the interviews myself. I kept several research journals throughout the study to regularly record my thoughts and working theories, as they were constantly modified while conducting the research. I utilized assistance from the Duke University Archives staff to have several of the archival photographs digitized for incorporation into my electronic dissertation document. Otherwise, I was able to access and save digital images from the yearbook and other online sources directly on my computer. Fortunately, much of the textual and visual data in the University Archives has been digitized which facilitated the incorporation of visual images into this research project.

Data Analysis

Tosh makes clear the foundation of all historical research: “It is the business of history to construct an interpretation of the past from its surviving remains” (2000, p. 55). Although Tosh described history as a “hybrid discipline” that draws upon the scholarly traditions of the humanities and the social sciences, it retains central epistemological tenets and assumptions that are unique (p. 34). First and foremost, a “hallmark” of historical scholarship is its concern for a “mastery” of the surviving sources (p. 66). Some of the rigorous methods that differentiate the professional historian’s work from the crude rendering of popular historical memory include a comprehensive survey of the available surviving

sources for the period being explored, a critical evaluation of the origins and purpose of the original documents against any potential bias of their creator, a secure grasp of the historical context, and a critical reading of the secondary scholarly literature relevant to the topic that informs the scrutiny of the sources (pp. 54, 57, 58, 65, 70).

Although it is not germane to scholarly historical research to utilize a prescriptive document analysis guide for the inspection of each document, the concept of a critical analysis of each of the archival sources is central to the historian's work. For the purposes of this qualitative study in higher education, I decided to create a document analysis guide to use as a general reference for the data I analyzed in the Duke University Archives (See Appendix D). I had planned to modify and revise the guide in the spirit of an emergent research process; however, due to the thousands of documents I reviewed over the course of the study, I found it more practical to maintain the document analysis guide as a general reference.

Data analysis in historical research could perhaps best be articulated in traditional qualitative research terms as the application of the "constant comparative method" in which data collection and analysis occur simultaneously. Thorne (2000) describes the constant comparative method as a strategy that involves comparing one piece of data with the similarities and differences of other pieces of data. The goal is to identify cohesive themes and patterns that result in descriptive and interpretive knowledge about a phenomenon of interest (p. 69). Both conventional content analysis that allows themes to emerge in the data and theory-driven content analysis can work well when blended together to foster productive,

ongoing modification of the understanding of the phenomenon (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2003). I embraced this approach which combined both inductive thinking and the general guidance of critical cultural theory to inform my interpretation of the data with ideas that have been systematically tested by others (Anyan, 2009).

To prepare for data analysis, I created a system for managing and organizing the massive volume of data that I collected, which included organizing material in notebooks, binders, and on flashdrives, an important step in the research process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007). I decided to manage the data manually rather than use a computer software program so that I could stay as close to the data as possible. I did not want to put a computer between me and the data. I sorted and reorganized materials during each phase of the research process.

Research Validity and Reliability

In conducting an analysis of historical data, the work necessarily involves constant integration and analysis of all data sources as potential explanatory theories are constantly modified towards what Lincoln and Guba (1985) might call a “trustworthy” narrative. In historical research, the data discovered in various archival sources can be triangulated with secondary and other sources, which for the purposes of this study includes institutional histories written by renowned historical scholars and institutional records produced by administrative offices at the university. Mertens (2005) defines triangulation as a research strategy associated with qualitative research that involves checking within and between sources for consistency.

Tosh insists that in keeping with best practices in historical research methods, the content of each document needs to be examined for consistency with known facts (2000). He also warns that a historian must never forget the historical record is “forever rigged in favour of the ruling class” (p. 111), thus the importance of critical scrutiny of the social position and worldview of the sources, which can be enlightening in itself. On a related note, historian of college student culture Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (1987) reminds the researcher that college life (referring to the American ideal of the extracurriculum) was the life of *some* but not *all* American college students.

LeCompte adds that key people in the research site can aid in assessing the validity of observed patterns and themes (2000). I regularly consulted with the university archivists as resident experts on the history of their university to triangulate the data I attempted to interpret. University archivists, after all, are the persons most familiar with their institutional history and records. They essentially serve as the historical experts for their particular institutions because they have the deepest knowledge of the scale of available sources in the archives as well as the scope of their content.

Although validity and reliability are terms traditionally associated with quantitative research, Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) explain they can at least in some ways be applied to content analysis of qualitative data. They offer that one way of checking reliability would be a kind of equivalent-forms reliability – the comparing of content from one source with the content in a second sample of materials (p. 489). This strategy is something I employed by cross-referencing the data in various types of archival sources. The best example I could

offer for utilizing this check for reliability would be the comparison of the representation of the secret societies in the yearbooks versus the student newspapers. These student publications were produced by different student staffs, occasionally with some overlap, so comparison also offered opportunity to note similarities and differences in tone and presentation of the content.

The anthropological methods associated with visual anthropology – the use of photographs to understand cultural meaning - (Prins, 2002) enhanced the trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of my historical data analysis. Grbich (2007) explains how signifiers within visual images can be used to understand accepted meanings within a particular social and historical context. My ability to examine and interpret the narrative material in the student yearbooks was greatly enhanced by the photographs, cartoon renderings, and other hand-drawn images that students had produced and included in their yearbooks and newspapers. On the other hand, some images appear in conjunction with textual narrative about student life. Grbich calls this text “structural narrative” which provided important clues for understanding the meaning in the images.

Ethical Issues

The most prominent ethical issue that presented a concern to me was one that I had not anticipated prior to beginning the study. Upon exploration of the 60 years of images and narrative about student life represented in the student newspapers and yearbooks, I discovered the surprising images of individuals in what looked like “KKK” hoods throughout the decades of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. I prematurely assumed that the racist

images these photographs evoked to my contemporary eye indicated members of the campus community also found these images to be offensive; however, after reading the testimonies of the people in the campus setting during this period and interviewing the Friars about what the hooded garb meant to them at the time, I discovered that the all-white undergraduate campus community was not upset by the hooded robes. In fact, the oldest Friar simply expressed that the robes signified an honor society tapping ceremony that students in his day considered to be very serious and important.

When I found color photographs of some of the ceremonies, I could see that the robes were in different colors and some were obviously church robes borrowed from ministers or choirs. Still I found it difficult to separate my guttural reaction to observing these photos and understanding that the honorary society robes had a different meaning in the context of the mid-twentieth century South on a college campus. I understand that incorporation of any reference to these hooded robes could be upsetting for readers of this study, but I decided that omitting any reference to the hooded garb would not honor the obligation we have to look at the past even when that history can be difficult and uncomfortable to observe.

The other ethical issue I confronted was related to the interviews with the former members of the Red Friars. Although my intentions were to interview these individuals for basic knowledge related to the origins and functions of the Red Friars within student culture, I was mindful that for them being associated with the legacy of secret societies at Duke University could be controversial, or at the very least, provocative. I was able to address these concerns by offering anonymity for the individuals and assuring their anonymity by

providing them an IRB form that we both would sign. The risks, of course, for a member of the Red Friars would be that their identity could be found out in relationship to this secret group that presumably disbanded due to accusations of elitism and snobbery; however, I also felt strongly that if anonymity of the individual could be provided, the knowledge that could be produced by this study would allow members of this group to contribute to a more comprehensive account of the origins and functions of this type of group in the annals of American higher education history.

Chapter Summary

As a transformative intellectual (Foster, 1989) and student affairs practitioner, I believe that a cultural history study informed by a critical approach was optimal for exploring the cultural hegemony of the past century as reflected in the ideals of the “Big Man on Campus” and manifested in a collegiate secret society. I came to this conclusion after conducting two pilot studies and testing various means of historical data collection and analysis, as well as theories about how culture changes over time.

Regarding the foundations of my research design, I selected historical research in the tradition of New Cultural History (NCH) which is the most prominent form of history employed today. NCH is characterized by a concern for cultural theory, and it is amenable to structural and humanistic analysis of a phenomenon. Rather than imposing a rigid, theoretical framework on my research topic, I decided to work within a theoretical orientation rooted in the cultural theory of Bourdieu and Gramsci which is concerned with culture and reproduction of social status, as well as the potential for change through action.

The research questions I designed to guide this study were necessarily broad to facilitate the flexibility of an inductive, yet theory-guided collection and analysis of data. They were intended to generate basic knowledge about the origins and functions of the Order of Red Friars secret men's honorary society that was active at Trinity College (Duke University after 1924) from 1913-1971. They also were intended to illuminate the cultural hegemony of the social context in which the Red Friars came to be known as the group that represented the "Big Men on Campus" until they fell out of favor with the student body in the 1960s.

Data was be collected from the primary sources in the Duke University archives that included the Red Friars organizational records, digitized yearbooks and archived copies of student newspapers – strong sources for both historical and cultural research due to their being produced by some of the same social actors who were the focus of this study. Interviews were conducted with members of the Red Friars spanning the decades from the 1940s through the 1960s. Finally, research journals were kept to facilitate the emergent, inductive processes associated with historical research techniques.

The data was collected and analyzed in a constant comparative process mindful of the bias of the social position of the creators of each piece of data. The ethical issues inherent in researching this controversial topic were primarily related to preserving the anonymity of the Red Friar alumni who were interviewed, as well as the decision to incorporate discussion about the presence of hooded ceremonial garb since these images were prominent throughout the student publications during much of the period of study. Ultimately, this dissertation

about a collegiate secret society similar to those established on many campuses prior to the development of the student affairs profession in the early twentieth century provides valuable insight into the history of students as a source of power on campus.

In conclusion, as a higher education scholar-practitioner seeking an understanding of the function and purpose of collegiate secret societies that have endured in this country since the nineteenth century, I have conducted a higher education history study grounded in traditional archival research and oral history and informed by cultural research methods. In the end, it is my hope that I have given agency to the researchers and the researched, both past and present. I have embraced the opportunity to contribute new knowledge about this mysterious historical phenomenon that American college students created and to honor the messengers from the past who have struggled in the same confusion and shadow to understand their existence.

CHAPTER 4: ORIGINS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE RED FRIARS: 1913-1943

The Formative Years

This historical study about the Order of Red Friars secret society is intended to generate basic knowledge about the origins of a collegiate secret society and how its functions within a campus community changed over the course of the twentieth century. Observations are made about how the individual members of the group, as well as the corporate body, represented the values, norms, and beliefs associated with a white, male collegiate “Big Man on Campus” ideal, which has been identified by this study as a twentieth-century phenomenon of student culture unique to American higher education. The findings of the study are presented in the form of narrative description and interpretation, which is customary for historical research.

The narrative is divided into two historical periods which facilitates comparison between the group’s formative years and a latter period when the group was operating under mounting public scrutiny about their activities and role in campus life. This chapter will cover the period from 1913-1943, which bounds the three decades from the time of the founding of the Red Friars and their ascendance in the campus social hierarchy until they disbanded temporarily due to large numbers of men leaving college to serve in World War II. Coverage of the higher education and institutional context of the first period will be more expansive than for the period after the war due to its relatively less familiar timeframe.

This chapter begins with an overview of the higher education and institutional context that supported the founding of the Order of Red Friars in the 1910s when Trinity’s

enrollment was on the rise, followed by a presentation of competing theories that offer insight into why the group was founded and what purpose they served during their formative years. A description of their major projects and activities during this early period reveals a group of dedicated student leaders working in earnest with college officials on projects to improve campus life and the prestige of their alma mater. The chapter continues with a glimpse into the growing dissonance between the group's founding mission of selfless service and their increased emphasis on projecting the prestige and importance of the secret order which would eventually lead to their undoing. The chapter ends with the reflections of a Red Friar alumnus from the World War II era, for whom membership in the Order was the ultimate honor that could be bestowed upon a man on West Campus.

Higher Education and Institutional Context

When the Order of Red Friars senior class secret honorary society was established at Trinity College in 1913, higher education in the United States was undergoing great changes in structure and purpose (Veysey, 1965). The rise of the modern research university, fueled by the past century's transition from an agrarian to an industrial capitalist society, threatened to leave behind many of the nation's small, church-related colleges (Rudolph, 1990). The pursuit of prestige in a new economic age that valued social mobility and associated a college education with social status, characterized the quest of every American institution, many students, and even faculty bent upon enhancing professional recognition for their academic work (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011; Veysey, 1965; Veblen, 1918).

When William Preston Few assumed the presidency of Trinity College in 1910, he drew upon his experience as a Ph.D. student at thriving Harvard in the 1890s and aspired to join the movement led by the elite Eastern colleges to make the bold transition to the status of a research university (Durden, 1993). By the end of the nineteenth century, Harvard, Yale, and Princeton had added graduate programs and made the transition to university status, while preserving the undergraduate program as their distinctive core (Slosson, 2010; Veysey, 1965). In fact, the patterns of college life that had been established at these elite institutions grew stronger into the first decades of the twentieth century as the nation's system of higher education diversified and expanded to serve more students (Thelin, 2011; Horowitz, 1987).

Trinity was an institution whose leaders and supporters were determined to establish its reputation as fine and prestigious. President John F. Crowell in the late nineteenth century advocated the move of Trinity College from rural Randolph County, North Carolina, to the urban setting of Durham “to place Trinity College ‘abreast of the foremost colleges of America’” (*Raleigh Christian Advocate*, June 26, 1889, as cited in Moyon, 2004). President Few oversaw the ambitious transition of Trinity College from its provincial liberal arts existence in the first decades of the twentieth century to a nationally-oriented research university by the time of his death in 1940 (Durden, 1993). The philanthropic benevolence of the Duke family that endowed Duke University in 1924 with a gift of \$40,000,000, was inevitably tied to James B. Duke's decision that the buildings on the new West Campus be constructed in the “Tudor Gothic” architectural style, in keeping with the most prestigious

colleges in the Northeast which had emulated the mystique of old Oxford and Cambridge (Durden, p. 23).

This architectural decision that marked Trinity's ascendance to university status is worth noting because it reflected the Anglo-inspired guiding values and ideals that shaped the building of Duke University around Trinity's undergraduate liberal arts core and its physical campus setting near Durham's bustling factories. Thelin (2011) pointed out the history of American higher education has always been associated with Anglophilia and the success of the colonial colleges that were founded on the Oxford-Cambridge model. The intentional selection of the Tudor Gothic architectural style for building the new West Campus expansion for Duke University was a strategic move to imbue prestige upon the nascent research institution in accord with the prevailing tastes of the finest institutions in the country (Thelin, 1982; Slosson, 1910). President Few visited Princeton, Bryn Mawr, Yale, Cornell, and other northern institutions to study their "collegiate Gothic" architecture before affirming with James B. Duke its selection as the style to be used on the new campus that would bear his family's name; at the same time, Julian Abele, the first African-American graduate of the architectural school at the University of Pennsylvania, was selected to design the new Gothic structures on West Campus along with 11 new Georgian buildings at Old Trinity (Durden, 1993).

Woodrow Wilson, president of Princeton University from 1902-1910, famously said that, "By the very simple device of constructing our new buildings in the Tudor Gothic style we seem to have added to Princeton the age of Oxford and Cambridge; we have added a

thousand years to the history of Princeton by merely putting those lines in our architecture which point every man's imagination to historic traditions of learning in the English-speaking race" (as cited in Durden, 1993). Wilson's choice of words revealed the primacy afforded all-things English by men of his social position in American life in the 1910s. His reference to "the English-speaking race" also reflected the association of race with nationality that was an accepted way of constructing its meaning during that period, as well as asserting the superiority of the English intellect (Painter, 2010; Roediger, 2005).

Trinity's situation in 1913, compared to Princeton's, was that of a modest, provincial, Methodist college in a southern state only decades removed from the financial devastation of the Civil War. The building of the Tudor Gothic West Campus would not be completed until 1930, six years after Duke University had become operational. Trinity's humble and longstanding mission of service supported college access by keeping tuition low, which in turn sustained growing enrollment from nearby students of modest means through the first decades of the new century and students from greater distances into the 1940s (Durden, 1993).

The homogeneous composition of the student body in the 1910s is observable in the pages of *The Chanticleer* yearbook, first published in 1912. It reveals through student photos and biographical information that, excepting a few international students, all students were white, most were male, Protestant (predominantly Methodist), and from North Carolina through the mid-1920s (Durden, 1993). Even though President Few blocked the growing college from sponsoring a football team until 1920 lest it become a distraction to more noble

ideals of the academy, he saw the potential in Trinity's transition to university status as an important step towards mending the reputation of higher education in the South by establishing a modern research university that could redress the backwards-looking social attitudes that characterized the region (Durden, 1993).

The Red Friars' saga began at Trinity College and continued as Duke University rose upon Trinity's humble foundation. The organizational records of the Red Friars indicate that the seven men selected for the secret order each year would bear heavy responsibility for bringing glory upon their college. They were charged by respected administrators and their own alumni members to serve the institution for the betterment of the student body. During their formative years, the Red Friars' social position as white men on a campus in the post-Civil War South situated them to experience the encroachment of female students and men from diverse backgrounds vying for status and positions in what would become a contested, white, male arena of student activities and campus leadership. And thus, the story of the secret Order of Red Friars begins.

Origins and Founding Purpose of the Secret Order

"New Secret Society: 'Red Friars' Composed of One Man from Each Frat and One Non-" announced the diminutive headline buried on page 4 of the February 5, 1913, issue of the student newspaper, *The Trinity Chronicle*. The article gave no explanation for the name of the group but revealed a new secret organization comprised of seven members of the senior class had formed with a founding purpose of fostering better relations on campus. The names of the Red Friars would appear annually in the newspaper when new members were

tapped. The group would pay for a page with their photos to be published in the “Secret Societies” section of the yearbook, but otherwise the activities of the group were kept secret. (See *Figure 7: Order of Red Friars*, page in *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College [1913], p. 104).

The article in the student newspaper explained the group would be permanent and self-perpetuating (meaning that the members would replace themselves annually). The process would involve active members selecting rising seniors each spring to represent the various areas of involvement of the charter members during their senior year. The Red Friars assumed a low profile in daily campus life and joined two other secret societies at Trinity College whose initiation activities occasionally made front-page headlines, along with articles about great lecturers visiting campus, men’s literary society debates, and star athletes in baseball, track, and basketball leading conquests over rival colleges.



Figure 7. Order of Red Friars, page in *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1913.

The Red Friars were preceded in founding at Trinity by two other secret societies. The first secret society was “9019”, established in 1890. This group recognized upper-

classmen for their scholarly achievement and sponsored literary debates and declamatory (speech) contests. Oratory was highly-valued and a popular form of public performance, especially at colleges in the South, for most of the nineteenth century and into the first decades of the twentieth (Coulter, 1928; *The Chanticleer*, 1943, p. 133). The group required a minimum scholastic average and in some years included just 19 gentlemen in their yearbook photos, which may explain the mystery behind their name (founded in '90 and 19 men).

The "Tombs", established in 1905, was the second secret society formed and was comprised mostly of upper-class male athletes. They were known for their outrageous initiation rituals and for sponsoring a prize cup for the class that won the annual field-day competition (*The Chanticleer*, 1913, p. 99). Athletes were recognized as heroes and campus leaders on many campuses during this period (Horowitz, 1987). The Tombs were noted throughout the early decades of the twentieth century for sponsoring projects to boost student life and for managing the inculcation of the freshmen into the ways of the college. The predominately male student body stratified itself by class-year seniority, as is evidenced by the hazing of younger members of student organizations by more senior students. Freshmen were commonly referred to as "freshies" and were subjected to hazing by the "Tombs" on "Tombs Night", described in 1935 as "a tradition of mild freshmen hazing confined to one period...to implant more firmly the traditions of old Trinity and instill in the hearts of freshmen a certain reverence for all traditions of the past" (*The Chanticleer*, p. 248; See

*Figure 8: “Tombs” photo in *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College [1919], p. 144, for an example of the mysterious imagery these groups coopted).*



Figure 8. “Tombs” photo in *The Chanticleer*, “Victory” issue, Trinity College, 1919.

The founding of the Red Friars may have been “Page 4” news in 1913 because men’s fraternal societies established on the basis of secrecy had become common in the United States over the course of the previous century (Clawson, 1989). In addition to the thousands

of young students who joined collegiate Greek-letter fraternities, millions of men participated in secret orders such as the Odd Fellows and Masons as a means of bonding amidst male uncertainty about gender roles, science, and the supernatural in an increasingly secular world (Carnes, 1989). The imagery associated with collegiate secret societies, including the popular Greek-letter organizations prevalent at small colleges around the country, included iconography and symbolism that referenced medieval mysticism and the occult, drawing upon the supernatural and religious values of the past and incorporating images of skeletons and bones that were part of students' new scientific studies (Horowitz, 1987; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011; Torbenson, 2005).

Secrecy has been recognized by scholars as a strategy employed by fraternities in the nineteenth century as a means of evading faculty interference with their extracurricular pursuits, especially at institutions where students' activities became so popular they rivaled the academic course and threatened faculty control of their behavior (Coulter, 1928; Stearns, 1976). An organizational history of "9019" states that social fraternities were banned for a few years at Trinity around the turn of the century until their sponsoring of social activities induced the president to allow the fraternities to be on campus again (The Chanticleer, 1943, p. 133). The oldest fraternities at Trinity were Alpha Tau Omega and Pi Kappa Alpha, founded in 1872 and 1873, respectively, with four new fraternities founded between 1901 and the founding of the Red Friars in 1913. Many more national fraternity chapters would be established through the first half of the twentieth century.

Once institutions recognized the legitimacy of organized intercollegiate athletics and fraternity life, faculty on small campuses like Trinity - who themselves had participated in fraternities and secret orders as students - often maintained a relationship with these groups, especially if they were alumni of the institutions where they taught (Horowitz, 1987). At Trinity, the names of faculty were listed as “Fratre Facultate” (Latin for “Brothers in the Faculty”) on fraternity yearbook pages, as well as on the “Tombs” and “9019” pages for many years, thus contributing to the institutional legitimacy accorded these groups. Notably, Dr. Robert Lee Flowers, who eventually would succeed President Few as president of Duke University in 1940, was included on the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity yearbook page in the 1910s while he was serving as vice president in charge of business affairs.

The lens of gender in student media. It is important to note that from the 1910s through the beginning of World War II most of the narrative about student life that appeared in the student newspaper and the student yearbook, *The Chanticleer*, was written from the male point of view. In addition, it is critical to note that for many of the years covered in this study, a member of the Red Friars was the editor of *The Chronicle*, *The Chanticleer*, or both, and several members of the Order typically served on their boards in a given year. In fact, a charter member of the Red Friars was the editor of the paper in 1913, which raises the question of whether their article was printed on a back page of the newspaper intentionally.

Although women occasionally worked on the staff of the newspaper or yearbook, no female students held the chief editorial positions for either publication until the Second World War. Prior to the war and men being drafted and leaving college to serve in the

military, women working on student publications were often relegated to responsibilities for coverage of the “coed beat”. Acknowledging the power and influence associated with editorial control of campus media, this study is informed by identifying the social position of the editors of the campus publications, whenever possible, when considering how the Red Friars were represented in the student media over time.

The tagline of the weekly campus paper revealed the leading role and social position of men in Southern society at the time of the founding of the Red Friars and expressed the intention to speak for all students: “The College Man’s Newspaper, Printing Everything of Interest to Trinity Men”. Although Trinity had been admitting women in small numbers since the 1880s as a condition of continued support from the prosperous Duke family (Porter, 1964; Durden, 1993), campus life clearly was dominated by the men, with the activities of the “coeds” –the name used for female students - relegated to secondary status.

Indeed, it was a good time to be a college man at Trinity. Extracurricular activities abounded, much like they did at colleges around the country (Slosson, 1910; Thelin, 2011). In the fall, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) sponsored the opening reception for new students. President Few and local Methodist ministers welcomed the students, and “men from the leading student interests” encouraged the new class to participate in the major activities of the college, which included fraternities, athletic teams, academic departmental clubs, and the Columbian and Hesperian literary societies that debated each other regularly; however, it was noted that the male student who addressed the coeds “was not able to speak

with authority” about their opportunities for a fulfilling college experience (“Enjoyable Reception...”, *Trinity Chronicle*, Sept. 17, 1913).

There was far less to offer the coed students in the way of campus activities. Membership in the most prominent student organizations was the domain of men only. Because coeds were only allowed membership in the Societe Francaise (the French Club) and the hometown clubs, they began forming their own organizations. There were two Greek-letter sororities, and the Athena literary society, but the women’s literary group had no rival society to debate. Women’s athletics were described in student publications as “nonexistent” or as “intramural competitions” through the first half of the twentieth century.

Representations of women’s athletics were featured in student publications in jest and portrayed the prevailing attitudes about gender from the male point of view. A mocking article entitled, “Basketball Team?” that appeared in *The Chanticleer* in 1912 offered a sarcastic tribute to the first Trinity College coed basketball team that played no games due to there being no opponents to play:

Starting with a remarkable influx of ambitious women, and extending through all the acute stages of Woman’s Suffrage...the movement has finally culminated in the organization of a co-ed basketball team...The team has had a remarkable record...has gone thru the entire season without a single defeat...has not even been scored on by opponents. In view of the fact that the college has prided itself on having the best team in its whole history...the women have once more proved their unquestioned superiority

over their masculine rivals (p. 192).

It was in this coeducational setting, somewhat unusual for colleges at the time, that the Red Friars appeared and began their mysterious existence at Trinity (See *Figure 9*: “Basketball Team?”, *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1912, p. 192).



Figure 9. “Basketball Team?” photo in *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1912.

Constructing an elite brotherhood. The extant organizational records of the Order of Red Friars offer a deeper glimpse into the inner world of this collegiate secret society and their espoused *raison d' être*, beyond the modest write-up in the campus paper. The officers of the Order consisted of the Grand Friar (President), Worthy Friar (Vice President), Grand Recorder (of minutes), Grand Treasurer, Grand Communicator (corresponding secretary), Grand Keeper of the Gate (door guard for meetings), and Grand Herald (notified members of meetings). The scripts that guided their meetings and initiation ceremonies, along with their constitution and by-laws, articulated their values and offered rhetoric about the purpose and mission of the group. Their ritual documents professed notions of an elite brotherhood grounded in privilege, service, and sacrifice characteristic of the all-male upper-class fraternal organizations established in the Northeast (Dean, 2001).

The initiation ritual included the revelation of a secret grip, motto (“Uno Animo”, Latin for “with one mind; unanimously”), password (Fellowship), color (scarlet), flower (the red carnation), and the seven virtues or “obligations” of the order: Truthfulness, Honor, Faith (to doubt), Courage (to overcome), Humbleness of heart (to serve in), Peacefulness (of heart), and Charity (of heart). Their ritual featured an oath never to reveal the secrets of the order and a pledge offering the remainder of their days in college as a time of selfless service for Trinity (later Duke). The purpose as stated for “the mystic seven” was to unite in thought and action to promote the success of the institution through their involvement in the interests and activities of the college (“Initiation Ritual”, May 18, 1916, Order of Red Friars [ORF] Records, Box 1). Their stated obligation of service to the betterment of the institution as the

“leading men of the college” further illustrates the aristocratic sense of “rule of the best” that was associated with the elite men’s fraternal institutions of their day (Dean, 2001).

The script used by the Red Friars to open their meetings in their early years and for sustained periods into the 1960s evokes the type of mystical imagery typical of the secret organizations made popular by the Masonic tradition in the nineteenth century (Rudolph, 1990; Torbenson, 2005). Their opening ceremony was intended to heighten the exclusive experience of the privileged few men who would come together to discuss plans to ensure a successful future for their college. The words of the opening ceremony for Order of Red Friars’ meetings were as follows:

In the stillness of the midnight hour, as the thick shades of darkness
conceal the outside world...let us assemble as brothers in our noble
Friarhood. Let the Grand Keeper of the Gate espy without the monastery
walls...and bring to us the word that no one is near who is not of this
Friarhood. Let the doors be closed and barred and the shutters on the
gratings be latched into their place, that no light or whisper may penetrate
the gloom beyond (“Order of Red Friars Opening Ceremony”, n.d. [pre-1924],
ORF Records, Box 1)

The meeting ritual included reaffirmation of a pledge to remember “the worth of a good name for our institution in other college circles” and “to lend our service and our influence toward that end...to keep alive the traditions, customs, and practices of our institution, ever keeping in mind the aims, aspiration, and ideals of Greater Trinity (in later versions ‘Greater

Duke’).” Although the Order of Red Friars page in the 1913 yearbook features photos of the members of the Septemvirate in an oval configuration around the symbol of a large cross, it should be noted that no overt reference to Christianity or Methodism appears in any of the group’s ritual information or organizational records (See *Figure 6*).

Lingering mystery about the founding saga. Competing theories offer potential explanations for why the Order of Red Friars secret society was established on the campus of Trinity College in 1913, but the Progressive Era spirit of social reform and improvement of institutions certainly matched the spirit of the rhetorical language and seven virtues of obligatory service adopted by the Red Friars. The student honorary society movement that blossomed in the first decades of the twentieth century was a product of Progressive Era values that promoted involvement in efforts to improve social conditions, and it encouraged students’ selfless service towards the greater good of their educational institutions (Rudolph, 1990). Students selected for membership in the college honorary societies were usually recognized as exemplary models of the finest character amongst their peers and the leading spirits of their class, exhibiting the lofty ideals of the era, much like those associated with the stature of an Eagle Scout in today’s society (Rudolph, 1990).

The “Constitution and By-Laws of the Order of Red Friars” declared that the group was to be comprised of the “seven leading men” of the senior class and that their purpose was to promote a “wholesome college spirit” and “to produce harmony and good fellowship among the various elements of the student body” (“Constitution & Minutes, 1913-1934, ORF Records, Box 1). A Red Friar alumnus from the Class of 1917 confirmed in written

correspondence to an early 1940s class of Red Friars that during his days at Trinity the Order “was probably the most distinctive organization on campus with the possibility for doing a lot of good” given that “it was the custom then to select from among the fraternity and non-fraternity groups of the college the outstanding men of the rising senior class.” Another Red Friar alumnus from the Class of 1928 reflected in a letter written to the group of active Red Friars in the early 1960s that he remembered members of the group were “the finest representatives of the student body to the highest ideals of unselfish service” (“Letter from J.H.B.”, 1942; “Banquet RSVP”, 1962; University Archives, Box 1).

In addition to the theory that the values of the Progressive Era supported the formation of the Red Friars, historians have noted that the same organizational forces that were driving the rise of the modern university fueled the organization of students towards models of self-government (Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965). When faculty left behind their *in loco parentis* role as overseers of student discipline and character development in the late nineteenth century in favor of research and their own professional pursuits, students were left to their own resources to organize and advocate for the bustling activities that comprised the extracurriculum (Brubacher & Rudy, 1968). In the absence of deans of students and directors of athletics (positions that were not yet part of the administrative structure), students assumed the responsibility of organizing and managing their elaborate system of extracurricular activities themselves (Thelin, 2011).

At most colleges during this era, the administrative structure was comprised of three branches of educational administration – the presidency, business operations, and a sort of

vice president or dean who managed all other academic affairs; some presidents hired deans of men and/or women to manage responsibilities for student discipline that had been discarded by the professionalizing faculty, but standardization and the specialization of student affairs administration remained elusive in American higher education institutions for several decades into the twentieth century (Lloyd-Jones, 1934; Nidiffer & Cain, 2004). Many student government associations were established on campuses during this period, adopting a model of self-governance (Rudolph, 1990), but a student government framework would not mature for the men at Duke until the early 1920s, nearly a decade after the Order of Red Friars was founded.

A more provocative development of this theory would assert that the establishment of a secret men's honorary society marked the beginning of a type of shadow government system that allowed a select group of campus leaders to work directly with members of the administration (including the president), coaches, and faculty outside of any official institutional structure to manage student life on behalf of the student body – with an agenda that presumably represented all students. This function would serve to fill the void created in American higher education, and locally at Duke, when organizational structures were evolving from the model of the “old time” colleges with their paternalistic system of faculty control over student behavior to the more bureaucratic model, like a business. Academic dean positions were being created at many institutions, but students would have no official administrative representation in the evolving structures on most campuses until the 1930s

when the profession of student affairs began to mature as a field (American Council on Education, 1937; Niddifer & Cain, 2004; Biddix & Schwartz, 2012).

President Few had served as Trinity's first academic dean from 1903-1910, just prior to his appointment as president, and although a dean was named responsible for the women on East campus in the early 1920s, the deans who would oversee student affairs for the men at Trinity would not be appointed until 1935 (Durden, 1993). Slosson (1910) confirmed that while conducting his study of great American universities, he had witnessed a type of shadow government called, "The Order of the Golden Bear" operational at the University of California prior to 1910 – a group comprised of student leaders, the university president, and other campus officials that met in clandestine fashion to discuss matters concerning student life. The known existence of Yale's secret senior class societies and all types of men's secret organizations at prominent institutions around the country would strengthen the viability of this theory based on the absence of a student affairs administrative branch in the institution's organizational structure. The records of the Red Friars' activities spanning six decades of the twentieth century indeed provides strong evidence that their function evolved into a sort of shadow government that was firmly in place by the 1960s, with members able to work in collusion with the president, members of the faculty, deans, and members of the Board of Trustees on an agenda for student life.

The origin of the Order of Red Friars Secret Society is ultimately a mystery in terms of who conceived the group - whether it was an initiative of the charter members themselves, a branch of a secret society from another institution, or the initiative of a faculty member or

law student who transplanted the group from an institution where they had been previously. All of these catalysts are conceivable explanations that represent ways Greek-letter fraternities typically were founded on a college campus during this era (Coulter, 1928; Johnson, 1972; Torbenson, 2005). Curiously, no mention is made in the organizational records about the historical existence of the Order of Red Friars that was a monastic order in medieval Britain who also were known as “Trinitarians” (Arnold-Baker, 2008).

Early Friars and Collegiate Manhood

The charter members of the Order of Red Friars formed the first “Septemvirate”, the name that would be used to identify the seven-member group each year. According to their Constitution and By-Laws, the Septemvirate of 1913 had been selected as “the leading men of their class”. Their exemplary campus involvement was to be replicated through the years as new members were tapped. Profiles of the original Red Friars in their senior yearbook portrayed them as ambitious young men involved in a number of activities that presumably were highly esteemed by the college men of their day.

A democratizing spirit was at work during this era in which what mattered most was what a student could do in terms of activities that would bring honor to their college (Horowitz, 1987; Thelin, 2011). Both presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson helped to popularize a “collegiate ideal” associated with “muscular Christianity”, due to their active involvement in college life at Harvard and Princeton, respectively, combined with their reputations as scholars and men of fine character; Roosevelt had been a member of

Harvard's boxing team, and Wilson coached football when he was a professor at Wesleyan College (Thelin, 2011, p. 188).

The original members of the Red Friars had much in common, but they were distinguished by their varied contributions to student life, and they embodied elements of "muscular Christianity" at Trinity. Three of the men were members of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). The "Y" was considered an important organization concerned with leadership development, not just at Trinity, but nationally (Durden, 1993). Two of the men were star athletes. Three worked on the yearbook, and one was on the board of the student newspaper. Two were in the Glee Club. Four were members of the literary societies. Two were class officers, and several were involved in clubs representing academic interests, such as the Botanical Club and the Science Club (*The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1913).

All seven of the young men were from North Carolina's small towns. Six of the students represented each of the Greek-letter fraternities at Trinity at the time, including one who was a first-year law student at Trinity. Five of Trinity's fraternities were founded at colleges in the South following the Civil War when many of the fraternities in the North chose not to reopen their Southern chapters, thus their sensibilities were rooted in preservation of the old "Southern Gentleman's" code of gentile and honorable living (Torbenson, 2005). The seventh Friar was not a member of a Greek organization, but he had gone to high school in Durham with another of the Friars. The Friars' demographics in terms of geography and fraternity membership reflected the homogeneity of the student body at

Trinity in the 1910s (Moyen, 2004). Student enrollment was just under 500 in 1913, and the Friars were in a class of 54 seniors, 11 of whom were women (Durden, 1993).

Because of the small class sizes, senior profiles in the student yearbooks featured elaborate portraits and details of each student's cumulative accomplishments during their four years in college. Only two or three students were profiled on each page of the yearbook into the 1920s, which allowed generous space for listing their campus activities, as well as customary light-hearted narrative about the student's campus image and reputation (See *Figure 10*. Red Friar Hendrix Siler Beal, senior yearbook photo, *The Chanticleer*, 1915, p. 67, whose personal narrative read, "Takes the leading role in all campus activities and, in his own words, 'is a veritable lion with the ladies'"). Testimony about Beal's popularity with women illuminates a recurring theme associated with members of the Red Friars through the years and one of the attributes associated with the B.M.O.C. ideal. Even as enrollment grew dramatically following Trinity's transition to Duke University in 1924, the level of personal commentary about individual students that appeared in the yearbooks into the 1960s in prose articles and photo captions was quite remarkable and offers tremendous insight into the perspective and biases of the anonymous student writers who produced the pages of these annual publications.

Historian of American higher education John Thelin (2011) noted the extraordinary usefulness of college student yearbooks produced in the early twentieth century as sources of cultural information due to their elaborate representations of colleges as "American city states run by students" (p. 164). Thelin added that student yearbooks published during this

era share common images of students “with an air of confident worldliness” and reveal the affected group persona and perspective of adventurous, ambitious young, white men who created an undergraduate world all of their own. (For an example of the well-dressed, confident style of the college gentlemen of the era of the Red Friars’ founding, see *Figure 10*. Red Friar Hendrix Siler Beal, senior yearbook photo, *The Chanticleer*, 1915).

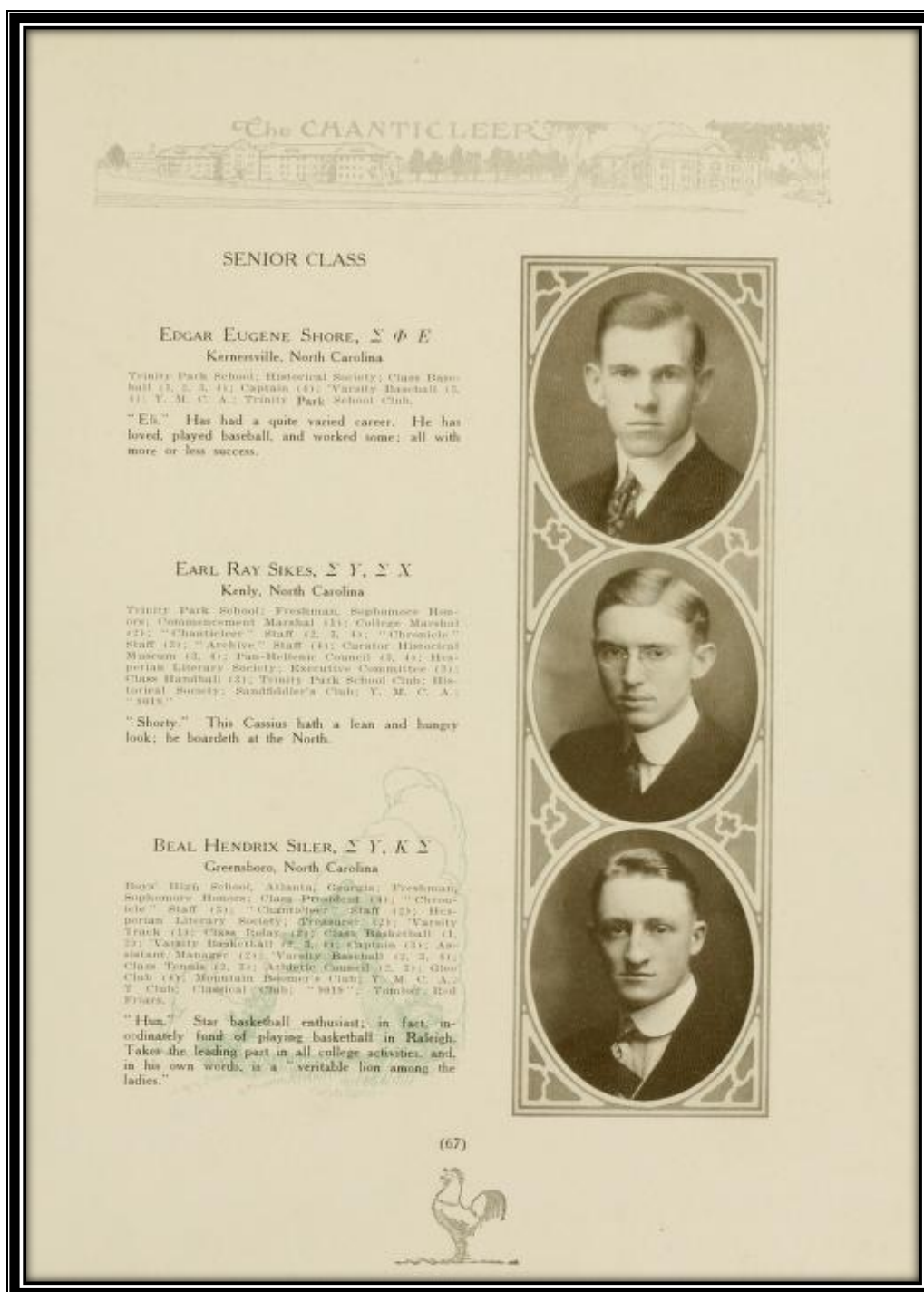


Figure 10. Red Friar Hendrix Siler Beal (bottom), senior yearbook photo, *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1915.

Profiles of several of the original Friars in *The Chanticleer* (1913) offer rich examples of how these students were described as “standouts” amongst their classmates and representatives of the new masculinity of the early twentieth century. Wester Ghio Suiter, from Garysburg, had been president of his sophomore class, served on *The Chanticleer* board, participated in the Columbian Literary Society, was a member of “Tombs” secret society which promoted involvement in campus athletics and activities, was selected for membership in “9019”, Trinity’s own academic honorary society, and was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity. The profile below his class picture read, “A member of more organizations than anybody else in the college. Respected as few other members of the class” (*The Chanticleer*, 1913, p. 40).

Don Raymond Kirkman, from High Point, played basketball on his class team and was the captain of Trinity’s track team for two years. He participated in the Glee Club and the Hesperian Literary Society, competed on the sophomore debate team, served on the board of the student newspaper, and was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity. Leonard Burwell Hurley, a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity from Durham, was a college marshal for four years and participated in numerous activities, but most notably was described as having a vibrant social life: “Often seen in the neighborhood of Fraushack (nickname for the women’s dorm) and similar localities. A songster, amateur artist and popular among the ladies” (*The Chanticleer*, 1913, p. 33), another heteronormative reference associated with the emergent masculine collegiate ideal.

Upon graduation, most of the first Septemvirate of the Red Friars pursued high-profile endeavors in public life. Wester Suiter went to medical school at the University of Pennsylvania. Don Kirkman went to law school at Trinity. Leonard Hurley took a position at a bank. Of the others, one went to business school, one continued advanced studies in the sciences, one became a school principal, and the law student continued in his second year. As the Red Friars reproduced their membership rolls through the years, their alumni would continue to assume prominent positions as physicians, attorneys, company presidents, college professors, and media moguls. George Allen, from the Septemvirate of 1924, worked for the State Department and later served as a U.S. Ambassador. A number of Friars would fill positions as administrators and faculty at Duke. James Cannon, III, from the Septemvirate of 1914, would eventually become Dean of Duke Divinity School, and Furman McLarty, from the Septemvirate of 1927, became a professor at Duke following graduate study at Oxford.

As the decade moved forward, the students selected for membership in the Red Friars continued to post daunting lists of their extracurricular accomplishments, but their campus involvement reflected changes in the types of activities that became prevalent over time. Beal Siler, the star athlete who once scored 68 of Trinity's 105 points against their in-state Methodist-rival Greensboro College ("Greensboro Defeated...", *The Chronicle*, February 18, 1914) undoubtedly was selected to the Septemvirate of 1915 due to his participation in varsity baseball, basketball, and track and especially his leadership as a sophomore in a movement that agitated for the return of football to Trinity. Siler organized a football club

and led a group of 250 students in a parade down Main Street in Durham to enlist public support for a football team, only to be warned of expulsion if their escapades continued.

Football finally returned to Trinity in 1920, generating renewed student interest in the stars of the gridiron (Porter, 1964; Durden, 1993). Participation in the literary societies and debating clubs waned in the 1920s as it was overtaken by the popularity of fraternity life, a phenomenon which occurred throughout the nation's colleges, but latently in the South (Rudolph, 1990; Coulter, 1928). The movement towards self-governance began to materialize as the Men's Student Government Association (MSGA) was established in 1925, and the Pan-Hellenic Council (later called the Interfraternity Council [IFC]) was created as the governing body of the men's fraternities in 1910-1911. Leadership positions in both organizations soon became recognized as two of the most-esteemed positions on campus and were regularly represented amongst the Septemvirates of the Order. The editors-in-chief positions of the student publications and the YMCA presidency maintained their elevated status in the extracurriculum hierarchy throughout much of the period of this study. Thus, beginning in the 1920s, it was typical for a Septemvirate of the Red Friars in any given year to include the presidents of the YMCA, the MSGA, and men's Pan-Hellenic, along with football captains, the editors of *The Chronicle* and *The Chanticleer*, and fraternity presidents.

Transition to university status. Along with changing patterns of campus involvement that were underway in the 1920s, the idealized concept of "muscular Christianity" began to expand into the larger "cult of the Big Man on Campus" that prevailed at Duke from the 1930s through the early 1960s (Durden, 1993). Once Duke University was

formed around Trinity College in 1924, the student body continued to grow and diversify, and so did the Friars' ambitious pursuit of prestige. The Red Friars were behind the initiative that established a Circle (chapter) of Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK), at Duke in 1926. ODK was a prestigious, national men's-only honorary society that recognized all-around involvement in campus life. It rewarded men for accomplishments in campus activities and certified their inclusion in an elite national network of all-male powerbrokers.

For most of the years after the founding of ODK, all of the Red Friars were members of ODK. The Red Friars' organizational records in the mid-1920s indicated their group was instrumental in bringing this society to campus out of concern that their University needed a nationally-recognized honorary society for men to bring prestige to the institution, acknowledging the limited advantages of the local nature of the Red Friars' secret honorary group. This movement towards associating a man's campus esteem with recognition for high levels of involvement in the major areas of campus life fostered intense participation and competition for leadership positions in the men's fraternity system, men's student government, varsity athletics or support thereof, and affinity groups of all types (Durden, 1993). The Friars' awareness and value placed on sponsoring a nationally-recognized elite fraternal organization for men who exemplified the "Big Man on Campus" profile implies their understanding of the social validation of masculine success associated with membership in this type of group (Dean, 2001).

The collective of the male fraternities continued to amass a great deal of power within the student body during the first decades of the twentieth century. The activities and symbols

of Greek life figured prominent in the representations of student life in the yearbooks. Fraternity pins were symbols of status for men who participated in organized college life – what Bourdieu would refer to as “symbolic capital” - that identified their membership affiliation. For women, fraternity pins were represented in the student yearbooks as symbols of status that a fraternity man could bestow upon a “co-ed” by “pinning her” (giving her his pin) to indicate they were in a serious dating relationship.

The decade of the 1920s indeed signaled the transformation of a small, provincial liberal arts college into a sophisticated modern research university. The homogeneous demographics of Trinity’s student body observable in student yearbook photos and profiles indicated the majority of students had been white, male, Protestant (many Methodist), and from North Carolina until the mid-1920s. According to Moyen (2004, p. 184), at the turn of the twentieth century, nearly all of the students and faculty at Trinity attended two Methodist churches in town, but by 1932, only a small proportion of the students were Methodist (Durden, 1993, p. 214).

In the years following the establishment of Duke University in 1924, the size of the student body grew rapidly and became much more heterogeneous and cosmopolitan in composition, except for race (Durden, 1993). The new research university attracted students from much greater distances, including some who represented a higher socioeconomic status than the middle- and working-class students who had graduated from Trinity (Durden, 1993, p. 198). Undergraduate enrollment at Duke in 1924 was just under 1,000; It would double by

1930 and increase to just under 3,000 by 1940, with women comprising about one-third of the student body across that period (Durden, 1993).

Along with the dramatic increase in enrollment and diversity during this period came a proliferation of diverse types of student organizations, with an estimated 150 active groups on campus by 1934 (Patrick, 1942, p. 2). Fraternity membership at Duke would grow remarkably from 24 percent of all male undergraduates in 1924 to 42 percent of undergraduate men by 1931, a membership level which would be sustained until 1940, the year the draft began to impact men's enrollment (*The Chanticleer*, 1924; 1931; 1940). According to Rudolph (1990), the great extracurricular growth during this period was in part a response to the impersonal scheme of the modern university structure that fostered undergraduates' sentimental spirit towards the old collegiate ideal of well-rounded involvement outside the classroom in athletics, fraternities, special interest clubs, and student publications (p. 464).

Diversification of the Friars' membership. The demographics of the Red Friars' members markedly changed beginning in the early 1930s and roughly mirrored the changes in demographics that occurred in Duke's student enrollment. From their founding in 1913, almost all of the Red Friars in every Septemvirate had been North Carolina natives; however, after 1932, it was rare for a Septemvirate to include more than one North Carolinian. Class rosters of students throughout the 1930s and 1940s indicated Duke was drawing students from every region in the county, especially from New York and New Jersey. With the expanded geographical reach, the numbers of students from different religious backgrounds

would prove sufficient for the founding of a Newman Club for Catholic students in 1934 and a Hillel group for Jewish students in 1937. Zeta Beta Tau, a national Jewish fraternity, would establish a chapter at Duke in 1935, which provided an opportunity for Jewish students to join a fraternity, due to membership restrictions still in place amongst the historically white fraternities (Johnson, 1972; Torbenson, 2005).

World War II has long been considered a watershed event for transforming attitudes about race and ethnicity in America due to men from diverse backgrounds serving side-by-side in the military and public reaction to the atrocities of the Nazi campaign against the Jews (Roediger, 2005; Painter, 2010). Institutional leaders at Duke, driven by the motivation to enhance the reputation of the faculty, appeared to be ahead of their time hiring German scholars who had been displaced due to Nazi laws that removed Jews from their university positions during the 1930s (Durdin, 1993). Because greater acceptance of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe as “white” has generally been noted by scholars as having been a result of the war and has been linked to the disruption in public sentiment, it is significant to note that the acceptance of ethnic students into the brotherhood of the Red Friars predated the United States entering the war.

The number of non-Protestant students who were tapped to be Friars during the group’s formative years is elusive to confirm, but at least one Irish football standout and one Jewish fraternity leader who was captain of the tennis team were tapped for membership between the late 1930s and early 1940s. Collegiate athletics has been identified as a means of America’s ethnic immigrants acquiring upward social mobility and acceptance via their

success in these activities (Thelin, 2011). The 1939 *Chanticleer* reported on the storied football career of “the big-boned Irish fullback” Robert O’Mara who led the “football eleven” to the Rose Bowl against the University of Southern California in 1939 (p. 256). O’Mara, who also was a basketball letterman and member of Sigma Chi fraternity, was a member of the Septemvirate of 1939 and went on to play professional football for the Washington Redskins.

Ray Nasher, a member of the Septemvirate of 1943 and the only child of a Jewish immigrant from Russia (Kennedy, 2007), was celebrated on the Zeta Beta Tau fraternity page in the 1943 yearbook as “Our S.G.A. president and tennis captain”. Furthermore, the narrative that accompanied the composite portrait of the ZBT fraternity members in the 1943 *Chanticleer* illuminated the significance that fraternities placed on the honors and campus leadership positions that their brothers had accumulated. Every fraternity included a listing of all of the major campus positions that their brothers held in a given year, and Nasher’s accomplishments affirmed a stellar year in which the “Zeta Betes” claimed bragging rights: “On the Duke campus Zeta Beta Tau has skyrocketed since its founding in 1935, and this year the general opinion is that it has reached a zenith. Not only has (the chapter) its largest membership in history (25), but it is also much more widely represented in college activities” (p. 232). Nasher would become a real estate developer and world-renowned art collector. He funded the \$7.5 million Nasher Museum of Art at Duke which opened in 2005.

An uncertain future for the Friar brotherhood. Nasher was to be in the last Septemvirate tapped before the Order of Red Friars disbanded until the war was over, due to

so many men leaving for the armed service. Membership rosters of many campus organizations were decimated beyond the ability to function. Just two years prior, a turning point in the glory days of the Red Friars was masterfully and profoundly captured in the group's meeting minutes dated Sunday, December 7, 1941 – the evening of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, prompting President Roosevelt to declare war on Japan:

A gloomy Septemvirate met at 6 p.m. in the Washington Duke. Pearl Harbor was on every lip, and despite an enforced cheerfulness, every Friar knew that a dark black curtain had fallen over his future, his hopes, his life as he had known it. There was no hysterical militarism, but rather a simple dedication to an unpleasant duty. We sat awed and bewildered in the face of a tremendous historical event. One by one we realized what had happened, and with calm, sad resignation we wrote our future off the books. Then we buckled down to meet the problems at hand. We arranged for a special “War Service” in the chapel the following Sunday, with Dean Herring as speaker. Purpose – the orientation of the student body, the stabilization of undergraduate life reeling under the shock. All Friars agreed to use their influence to prevent war hysteria, to keep a steady hand on the tiller, to set an example of being men. By the time of adjournment, seven extremely carefree college boys had become men. The perspective had changed. The future was no more, and the present was only tolerable through a rededication to eternal principles of faith, hope, courage, service and duty.

With the United States entering the war, college men were drafted and joined the service in large numbers. Fraternity membership dwindled at Duke, as it did nationally, and no man knew whether he would be able to remain at Duke for another month or longer (Durden, 1993; Johnson, 1972). The uncertainty of the future and the profound impact on students' perspectives about the importance of accumulating honors and leadership positions in extracurricular life became a diversion that was increasingly minimized as several branches of the armed services utilized Duke's campus facilities for officer training (Durden, 1993). A new conception of masculinity was presented in the image of the military man – an image that superceded the superiority of the B.M.O.C. collegiate ideal, at least for the time being. (See *Figure 11*: Duke campus used for Navy V-12 officer training and Army Finance School, *The Chanticleer*, Duke University, 1943, p. 303).

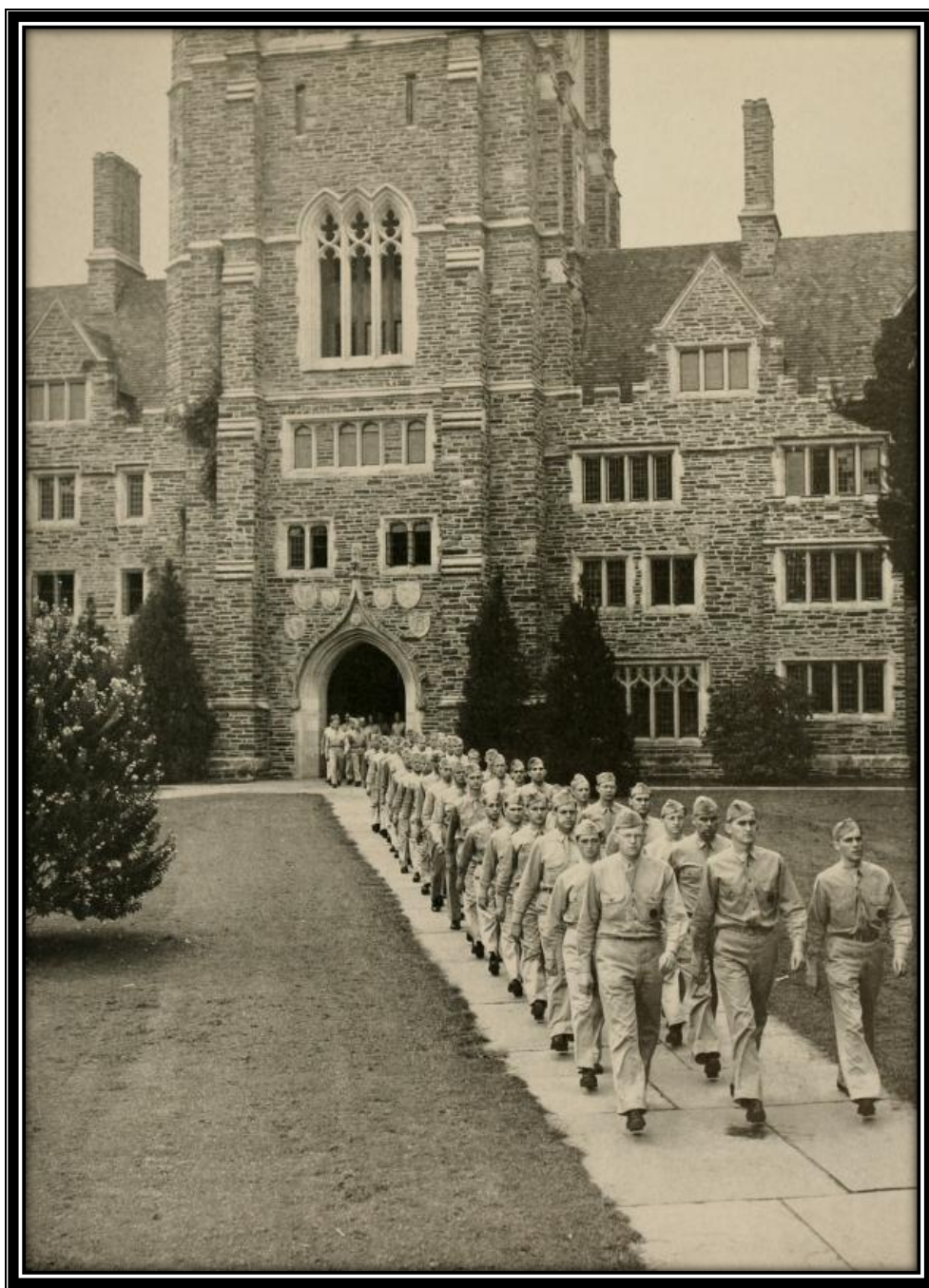


Figure 11. Duke campus used for Navy V-12 officer training and Army Finance School, *The Chanticleer*, Duke University, 1943.

Major Projects and Pursuit of Prestige

The Order of Red Friars pursued a number of major projects during their formative years related to the improvement of student life and enhancing the prestige of the college and their organization, including the establishment of a men's student government association, lobbying for the hiring of coaches, and developing plans to build themselves a "monastery". Once Duke University was established around Trinity College in 1924, the Friars became increasingly concerned about enhancing the prestige of the institution and making the importance of their presence known. As new secret societies were formed, creating competition for status, the Friars added public performative elements to their rituals and launched a campaign to build a "monastery" intended to serve as an impressive, mysterious clubhouse in the forest near the new gothic West Campus buildings. They even acquired a 600-year-old bell from a nunnery in England, anticipating they would hang it in their monastery. The Friars founded a secret organization for female students at Duke in 1925 which they named, "The White Duchy", and they spearheaded an initiative to bring the prestigious men's national honorary society, Omicron Delta Kappa, to Duke.

Patterns in the Friars' evolving relationship with college officials reflected a larger national trend of organized college life assuming authority and respect on campus between the 1920s and the 1960s when a resurgence of enthusiasm for participation in the extracurriculum was underway; deans and other administrators began recognizing the permanence of the extracurriculum that students had created in the nineteenth century, especially the growing importance of intercollegiate athletics and fraternal organizations to

alumni; administrators began cooperating with student leaders to plan events and programs and manage student conduct (Horowitz, 1987). In 1913, at most institutions, specialist dean positions for managing student affairs were either newly-created or not yet part of the administrative structure (Schwartz, 2003). Such was the case at Trinity.

Managing student affairs. When the Order was founded, the only administrative positions at the college were the president and one academic dean (*The Chanticleer*, 1913, p. 25). The Red Friars initiated contact with the president and other administrators seeking support for their agenda for enhancing student life and building the prestige of the college. In the 1920s, the Friars began the practice of inducting senior administrators as honorary members of the Order and inviting them to meetings on a regular basis. In 1925, the group inducted President Few, Dr. R. L. Flowers (a faculty member named vice president for business operations who would succeed Few as president in 1940), and Dr. D.H. Wannamaker, a German professor appointed academic dean responsible for student concerns, into the Friar Brotherhood (“Membership Lists”, 1913-1943, ORF Records, Box 1).

The relationship between the administrators and students became more mutual in terms of consultation about student issues over time. By the end of this early period, the president and deans regularly approached the Friars, seeking feedback and assistance for managing student life issues. In the 1940s, the Friars inducted Duke’s director of PR and alumni affairs and the dean of freshmen into the Order as honorary members. They inducted A. Hollis Edens, president of Duke University from 1949-1960, into the Order in 1953, only

after they determined he had exhibited sufficient past, present, and future promise of service to the institution (“Membership Lists”, 1913-43| 1949-56; ORF Records, Box 1).

The Friars routinely approached faculty and deans about concerns impacting the student body. They met with faculty to discuss their attitudes towards the Trinity fraternities and lobbied for a new exam policy that would exempt seniors from taking their final exams if they secured “fair average marks for the term”, a request that went unheeded by Dean Wannamaker, the German professor and new academic dean who assumed management of all student affairs concerns in 1920 (“Meeting Minutes”, ORF Records, February, 1921; February 3, 1922). The Friars had numerous discussions with President Few, Dr. Flowers, and Dean Wannamaker through the years about such problems as cheating on campus, the prevalence of smoking in the classrooms, and the need for paved parking lots (“Meeting Minutes”, February, 1921; February 3, 1922; May 19, 1925; May 5, 1926; March 10, 1927; February 4, 1940; February 14, 1943; ORF Records, Box 2).

When the problem of cheating became a recurring topic of concern during the 1920s and 1930s, the Friars discussed the prospect of developing an honor system that would be controlled by the students themselves. They pledged to work through the various groups they represented on campus to push towards the establishment of such a system, all the while continuing debate in the privacy of their meetings about the model that might be adopted and its potential for effectiveness in curbing cheating. Although an honor system never materialized during this era due to worries it would develop into a “spy system”, the Red Friars would take up the topic again when the Friars were reorganized following the Second

World War. In a meeting with Dean Wannamaker in 1943, they were successful in convincing him to send a letter to the faculty encouraging them to proctor all of their exams due to student concerns about cheating (“Meeting Minutes”, February 7, 1926; December 12, 1927; January 6, 1928; December 7, 1928; February 14, 1943; ORF Records, Box 2).

As the relationship between the Friars and the senior administrators of the university matured through the years, their function as an advocate for student issues came to be accepted and highly-valued by the president and his staff; administrators sought the counsel of the Friars on important decisions about policy and campuswide initiatives. An example of how their relationship changed is illuminated by documentation that in a meeting in 1929 the Red Friars discussed and lobbied for a commencement speaker, but by 1940, President Flowers attended a meeting of the Order and announced he would like to hear their recommendations for commencement speakers that year (“Meeting Minutes”, October 4, 1929; December 1, 1940; ORF Records, Box 2). Near the end of his presidency, Dr. Few showed the Friars proposed plans for the conversion of space in the Union on West campus to create a new rec center; he entered into negotiations with them about the prospect of students raising some money for the project so that “plans might materialize” (“Meeting Minutes”, February 4, 1940; ORF Records, Box 2).

Unfortunately, the Order’s endeavors were not well-documented until after 1920 when alumni Friars exhorted the Grand Recorder (the secretary of the Septemvirate) to “stop having such a loose system” and to begin keeping minutes of their monthly meetings so that incoming and alumni friars would have a record of each Septemvirate’s activities (“Meeting

Minutes”, November 1920, ORF Records, Box 2). Their meeting minutes were not intended for publication and provided confidential records of their organized activity, which strengthens their value as sources for historical research (Tosh, 2000). Many projects the Friars pursued and documented during the 1920s addressed fundamental, practical needs related to student life and involved tactical meetings with individuals the group identified as key sources of power on campus.

Prestige for Alma Mater. Of great concern to the Friars was enhancing all aspects of student life as a matter of projecting the prestige of their alma mater. Although the president and senior administrators would come to hold the opinion of the Red Friars in high regard by the end of their formative period, the group endeavored to involve themselves in all types of institutional decisions through the years, with varied success. When the college was in transition to university status, the group recorded a discussion held on the topic of naming a mascot for the athletic teams. They discussed and agreed to “especially fight the selection of any such name as ‘Blue Devils’” – the name that had been proposed due to its representing a popular French battalion in World War I, which of course would ultimately become the famous mascot for Duke University (“Meeting Minutes”, October 8, 1921, ORF Records, Box 2).

The Friars approached President Few and “Brother Flowers” about the need for Duke to have a coat of arms to go on the university seal and involved themselves in the process of determining a design for the senior class ring. As Duke’s football teams achieved national success, the Friars pledged to do their part “in disseminating information to address the

image around the state as to the true value of our University and to rectify misconceptions conceived on our status as ‘playboys, Yankees, etc...’” (“Meeting Minutes”, February 3, 1923; March 3, 1922; Nov. 5, 1926; “Septemvirate of 1938-1939 Meeting”, Fall 1938, ORF Records, Box 2).

The Friars advocated to campus officials their support for a variety of student organizations’ needs and student life interests. Early sentiment regarding the purpose and charge of the Order of Red Friars was aptly proclaimed by the Grand Friar of the Septemvirate of 1922: “Let each member keep a keen eye on all of the activities of the campus and an interest in everything worthy” (“Meeting Minutes”, October 8, 1921, ORF Records, Box 2). Throughout the 1920s, the Friars were dedicated to supporting student activities such as the yearbook, newspaper, athletic teams, and musical organizations regarding “their general welfare and prospects for the future. Although their newly reinstated football team would not beat the University of North Carolina throughout the decade of the 1920s, an intensive rivalry developed that fostered comparison between the quality of Duke’s student groups and those of their rival just 20 minutes away in Chapel Hill (“Meeting Minutes”, March 1, 1926; February 14, 1943; ORF Records, Box 2).

The Friars assigned brothers to meet with coaches to petition for the hiring of a coach for the tennis team and a coach for the wrestling team, prior to the arrival of the institution’s first director of athletics in 1926. They worked towards acquiring financial support for instruments for the student orchestra, along with funding for trips for the Glee Club and funding for their new marching band that would perform at football games once the sport

was reinstated in 1920. When the yearbook experienced financial challenges, a Friar who was the business manager enlisted the group's support for developing strategies to increase ad sales with local Durham businesses ("Meeting minutes", March 1921; October 7, 1922; December 4, 1922; December 5, 1923; February 6, 1924; November 5, 1924; ORF Records, Box 2).

Once the United States entered the Second World War, the Friars worked with campus officials to address concerns presented by the wartime situation. They made plans to place a strong box of materials in safe storage in the president's office in the administration building (September 28, 1941). They remained concerned about the university having a thriving social atmosphere and discussed the need to create low-cost wartime recreation and campus activities. They met with Dean Manchester and worked out a deal for a "Wartime Social Activities Board" to be created with the agreement that the Red Friars would select the membership for the group and generally guide its policy and programs (April 22, 1942).

Sometimes the Friars used their influence as leaders in student organizations as a "front" or "cover" to develop policies and introduce projects that would address concerns about student behavior and create a positive reputation for the college. When smoking emerged as a controversial social issue associated with the changing morals of the youth culture in the 1920s (Durden, 1993), the Friars sought to develop a policy that would prevent smoking in the halls of the administration building and other academic buildings. They decided to present this matter to the student body through the Tombs as their cover ("Meeting Minutes", February 3, 1923, ORF Records, Box 2).

In a given year, several members of the Red Friars were members of the Tombs, thus the Order often used the Tombs as a front for their agreed upon agenda (“Meeting Minutes”, December 8, 1924, ORF Records, Box 2). In a retrospective issue of the yearbook years after the smoking policy initiative, the Tombs were described as “an athletics and leadership honorary dedicated to raising the dignity of the university that also condemned smoking as undignified” (*The Chanticleer*, 1951, p. 15), a commentary that actually reflected the opinion of the Red Friars and proved that their ploy to secretly manipulate campus behavioral standards was never discovered. When the Friars decided it would be beneficial for Trinity to host a high school visitation day, they determined to “put it across under the cover of the Tombs”; they also used their membership in the Tombs as a front to host a banquet for the North Carolina Collegiate Press Association Convention when it was held at Trinity in 1923 (“Meeting Minutes”, March 3, 1922; ORF Records, Box 2).

Other initiatives the Friars pursued to enhance the prestige of the university included working through their fraternities to improve attendance at football games and pep rallies. They discussed strategies for groups to sponsor more dances on campus and brainstormed what other types of social activities could be sponsored to improve school spirit (“Meeting Minutes”, February 6, 1931; March 6, 1931; October 3, 1940). The Order took up the cause in earnest to improve the cheerleading (in those days meaning the literal leading of crowd in cheers which was done by male cheerleaders) at football and basketball games. They even assigned Friars to speak with the head cheerleader from time to time if they felt the cheering at games or pep rallies needed better organization and improvement (“Meeting Minutes”,

ORF Records; September 29, 1940; December 1, 1940; January 12, 1941; Box 2).

Additionally, the Friars delegated to several brothers the task of speaking with the hosts of an evening broadcast of the campus radio station regarding concerns about the “harmful and malicious content” that needed to be “cleaned up and its spirit changed” (“Meeting Minutes”, ORF Records, October 3, 1940, Box 2).

Prestige of a national men’s honorary organization The Friars were instrumental in spearheading an initiative for Duke University to obtain a charter for the national men’s honorary fraternity Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) that recognized all-around achievement on campus, referencing the prestige afforded an institution for having a national organization and acknowledging the advantages inherent for their young university. Friars were assigned the task of meeting with Coach James DeHart, the new head football coach and athletics director who came to Duke from Washington & Lee University in Virginia, where he had been inducted into ODK (“Meeting Minutes”, April 7, 1926, ORF Records, Box 2). Omicron Delta Kappa was a prestigious national men’s organization that flourished on campuses around the country from the 1920s through the 1950s. This period roughly mirrored the aforementioned resurgence in student participation in extracurricular activities, thus offering validation of college men’s accomplishments and networking on a national level.

Duke received a charter to establish a “Circle” (the organization’s name for a chapter) of ODK on May 22, 1926, just two years after Duke University had been named (“Omicron Delta Kappa” charter, ODK Records, Duke University Archives). President Few, Coach

DeHart, and several other faculty and administrators were among the charter members of Rho Circle of ODK at Duke, along with all of the Red Friars. Governors, coaches, and renowned public figures were included in the rolls of ODK nationally, having been inducted either as collegiate members or as recipients of honorary memberships. ODK represented the type of elite fraternal organization that codified upper-class masculine success; it was part of a system of overlapping “male solidarity groups” similar to the Greek-letter fraternities that were nationally-based, as well as the local secret societies like the Red Friars (Dean, 2001; Syrett, 2009). The ODK national office was notified in 1942 when the governor of North Carolina accepted membership into the Rho Circle (“Omicron Delta Kappa Charter, Rho Circle of the Fraternity at Duke University”, May 22, 1926; “Letter from Dean Manchester to National ODK Office”, May 12, 1942; ODK records, Duke University Archives, Box 1).

Having a chapter of ODK on Duke’s campus was significant in terms of institutional prestige because it validated the university’s status within the larger extracurricular movement that was propelling students to seek leadership positions on their respective campuses around the country. Prominent men in higher education and government, such as J. Edgar Hoover, contributed articles to the ODK national newsletter and participated in regional and national conferences. A professor from Denison University who authored a column in “The Circle”, ODK’s national newsletter, articulated the spirit of the movement by describing how the uniquely American fraternity system had become “the breeding place of culture and leadership for American life” during the past 100 years. He went on to explain, “Every fraternity urges, nay compels, its members to take part in the management of the

campus. Every 17-year-old who joins a fraternity is compelled to learn the art of leadership on the college campus. So important has the fraternity deemed leadership that it has frequently sacrificed scholarship for leadership...” (Crocker, 1943).

As mentioned previously, fraternity membership during this period was considered foundational to the pursuit of becoming a “Big Man on Campus”, and the values of the American fraternity were fueling an intense drive for leadership positions on campus. The ODK national men’s leadership honorary society established an elaborate points system that directed campus circles to quantify a man’s participation based on weighted categories of “major” versus “minor” activities. Duke’s ODK points system recognized the presidents of the student government association, IFC, and YMCA as the top category for points, followed by membership in the Red Friars, captains of a major sport, or editor of the newspaper or yearbook; all officer positions in other clubs or organizations, captains of minor sports (track, lacrosse, swimming, etc...), and managers of sports or clubs received fewer points (“Point System for Rho Circle of Omicron Delta Kappa”, 1955; 1956; 1966). The ODK points system essentially codified a negotiated social order on campus that perpetuated pursuit and validation of the “Big Men on Campus” ideal (Hallett, 2003).

Donald Everette Kirkpatrick, one of the Red Friars who was selected as a charter member of ODK at Duke in 1926 had accumulated the types of recognition and positions that not only assured him a place in the ODK Circle membership but also illustrated the level and type of involvement that exemplified the profile of the “Big Man on Campus” of his day. The honors listed on Kirkpatrick’s ODK points tally sheet included president of the men’s

student government association, membership in Red Friars, Tombs, Sigma Upsilon, “9019”, Iota Gamma Pi, Sigma Pi Sigma, Cosmopolitan Club, sophomore class president, varsity track (3 years), varsity football, freshman and sophomore honors, sophomore and junior scholarships, chairman of Y.M.C.A. reception committee, and Phi Beta Kappa (“Donald Everette Kirkpatrick – Honors”, ODK Records, Duke University Archives, Box 1).

Once the ODK Circle was established at Duke, the Red Friars increasingly used ODK rather than the Tombs as their cover for pushing through initiatives intended to enhance student life. In January of 1940, the Friars determined that they would turn over to ODK the idea of putting up fences to keep people from walking on the grass in the West campus quadrangles. In February of 1941, they reported that ODK’s “Keep off the grass” campaign had been launched (“Meeting Minutes”, January 7, 1940; February 16, 1941; ORF Records, Box 2). When Dean Herring sent the Friars a letter requesting they consider donating funds for the purchase of an ambulance for Great Britain due to the onset of the war in Europe, the task was delegated to the Friar who was president of ODK for action by that group (“Meeting Minutes”, September 29, 1940; ORF Records, Box 2).

White Americans’ attitudes about race in the 1920s and 1930s have been described by scholars as complacent amidst a resurgence of Ku Klux Klan (KKK) activity (Johnson, 1972; Painter, 2010). Images of ODK initiation ceremonies that appear regularly in the *Chanticleer* in the 1930s and the 1950s featuring individuals in white, hooded robes indeed raise interesting questions for contemporary scholars. Although the student body, faculty, and administrators were all white during this period, the Duke community was fairly diverse

geographically in that it included many students and scholars from outside of the South. Institutional historian Robert Durden (1993) explained that since racial segregation was still de facto in most of the country, and Jim Crow laws mandated segregation in the Southern states, the community generally accepted the status quo, which apparently included a tolerance for the use of KKK-style garb in public tapping ceremonies for the prestigious honorary society.

Creation of men's student government. Concerns about the increasing intrusion of administrators in student affairs, in addition to concerns about student enrollment, likely spurred the Order of Red Friars to take action to create a formal system of student government when they did. In 1921, when the Friars first documented a discussion about creating a student government association for the men of Trinity, they referenced concerns about a growing student body that warranted initiatives to foster closer relations between students and faculty ("Meeting Minutes", January 1921). As colleges around the country were making the transition to university status, the growth in enrollment that ensued gave rise to related concerns about the impact on faculty-student relations and the impersonal experience associated with management of the new, larger bureaucratic institutions (Veysey, 1965). At Trinity, evidence of a brewing battle between the faculty and student leaders emerged over who would assume responsibility for managing students' affairs and extracurricular activities as the student body grew.

When the Red Friars were founded in 1913, student leaders were running their own men's Pan-Hellenic Council, the governing body for the six national fraternities with

chapters on campus. Along with growing enrollment at Trinity, fraternities began to grow in number. By 1916, as the college enrollment reached 551 students, another national fraternity chapter and a new local fraternity chapter had been added (Durden, 1993; *The Chanticleer*, 1918). President Few assumed the position of “Chairman” of the men’s Pan-Hellenic Council in 1916; Although a member of the Red Friars again assumed the position of president in 1919, in 1920, the new academic dean, Dr. D. H. Wannamaker, assumed the chairman’s position of the men’s Pan-Hellenic Council and retained the title through 1928 (*The Chanticleer*, 1913-28).

Regular complaints about Dean Wannamaker’s intrusion in student life developed dramatically throughout the late 1920s and into the early 1930s. Among other things, he was accused of imposing fraternity rush rules on the Greek system and having housekeepers “spy” on students to investigate whether they were keeping alcohol in their rooms during Prohibition. Dean Wannamaker became the target of a student protest in 1934 that was covered by the local press and picked up by *Time* magazine (February 19, 1934) as a “student revolt” against autocratic administrators. Students had sent a telegram to the director of the Duke Endowment demanding someone take action because “student opinion means nothing to the present administration”, students were being “treated like children”, and “real universities do not treat student opinion with contempt” (“Student Rebellion 1934”, W.P. Few Papers, Duke University Archives).

According to Duke institutional historian Dr. Robert Durden (1993), President Few managed to “steer the protest in a more orderly channel” by arranging for the president of the

men's student government association to preside at an assembly of students, faculty, and administrators where a compilation of student grievances were addressed (p. 62). The interesting back story to the "student revolt" reveals that the president of the men's student government who presided at the protest meeting was a member of the Red Friars (*The Chanticleer*, 1934). Following the assembly, a student-faculty committee was appointed to make recommendations to improve treatment of students' concerns by the administration, which eventually led to the appointment of Herbert James Herring as the first dean of students and Dr. Alan Manchester as the dean of freshmen – two positions designated solely for the support and management of student affairs (Durden, 1993).

Ironically, Herbert Herring had been a member of the "mystic seven" from the Septemvirate of 1922, chief instigators in the creation of the men's student government association at Trinity. Four of their brothers from the previous year had created their own student life committee that met with Dean Wannamaker to initiate plans for the men's association to form. Wannamaker was later credited for having suggested that the committee come into being (Patrick, 1942, p. 29). The Friars' efforts resulted in the founding of a men's student government association (later to be known as "MSGA") that elected its first officers in 1922. Herring had taught high school English for a couple of years upon graduation before returning to Duke in 1924 to serve as an assistant dean; He also attained a master's degree from Columbia before accepting the dean of students position in 1935 ("Meeting Minutes", January 1921, ORF Records, Box 2; Durden, 1993). President Few undoubtedly knew Herring as a student.

Herring's Septemvirate of 1922 was an industrious group in seeing that a men's student government association was founded. Once the Red Friars achieved their goal of establishing this group at Trinity, a member of the Red Friars served as president every year but two, from the inception of the men's student government in 1922 through 1943 when the Order disbanded for the war (*The Chanticleer*, 1923-1943). The "Men's Association", as it was also called, independently handled all disciplinary matters of the undergraduate student body, and only major charges were handled by the dean (Patrick, 1942).

The students asserted their role in the educational administration structure beginning in the early 1920s, as exhibited in a caricature of students driving their "College Affairs" car over the faculty in *The Chanticleer* in 1924 (See *Figure 12: "Student Government"* caricature, p. 203). During this early period, the Red Friars regularly referred to President Few and the other senior administrators as "the faculty" because they had come from the faculty, including President Few who began his career at Trinity in the department of English ("Meeting Minutes", March 10, 1927; Durden, 1993).

Even though the Friars' relationship with President Few and Dr. Flowers would become increasingly collaborative over time, their contentious association with Dean Wannamaker perpetuated their efforts to claim their status as part of the educational administration structure. By the early 1930s before Wannamaker relinquished his responsibilities for student affairs to Dean Herring, both the men's and women's student government associations literally positioned themselves as powerbrokers within the grand scheme of the University administration. The groups regularly placed their officers' photos

in the “Administration” section of the yearbook over the next decade, alongside the photos of the university president and the deans for the undergraduate college and the graduate and professional schools. A description of the perceived success of the role of the men’s student government in the 1935 yearbook asserted that, “Over the past three years, student government at Duke has grown enormously in power and prestige. Through wise and just legislation a worthy position in the eyes of University administration has been gained and potent influence exerted over the general student body. It is laying down and enforcing rules that are to become traditions as the University grows in age” (*The Chanticleer*, p. 51).

Concurrent with the Order’s actions that established the men’s student government association, the Friars assumed an interest in addressing problems with student attitudes and behavior beyond the disciplinary process managed by the Men’s Association. During the later years of their formative period, when student attitudes and behavior turned negative or destructive, the Red Friars increasingly sought to use their personal influence as leaders on campus to rectify the situation. They resolved to “wipe out” the poor sentiment expressed by students on campus against faculty plans for a Duke Centennial celebration in 1938. In 1939, when Duke’s football team had risen to national prominence, the Friars addressed concerns about drinking at football games and tearing down the goalposts by assigning their brother who was then editor of the student newspaper the task of “giving the situation publicity through the Chronicle”, a strategy that worked in their favor as long as a Friar was at the helm. Dean Herring, a Friar brother from 1922 and dean of students beginning in 1935, occasionally asked members of the Order to use their influence to address student behavior,

such as the time he asked for their assistance to prevent the stealing of parking and traffic signs from around campus amidst student dissatisfaction with the University's parking regulations ("Meeting Minutes", November 2, 1937, ORF Records, Box 2; "Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Year", 1938-1939; "Meeting Minutes", ORF Records, October 1, 1939; December 1, 1939).

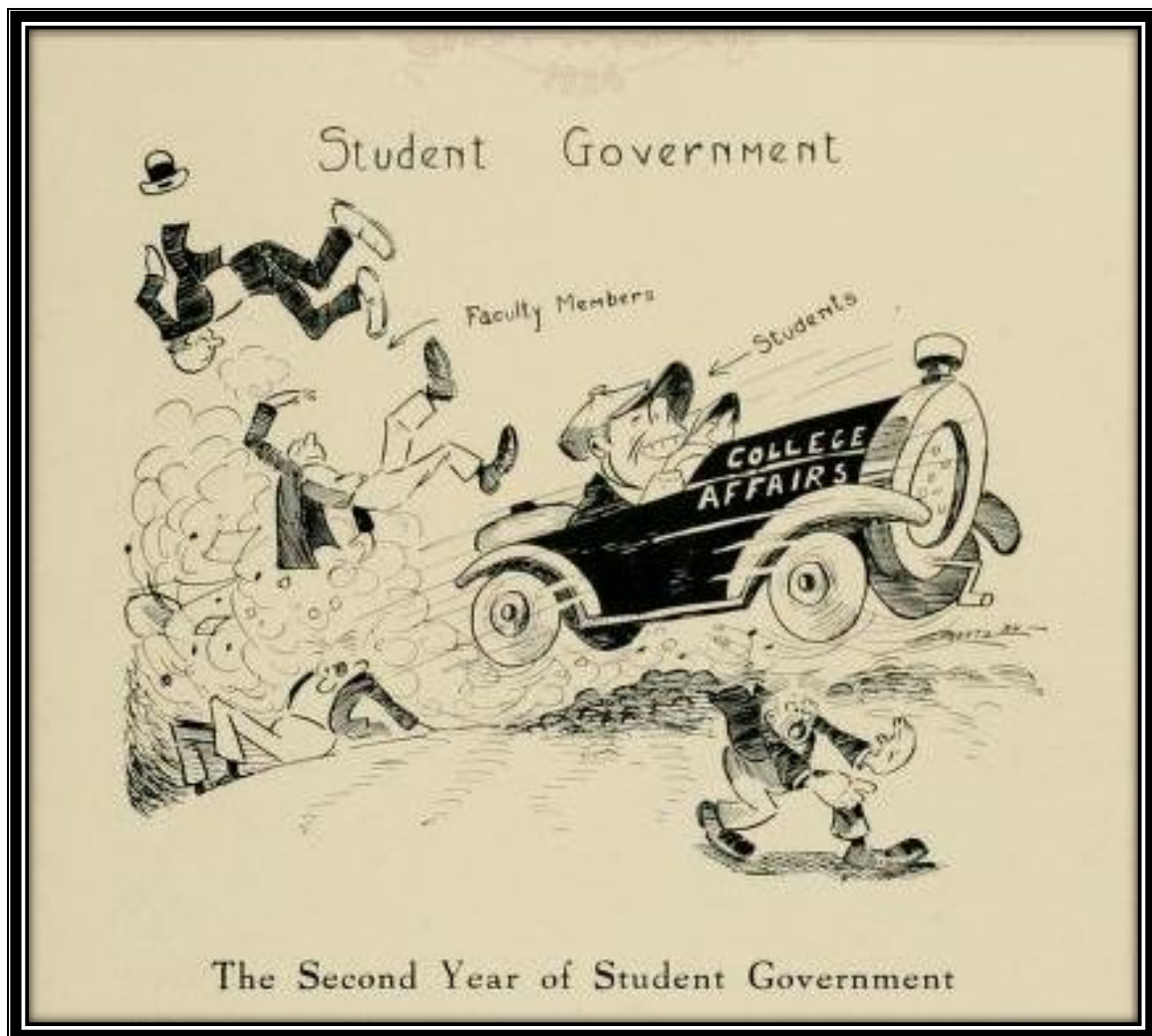


Figure 12. "Student Government" caricature in *The Chanticleer*, Duke University, 1924.

Other systems of control and social organization. Although the Friars managed to control much of student life through the 1930s and into the early 1940s ensuring that a Friar regularly served as president of the Men's Student Government Association and editor of the *Chronicle*, larger patterns of control and exertion of power were observable during this same period in the structured aspects of the men's undergraduate student body. The hierarchy of class rank and the corporate organization of fraternity affiliations were influential forces in the students' social system which fostered conformity to hegemonic conceptualizations of masculinity. Dean (2001) explained that the elite upper-class boarding school patterns of socialization inculcated masculine codes that taught men to "repudiate feminine characteristics and attributes, to conform, and to compete physically and intellectually" (p. 22). In fact, an influx of students from private schools and prep schools coincided with the expansion of undergraduate enrollment by students from the Northeast and broader reaches of the country which occurred in the early 1930s (Patrick, 1942).

Beginning in 1930, freshmen were forced to buy and wear "dinks" (freshmen caps), a tradition that reportedly fell out of favor by the early 1940s, but periodically was sought to be reinstated by the upperclass men (Durdan, 1993). "Beta Omega Sigma", also known as "The Bloody Order of Sophomores", was founded in 1917 as an honorary fraternity of outstanding sophomores with the charge of "orienting" the freshmen and overseeing the discipline of the freshman class (Patrick, 1942). The group's activities are featured in student life photos during the 1930s in which men dressed in women's lingerie are being hazed by

upperclassmen wielding brooms and smiles, an example of ritualized repudiation of all things feminine (See *Figure 13: Bloody Order of Sophomores: “Informal Initiation”* on lawn in front of Duke Chapel, *The Front Line*, April 30, 1938). In the 1941 yearbook, the Chapel steps were described as an informal gathering space for students between classes where freshmen were not allowed. The symbolic import of the prominence and privilege associated with the steps in front of Duke Chapel is magnified by the monumental scale of the Gothic architecture that towers there over the center of campus. The steps served as the site where many initiation and hazing rituals were performed, including the public tapping ceremonies for the secret student honorary organizations, such as ODK and the Order of Red Friars (Durden, 1993).



Figure 13. Bloody Order of Sophomores: “Informal Initiation”, Chapel lawn in front of James B. Duke statue, *The Front Line*, April 30, 1938.

According to the 1941 yearbook, the social life of the student body was led by the men’s Pan-Hellenic Council (the governing body for the men’s Greek-letter fraternities). The fraternities also managed to monopolize control of the men’s student government elections for many years. Yearbooks in the 1930s included references to the “Blue” and “White” combines (named after the school colors), which were voting blocks formed by the fraternities to ensure that the preferred fraternity candidate would be elected SGA president. In 1939, a new student government constitution was adopted that suppressed the controlling

power that the men's fraternities had exerted over the student body in the 1930s through their voting combines system, due to a student uprising about the unfairness of "the politics" associated with SGA elections (Patrick, 1942, p. 39).

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, all of the above-mentioned men's groups were shadowed by their counterpart women's organizations that were active on East Campus at the women's coordinate college. The general pattern was that once a men's affinity group was established, a women's group would be established some years later due to the all-male restrictions on membership. Several examples of this replication process include the founding of the first social fraternity chapters at Trinity in the 1870s, followed by the first women's sororities around 1912. The men's fraternity Pan-Hellenic Council established in 1910, was followed by the sorority's Pan-Hellenic Council in 1913. The founding of "9010", the men's local version of Phi Beta Kappa academic honorary society in 1890, was followed by the women's "Eko-L" counterpart in 1914, while the founding of the men's athletic association around 1910, preceded the women's athletics association in 1931. Finally, Beta Omega Sigma (the "Bloody Order of Sophomores") founded in 1917, was followed by the Sandals women's sophomore honorary society, founded in 1932 (Patrick, 1942).

The social reproduction of a system of masculine power is evident in the patterns of socialization that developed as Trinity's student activities and traditions became organized. Most all student organizations were originally established as exclusively male, and when women were allowed to participate in student organizations, they typically were relegated to

secondary status. Although the predominantly-male student newspaper and yearbook staffs allowed women to participate, it was understood that a male would serve as editor-in-chief. A “co-ed” editor position was created for both publications around 1924 when Trinity made the transition to Duke University.

Founding of a women’s secret society: “The White Duchy”. Following this general pattern, the origins of a women’s secret society at Duke University can be traced to a discussion at a Red Friars meeting in 1923. All that is documented is the description of “a rather unfavorable discussion regarding the establishment of an order among the girls of the college somewhat similar to the Red Friars.” A group named the “Order of White Duchy” was founded at Duke in May of 1925, and their records indicate they were founded by the Red Friars. The Red Friars made a decision soon thereafter to have no relation with the White Duchy and encouraged them to function as an independent organization for the women of the new university, thus, there was no recorded interaction between the two groups for nearly 15 years (“Meeting Minutes”, October 15, 1923; November 2, 1925; March 7, 1939, ORF Records, Box 2; “History of the Organization”, n.d., Order of White Duchy [OWD] Records, Box 1).

According to the White Duchy’s organizational records, the saga of their founding was directly tied to the Red Friars, who in the spring of 1925 visited with “Miss Baldwin, the Dean of Women” to ascertain whether she thought the women of Duke University would be well-served to have an organization of their own similar to the Red Friars. The Friars explained the group would be comprised of “the seven outstanding women of the senior

class.” They emphasized that this group would not be a sister group to the Friars, but would be for the women on East Campus what the Red Friars were for the men on West Campus. The Friars intended for the White Duchy to organize themselves “with one purpose in mind – that this organization among the women come to mean as much to the women as had the organization of the Red Friars among the men.” Beyond these few words, the White Duchy were given little further guidance for organizing the women’s group: “They [the Red Friars] disclosed none of their purpose, nor their form of meeting, nor their plans; only that their meeting aims, and everything pertaining to their organization was entirely secret” (“History of the Organization”, n.d., OWD Records, Box 1).

Feature stories written for the *Chanticleer* in the 1910s and 1920s that often mocked co-eds as being mentally inferior and threatening to take over the school pose the question of the Friars’ motivation to found a separate order for the women of the school. A satirical piece entitled, “A Prophetic Dream” appeared in the 1919 annual (pp. 201-203) in which the story was told of an alumnus of Trinity College returning to visit campus in 1930 only to discover it had been taken over by co-eds – “little skirted creatures flit(ing) around at random” and only “13 male survivors”. A fictional tale about “cow-eds” [sic] attacking the editor of the student newspaper in an attempt to assert their equality with men appeared in the *Chanticleer* in 1923 (pp. 292-293). A 1935 photo of a co-ed speaking with a professor appeared with the caption, “Of the two general methods of making grades, here is the easiest” (p. 206).

Although the seven women selected for the White Duchy were leaders in campus activities, in the same way that the Friars represented the select amongst the men, the persistence of the judgment of women on standards of beauty prevailed as an overriding category for validation of female status in the collegiate community. Through the mid-twentieth century, photographs of the “most attractive” co-ed students were featured each year in a special “Beauties” section of the *Chanticleer*, as they were in college yearbooks around the country, a reification of the feminine role in the college world as opposed to the athletic physicality of the male student. These co-ed “beauties” were selected annually by the yearbook editors, except for in 1928 when they were selected by members of the faculty, in 1941 when the fraternity men at the University of Southern California were invited to select the “beauties” to eliminate any showing of bias from knowing the students, and in 1951 when the *Chanticleer* beauty queen was selected by Vivien Leigh and Marlon Brando during the filming of “A Streetcar Named Desire” (p. 51).

The 1924 yearbook staff even published a feature about “types among girls” – a backhanded superlative recognition for coeds deemed “Ugliest”, “Freshest”, “Flapperest”, “Cutest”, and “Biggest Eater” (p. 286). The 1934 yearbook included a section of photographs of coeds in full-body poses in formal attire with labels such as, “Glamorous”, “Coquettish”, “Alluring”, “Chic”, “Demure”, and “Saucy” (pp. 329-330). (See *Figure 14*: Miss Marjorie Arthur, *The Chanticleer* Beauty Court representative, 1951, p. 354).

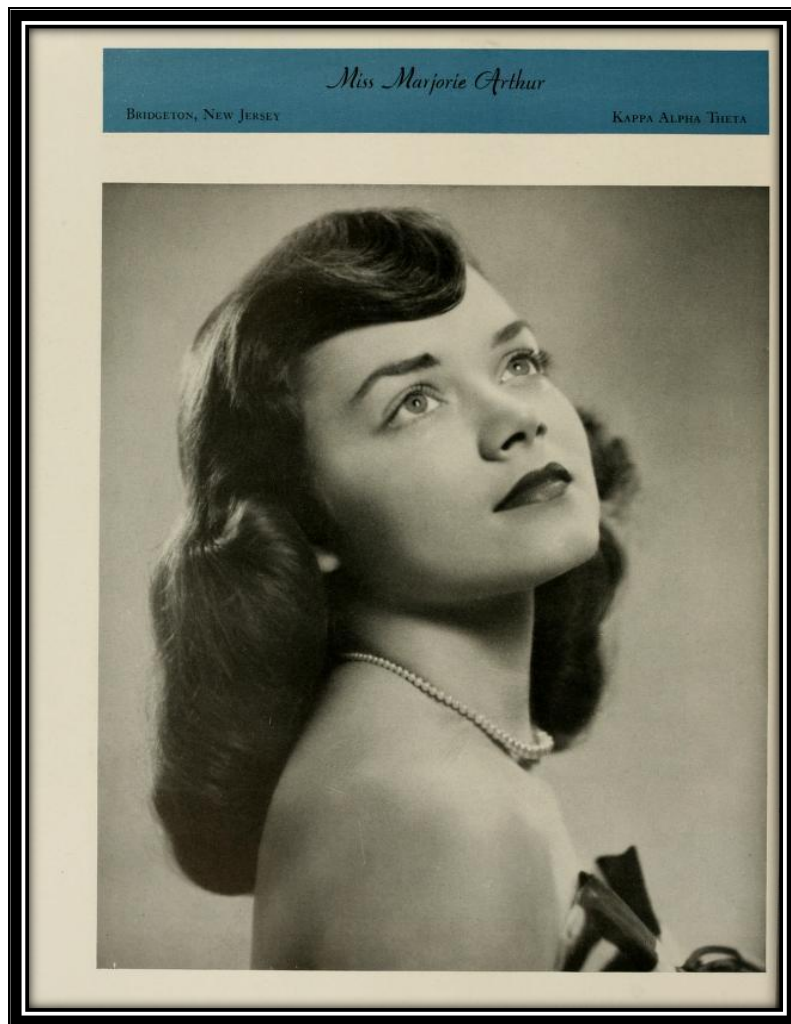


Figure 14. Miss Marjorie Arthur, *The Chanticleer* Beauty Court representative, 1951.

Amidst these traditional gender roles, the women of the White Duchy were typically considered socially progressive (Personal communication, February 16, 2013). In the 1950s, when White Duchy member Elizabeth Hanford (later Dole, U.S. Senator from North Carolina) was president of the Women's Student Government Association, the White Duchy were already discussing integration of the university (that did not transpire until 1962) and

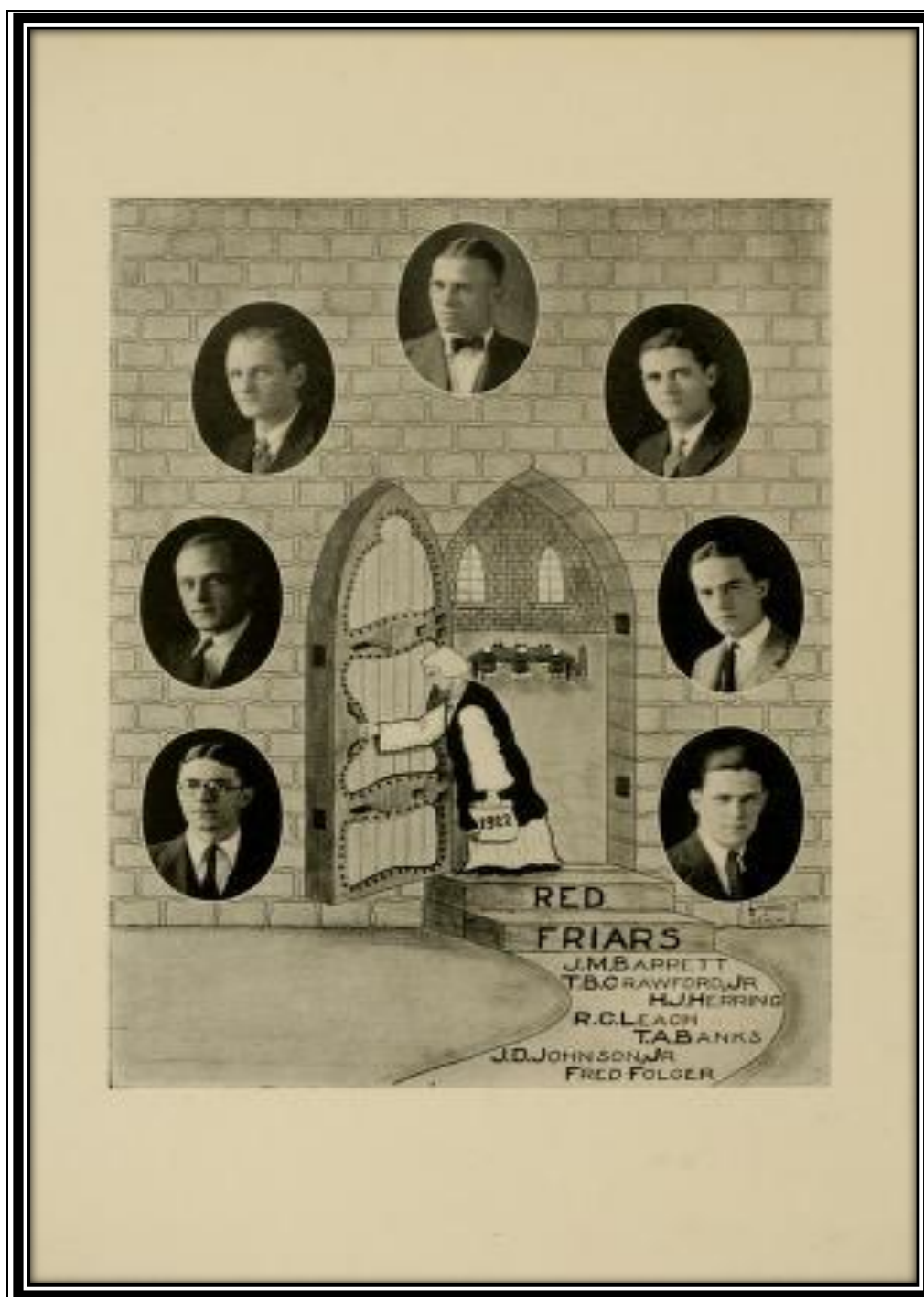
their discomfort in wearing the customary white carnation associated with their Order, due to connotations of elitism. It was the women of the White Duchy who decided to disband in 1968 (three years in advance of the Red Friars) after disavowing the selectivity and exclusive nature of the group: “In a university which professes to nurture the growth and recognize the worth of each person, there is no longer room for an exclusive group which recognizes and nurtures only a few” (“Duchy statement”, The Chronicle, May 3,1968).

The White Duchy and the Red Friars did have at least one joint meeting during their formative period before World War II. The Friars’ records read that they met with “the 7 feminine members of White Duchy” at the Washington Duke Hotel on October 29, 1939. Their agenda identified “problems of mutual interest” including East-West relations (relations between the women’s and men’s campuses, respectively), drinking at football games, and food in the Unions (the quality of the food in the Student Unions on each campus was a perpetual issue cited by students through mid-century). The men reluctantly noted their apprehension about planning any future meetings with the White Duchy, stating, “All were equally flattered and horrified, especially Friar Shorty Penfield, when the ladies suggested that we do this again real soon” (“Meeting Minutes”, ORF Records, Box 2).

Elevating the prestige of the Order. By 1922, the number of secret societies had grown from three in 1913, the year the Red Friars were founded, to 10. All of these groups sponsored organizational pages in the “Secret Societies” section of the yearbook. The increased presence of this type of student organization that coincided with growth in enrollment and the transition to university status undoubtedly served as a catalyst for the

Friars to enhance their image and prestige within the campus community. The elaborate design of the Red Friars' page in the 1922 *Chanticleer* featured artwork that elevated the mystical aura of the group (See *Figure 15*: "Red Friars" yearbook page, *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1922, p. 204).

Alumni friars and faculty who spoke to the Order regularly during this period began to emphasize the importance of their secrecy in sustaining the respect of the campus community as a highly-esteemed student organization ("Meeting Minutes", October 6, 1921; February 3, 1922; ORF Records, Box 2). One alumni Friar guest speaker "earnestly urged the Mystic Seven to remember always that much of its power lay in the absolute secrecy which had always prevailed" ("Meeting Minutes", November 12, 1921, Order of Red Friar Records, Box 2). What ensued by the spring of 1923 were discussions of two major initiatives that might preserve and further heighten the status of the Order amidst the growth in enrollment and Trinity's transition to university status.



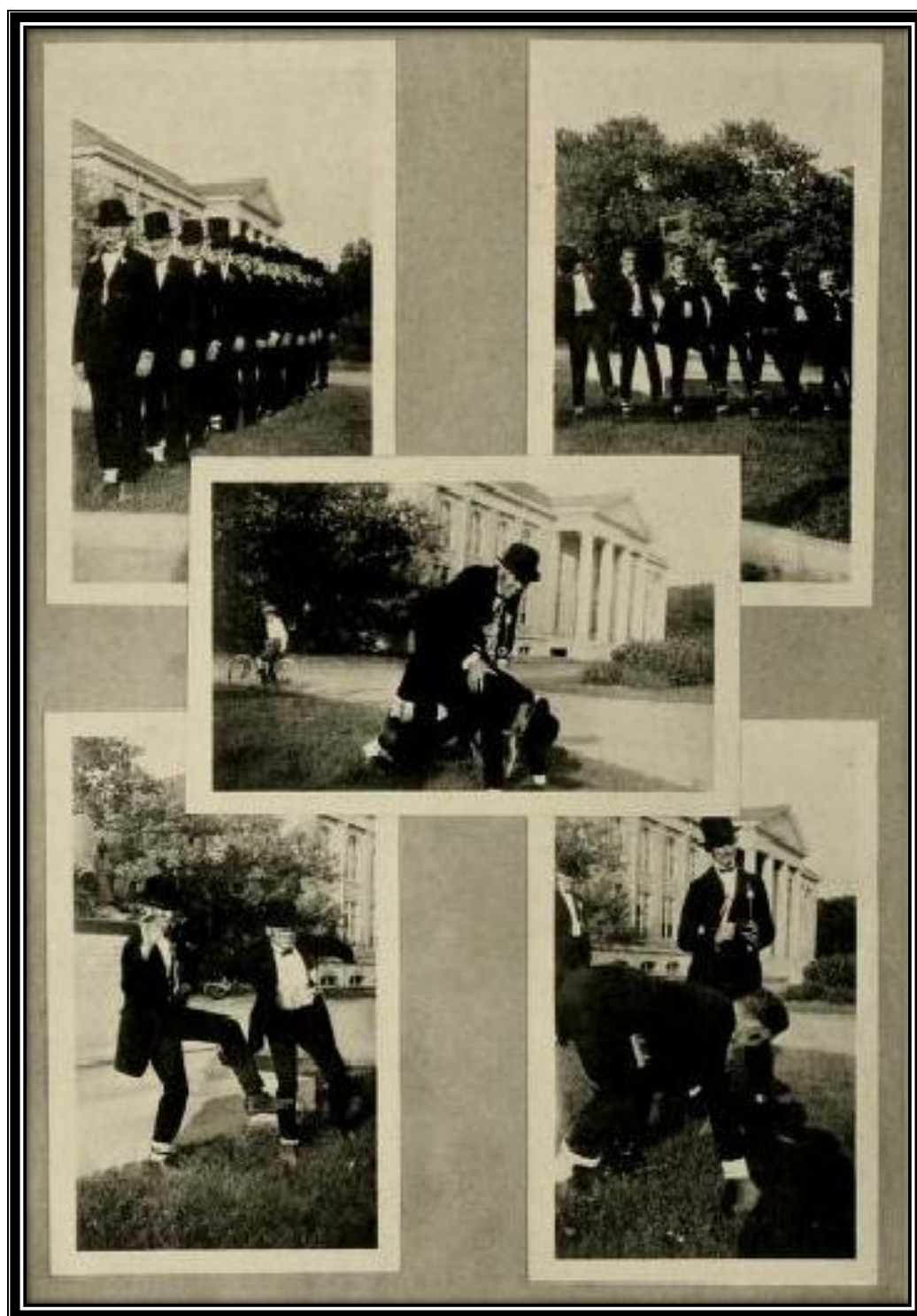
*Figure 15. "Red Friars" yearbook page with portrait of Herbert J. Herring, first dean of students (upper right-hand position), *The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1922.*

Introduction of the public tapping ceremony. The Septemvirate of 1923 set out to develop a public tapping ceremony to replace their informal “initiation” activities that had until then been characterized as “customary horseplay”. The article that appeared in *The Trinity Chronicle* the previous spring described the Red Friars’ initiation activities and detailed how “the seven appeared on campus in the ‘usual regalia’, consisting mostly of red stockings, flowing red ties in Buster Brown collars, and black caps”; the article continued to lament, “It is rumored that the girls of Southgate [the women’s dorm] have completely surrendered to the attentions of the mystic order” (“Red Friars Celebrated Taking Seven Men In”, May 10, 1922). When this favorable article about the Red Friars and their appeal to the coeds was printed, the editor-in-chief of *The Trinity Chronicle* was a member of the Order, as was likely to be the case prior to World War II.

During this period, it was common for student organizations to have inductees dress up in outrageous attire as a form of publicly “hazing” the new members of the group. A celebrated student activity featured in *The Chanticleer* for many years was the public “informal initiation” ritual of the various secret honorary academic, athletic, and leadership societies. The select students were “tapped” and initiated into the prestigious honorary societies for everyone to see, either in front of the Washington B. Duke statue on East Campus or on the steps of Duke Chapel after it was built in 1930. These public hazing rituals – the ceremonies performed to induct new members – often consisted of humiliating activities that required new members to dress like women or babies or to wear blackface – a practice associated with white performers in minstrel shows and vaudeville entertainment in

the early twentieth century and something the Tombs men periodically incorporated into their hazing practices.

The Tombs secret society at Trinity was notorious for parading their new initiates down Main Street in Durham dressed in a garb that included such things as bowler hats, mismatched socks, baby rattles around their ankles, and pacifiers in their mouths (For initiation day images of lineups and games of leapfrog, see *Figure 16: Tombs initiation on East Campus, The Chanticleer*, Trinity College, 1923, p. 288). The Friars determined in the fall of 1922 that they would create their own new and more dignified “public tapping” ceremony that would serve as a welcome change from the usual “horseplay”. Upon holding a more formal tapping ceremony in the chapel at Trinity that spring, the group concluded that “the new tapping ceremony had been a complete success and that much prestige had come to the Order as a result of the new procedure” (“Meeting Minutes”, May 1923, ORF Records, Box 2).



*Figure 16. Tombs initiation on East Campus,
The Chanticleer, Trinity College. 1923.*

In the fall of 1925, the Friars decided to add robes to their private initiation ceremonies to make them more impressive, akin to the dignity afforded commencement ceremonies by faculty wearing robes (“Meeting Minutes”, October 12, 1925, ORF Records, Box 2). The tradition for the Red Friars’ annual spring “Tap Day” grew to consist of a formal public tapping ceremony in the morning on campus, followed by a reconvening of the group in the evening for the private initiation ceremony, usually in a rustic setting somewhere off campus. This practice would continue into the late 1960s. After the Friars implemented their enhanced initiation program in the spring of 1926, they concluded that the addition of the robes to their private ceremonies achieved its goal. A description of the scene offers insight into the seriousness with which the group took their role of inducting new men into their Friar brotherhood and conveying the significance of the secret bond associated with membership, along with the spirit of comradery which characterized their private gatherings. The initiation ceremony that year was held in the woods at a deserted camp a few miles north of Durham:

The hooded red-robed figures, their faces lighted up by glowing embers of the campfire gave a solemn and impressive significance to the whole ceremony. Following this, wieners, marshmallows, dopes (slang term of the day for soda drinks), etc...were brought forth and feasted upon; tales were told; songs were sung; and soft music made the silence all the more impressive (“Meeting Minutes”, May 17, 1926, ORF Records, Box 2).

Plans to build a monastery for the Friarhood. This Septemvirate of 1923 that had been responsible for creating the formal public tapping ceremony also launched the prospect of erecting a medieval monastery building somewhere on campus that would serve as a “meeting house” and public shrine for the Order of Red Friars. Letters were sent to alumni friars over the summer break to gauge their support for such a building. Friar George Allen from the Septemvirate of 1924 (who later would work for the state department, serve as a U.S. Ambassador, and become a member of Duke University’s Board of Trustees) spoke with the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees and was directed to draw up a proposal for the board to consider regarding granting their permission to build the building (“Meeting Minutes”, October 15, 1923, ORF Records, Box 2).

As the Order continued to discuss plans for securing financial support from their alumni to build the proposed monastery, they continued to regularly visit with and invite college officials to their meetings to enlist institutional support for their efforts. By the spring of 1927, their work had progressed to the point they were able to secure a meeting with President Few, Vice President Flowers, and Dean Wannamaker to make a pitch for their monastery plan: “They were all present and became very enthusiastic over the idea. Dr. Flowers gave the impression they could secure the stone and architectural plans for free” (“Meeting Minutes”, March 10, 1927, ORF Records, Box 2). On May 17th of that year, according to the group’s organizational records, the private initiation ceremony for new members of the Order was held “on a little pine-covered knoll deep in the woods of the new campus [not yet built]. It is on this same knoll that the Friars hope some day to build the

monastery” (“Initiation Ceremony”, ORF Records, Box 2). In the spring of 1929, Dr. Flowers escorted the Red Friars to the new West campus woods where the group together selected a site for the monastery, unaware of the impending stock market crash that would occur in October of that year, sending the United States into an economic crisis for more than a decade.

In spite of the severe economic challenges that faced them, the Friars persisted in their efforts to secure the funds to build their beloved monastery. Discussions about the building project through the years grew more purposefully attached to a perceived need to impress upon the campus the importance and esteem of the secret group. The Order was ultimately compromised by its own secret oath that prevented any public recognition of their efforts or affirmation of their mission of service to the university, perhaps a foreshadowing of the ambiguous image that would come to be associated with the Friars as the group of “leading men” of the university who were tapped each year.

The project of building a monastery became something of an obsession for the group by the late 1930s, as it was represented in their meeting minutes. Their monastery fundraising efforts and letter-writing campaigns to Friar alumni dominated much of the group’s focus and energies, all to no avail. A letter sent to Friar alumni in 1936 was a passionate plea for support that presented the monastery as a necessary physical marker on the campus: “The Red Friars in 25 years has come to rank first on the campus among honorary organizations...[The monastery would be] a shrine of achievement toward which students will strive...a shrine that will enrich our traditions, enhance our prestige, and be a constant

and beautiful reminder of the virtues we seek to promote...to be used for meetings and reunions...a campus landmark” (“Letter to Alumni”, December 7, 1936, ORF Records, Box 1). Numerous alumni wrote to express their support for the building project, reaffirming how much membership in the group had meant to them as a collegian, yet acknowledging their inability to make a significant contribution to the project, due to the weary condition of the country’s economy.

At a meeting in January of 1939, the Friars expressed to Dean Herring their great discouragement about making no progress on the monastery project, only to be reminded by him of their founding purpose: “the need for the Order for the sake of service, emphasizing the need for absolute secrecy for the sake of power” (“Meeting Minutes”, ORF Records, Box 2). By 1940, however, due to continued struggles for financial backing, the Friars reluctantly concluded that the monastery project “was hardly within the realm of the possible” (“Meeting Minutes, March 3, 1940, ORF Records, Box 2). While the Friars had spent the better part of the prior decade focused on the building of a monastery “shrine” to the Order, organization of the university structure that managed student affairs had advanced greatly to include two deans responsible for student behavior, programs, and services. The men’s student government association, men’s Pan-Hellenic Council, and men’s Judicial Board had ascended to assert their presence as official student groups in the formally recognized network of governance bodies in the campus community. (For an image of the design conceptualized for the Friars’ meeting place, see *Figure 17: Clay model of Red Friars’*

monastery, ORF Records, Duke University Archives, Box 1; According to the Red Friars' organizational records, an art professor at Duke cast the model for the Order).

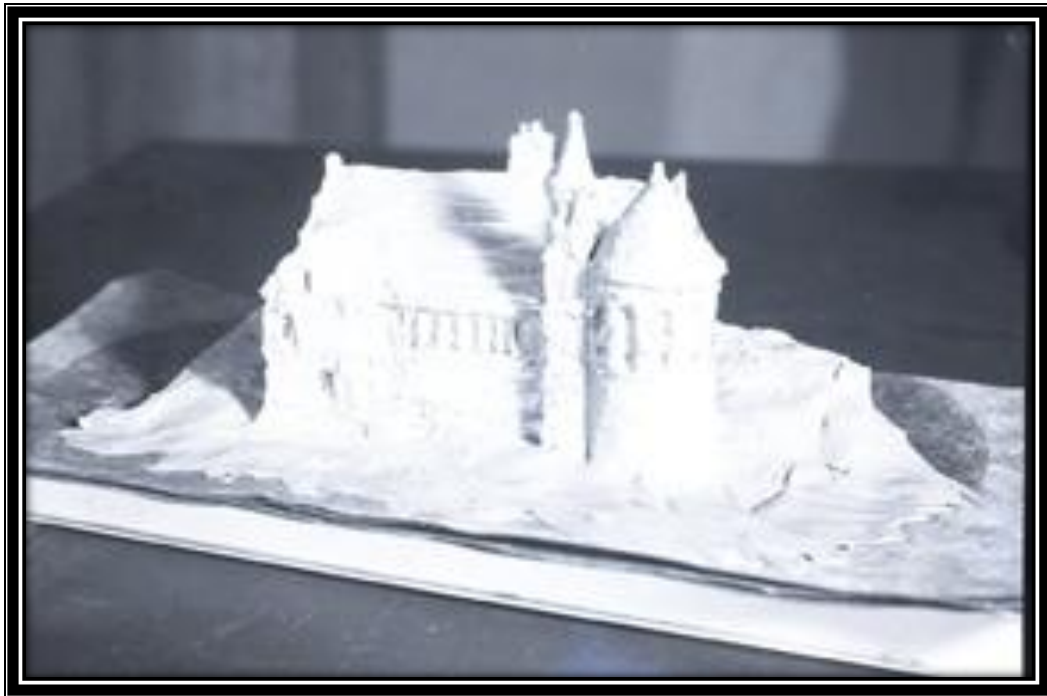


Figure 17. Clay model of Red Friars' monastery, ORF Records.

By 1943, Dean Herring's words of reassurance to the Friars revealed a broadening of his definition of their purpose as a student organization to include a new statement about its meaning for the individual. In speaking to the Order in the spring of 1943, just a few months before the group disbanded due to World War II, Herring defined the purpose of the Friars as "primarily an organization for service on campus" but added it was "an individual reward for

past accomplishments”, a telling shift towards reframing the group’s purpose with lessened regard for “selfless service” (“Meeting Minutes”, February 14, 1943, ORF Records, Box 2).

Questioning and questionable tactics.

As the Friars neared completion of their third decade, indications that the group was losing some of its connection to its founding purpose were observable. The men began asking alumni and administrators who were regular guests at their meetings to give them more direction regarding their founding purpose and what criteria they were to use to select new members. The Friars themselves began to question some of the foundational tenets of their organization, including the need to preserve absolute secrecy and the pledge to act “of one mind”. In 1941, the Friars documented a decision to allow brothers to disagree with the sentiment of the group: “After warm consideration, it was decided that individual Friars had the right to express their personal opinions on campus issues, even when that opinion was not in accordance with that of the majority of the Septemvirate” (“Meeting Minutes”, February 16, 1941; ORF Records, Box 2). The value placed on the freedom to disagree reflected a larger social movement in which Americans began to reflect on the nation’s values during wartime. Freedom and democracy were top of mind, and the first signs of a generation gap would characterize the Red Friars’ relationship with their alumni when the group was reorganized after the war came into view.

Two new Friars tapped for membership during the war years boldly questioned their elders – alumni, faculty, and deans who attended a meeting with the new Septemvirate – regarding why certain aspects of the secret society couldn’t be reconsidered for the good of

the student body. One of the men who was a football standout expressed his opinion that the Red Friars' work was impeded "by the cloak of secrecy and infrequent meetings" (the group met monthly, except for called meetings), only to be "straightened out on secrecy" by the elders as non-negotiable ("Meeting Minutes", April 22, 1942, ORF Records, Box 2).

Another new Friar made a plea for infusing the Order's cause with a new democratic spirit: "to make a plan for students to participate in and understand university management (just as the Friars did), to get to know the administrators and faculty as 'real personalities' and friends to the average student, and to address the unfortunate gulf that exists between the faculty and administration and the average students". A discussion ensued in which the dean of students (Friar Herring, '22) engaged the new Friar in a lengthy debate, but ultimately gave no concessions for any change in procedure.

In the final years of the Friars' formative period, there appeared to be a growing divide amongst the Friars themselves regarding the purpose of the group and whether it would continue in earnest pursuit of a prestigious reputation for the group or reform its mission and become more democratic, in the spirit of their founding ideals of selfless service. Several incidents indicated an attraction to operate more in the direction of a shadow government. When the Friars heard rumors that the popular collegiate sport of boxing would be discontinued at Duke, they assigned a brother to speak with the director of athletics about the matter, only to learn that "boxing was subsequently and quietly and painlessly removed from the list of varsity sports" ("Meeting Minutes", February 4, 1940). The following year, when the Friars decided "something must be done about the coaching situation of the

basketball team”, rather than meet with the director of athletics, they determined perhaps they would have more success affecting change “through the pages of the *Chronicle*” which they could easily arrange since a member of their Septemvirate was the editor (“Meeting Minutes”, January 12, 1941; ORF Records, Box 2).

The strategy of working through the *Chronicle* to influence campus opinion became a popular one for the Friars. Discussions about how “influence could be brought to bear through the pages of the *Chronicle*” addressed an agenda that included planting publicity for SGA officer candidates, for the passing of an SGA constitutional amendment to restructure the elections process, and to sway opinion about rules governing fraternity rush; the Friars also strategized with Dean Herring about plans to work through their fraternities to boost school spirit (“Meeting Minutes”, January 12, 1940; October 3, 1940; December 1, 1940; ORF Records, Box 2).

Another example of questionable tactics was the prospect discussed of creating a “Super Council” to address the problem of fraternities controlling campus politics through block voting for student government candidates. The Friars discussed creating a group to serve as an “excellent front” or “stooge” for the Red Friars and White Duchy and to “serve as a liaison agency for the promulgation of university-wide projects”; supposedly, the Friars envisioned a Super Council that would “subsume leadership from SGA on both campuses (the men’s and women’s), as well as the SGA for the men’s undergraduate engineering college (“Meeting Minutes”, November 9, 1941; ORF Records, Box 2). Although the Super

Council never came to fruition, the increasing desire to control campus politics certainly was evident.

Marching Towards Conflict

With the onset of World War II and the military draft underway, about one-third of all fraternity chapters in the United States were forced to close down in the early 1940s; alumni were called upon to manage operations during wartime and to reactivate chapters following the end of the war (Johnson, 1972). Duke's powerful fraternity and honorary system likewise suffered from the departure of male students. As the Friars faced an uncertain future in the early years of World War II, the Septemvirate of 1943 decided to "close its gates" and restored "to active duty" four deans and the director of PR and alumni affairs, several of whom were Friar alumni, with the charge to "revive the group and restore it to its position of honor and esteem after the war emergency" ("Meeting Minutes", May 9, 1943; ORF Records, Box 2).

Although the Red Friars had continued to operate as a collegiate secret society, over the course of their first 30 years of existence, they had become part of the institutional fabric and managed to establish a working relationship with university officials to ensure their involvement in the administration of student affairs. The fact that Friar Herring from the Septemvirate of 1922 would become the first dean of students at Duke in 1935 undoubtedly reinforced their status and institutional recognition of their importance for many years. Their induction of the university president and senior officials as honorary members beginning in 1925 served to cement their relationship with the inner circle of the administration.

At the same time, however, distance from the founding purpose of the Order was growing evident in questions and conversations between the Friars and their elders just prior to the group disbanding temporarily in the spring of 1943. The early purpose of the Order that included a mission of selfless service and a practical agenda of creating a form of student self-government, a bona fide athletics program, and financial stability for student publications and musical organizations had been fulfilled. The group's decade-long Red Friar Monastery building project diverted their focus and allowed them to be displaced as central to the operations of student affairs. During the 1930s, the Friars' original reason to exist was incrementally replaced by two entities they themselves helped create – the Men's Student Government Association and deans in the university's organizational structure who were specifically responsible for the oversight of all student affairs. American higher education history scholars have explained how this same phenomenon occurred around the country as institutional administrators realized the permanence of the alumni power base associated with intercollegiate athletics and fraternities (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011).

The minutes of the final meeting of the 1943 Septemvirate that bounded the years of the Friars' formative period recorded a profound, but hopeful statement by Grand Friar Ran Few (the former president's son) that they would someday resume the practice of tapping the seven outstanding men of the senior class "to engender a higher love and interest in Duke University": "The (Septemvirate) after a great deal of study and deliberation has decided to suspend its activity for the duration of the war. The order believes that in order to retain its high ideals and standards that this action is imperative. Red Friars is not being obliterated; it

is just shutting its monastery gates with its strength intact and undiluted after the emergency is past. Red Friars must always live at Duke University” (“Meeting Minutes”, May 9, 1943; ORF Records, Box 2).

By the end of the war, however, perhaps due to the departure of many male students who had left college to join the armed services, along with the enrollment of many male students in the Navy’s V-12 officers’ training program on campus, a shift in power within the student body was documented. The 1944 yearbook proclaimed that major changes had occurred as a result of the disruption of the war including “the abolition of fraternity politics, no discrimination against the co-ed ‘touch’, and the exclusion of candidates who desire personal benefits.” The 1945 yearbook further announced that the new “V-12 ticket” had overpowered the “old fraternity combine system” of block voting for candidates in the SGA elections, and the activities of the oldest secret honorary society, “9019”, founded in 1890, had been taken over by other groups.

Other changes in the campus power base were indicated by reports in the yearbook that a woman had been elected editor of the “Archive” literary magazine in 1940 for the first time in its 54-year history, and the freshman class of 1941, in spite of having record-breaking numbers pledging fraternities, had “one of the lowest averages of any class” to wear the traditional “dinks”. Finally, in what appears to be a typographical error intended as a reference to the B.M.O.C. ideal, the 1945 yearbook reported the demise of “the BMOS’s who had appointed themselves to run the campus.” Notably, the editor of *The Chanticleer* in that year was Helen S. Wade, a coed student who was not a member of the White Duchy. Wade

had inherited the editor's position from the male editor-in-chief who had to leave for active duty in the middle of the 1943-44 school year (*The Chanticleer*, 1944, p. 172).

The Red Friars speak for themselves about changing times. The trustworthiness of this study has been strengthened by the insight of three Red Friars whom I interviewed who shared their insider perspectives from the decades of the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. Each Friar knew little or nothing about why the Friars were founded, why the name was chosen, or what was the significance of the name. None of them were aware of any protest or objection to the hooded style of robes used by the honorary societies for tapping ceremonies when they were students, although they certainly acknowledged how problematic viewing the images was for them in a contemporary setting. Attitudes about race were emergent during the period of this study, especially after the Second World War, and the Friars from the 1950s and 1960s confirmed that concerns about the Friars after the war stemmed from accusations of elitism made by the campus community.

Differences that existed between the three Friars interviewed were marked by the sociohistorical context of when they attended Duke. Their candid discussion of what it meant to be a Friar, both personally and within the larger Duke community, served to highlight and reflect the spirit of their college days. The "B.M.O.C." phenomenon was more pronounced in the 1940s than in the 1950s as a moniker associated with the members of the Order. By the 1960s, the term itself had largely fallen out of the campus vocabulary. By viewing the changing perspectives of Friars across time, I was able to achieve a better sense of how cultural meaning changed over the course of the twentieth century on the Duke

campus as new and more pressing societal issues displaced the central role of the Red Friars in campus life.

Memories of a Red Friar SGA President from the World War II Era

I had the great pleasure of interviewing a Red Friar who was a member of a Septemvirate from the World War II era regarding memories of his time in the Order. I discovered that he was the bold Friar who as a rising senior had challenged Dean Herring over the prospect of the Friars adopting a more democratic mission. He had proposed that the Friars create a plan for all students to get to know faculty and administrators and have close relationships with them so they all might learn about the inner-workings of university governance, just as the Friars did.

This Friar was president of the Men's Student Government Association when men were leaving college in large numbers to serve in World War II. The draft had been underway since 1940, and his Septemvirate was the last group to remain active before the Friarhood disbanded temporarily for the war at the end of the 1942-43 academic year. They were plagued by decisions regarding whether to replace themselves with men who risked being drafted or to have the group become inactive during the war, which ultimately was the decision they made.

Although this Friar was 91 years old at the time of the interview, he was very clear on the memories of his college days and his involvement in the Order of Red Friars. He had been active in Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK) and student government and lived in one of the halls where his fraternity had a section near Zeta Beta Tau, the Jewish fraternity, so he made

many friends there. He was a pre-med student and attended medical school at Duke upon graduation. He described his membership in the Order as a tremendous honor and revealed that when he was a Friar, the group was definitely comprised of the “B.M.O.C.s” who ran the major campus organizations, but they spent the year concerned about what to do about the Order during the war.

What follows are excerpts from the interview organized by topic. I shared photographs with the Friar alumnus from his senior yearbook to facilitate recall of his time at Duke. He spoke with me both about what he knew about the origins and purpose of the Red Friars and added anecdotal memories from his college days that were important to him. I have presented the topics discussed in bold below, followed by the Friar’s own words of response to make the presentation of this material as authentic as possible. Much of what I learned from this interview was about the profound gravity of meaning of membership in the Order for one of its members at the time of the Second World War when the military presence on campus was in its ascendancy, and the traditional college fraternity and honorary society system was facing an uncertain future.

On being tapped for membership in the Order of Red Friars - Red Friar (RF): “I know I considered it quite an honor. They would just go out and tap you on the campus. I was sitting on some steps visiting with some friends when they tapped me...I didn’t know about any big public (tapping) ceremonies...I do think people on campus respected the group because it was so small...The main thing that was the mark of the Red Friar was fine character, and we were very serious...I didn’t go downtown like everyone else. I was always

studying because I wanted to go to med school. I started thinking about that before I went to Duke. It was part of the reason I went to Duke.”

On the origins of the “Red Friars” and the early years, the White Duchy – RF: “I never did know exactly why they chose the name Red Friars, but I know the man on the faculty in the Greek department – our advisor and consultant – He made a big thing out of it. It was very important to him. (The advisor to whom the Friar referred was probably Dr. Furman McLarty, a Friar from the Septemvirate of 1927 who studied at Oxford and was a professor of Greek at Duke for his entire career.) The East Campus, they had the White Duchy. We never did meet with them, but we communicated very frequently. I never knew that the Red Friars founded them. I’m very glad to hear about that.”

On a possible Skull and Bones connection – RF: “When I was a senior I learned about the Skull and Bones. Our last year at Duke, our advisors organized a class trip for us to take, and we went on an automobile trip to visit the Ivy League – the whole class. We went to Harvard and Yale, and we went to Amherst. We arrived one night, and they were having a pep rally at Amherst, very impressive, when we went to visit. We went to Mount Holyoke, Smith, and Wellesley – the female groups. At Yale around that time, that’s when I found out about Skull and Bones. They took great pride in impressing us with that. I met several of them and learned that the superior student officer – the chief officer at Yale – they called him the secretary. So we did meet him. He had a rather superior attitude. As far as I was concerned, we were founded at Duke and had grown there and developed there and had no very early experience with those groups (Skull and Bones, etc...).”

On purpose and function of the group – RF: “The Red Friars were such a secret organization. They elected their successors...But we didn’t do very much. We weren’t very active. It was an honor, and we took it all very seriously...What we tried to do was maintain a group of consistent leaders who sought high goals...The one thing we did was recommend to the university Board of Trustees that they put that statement of purpose (a statement called, “The Aims of the University”, a paraphrased speech by one of Trinity’s early presidents about the institution’s noble mission of scholarship and service) in front of the campus. You stood there just looking at the chapel or reading that purpose...Something where students would stop and read it. It was our idea, and the Board of Trustees responded favorably to have it etched in stone.” This Friar’s Septemvirate secretly made arrangements for the three foot by five foot plaque to be cast and laid in a prominent location between the Divinity School and the Chapel where it lies today.

On religious and geographic diversity of the student body – RF: “Lots of students were Methodists. That’s part of why I went to Duke, but students were from all over. Most of them were from New York and New Jersey. They probably came to Duke because it was cheaper...Jewish people had at least one fraternity that I knew of. We had a quadrangle, and the fraternity I lived in...one fraternity was a Jewish fraternity, so I got to know those people real well. One of them went to a very good academic school in Boston. His parents moved there so he could go to school. He was in the Red Friars, too.”

On interaction with the deans - RF: “Dean Manchester, the dean of freshmen, was a very important man. Let me just say one thing about Dean Manchester. I went in to see him after

I'd been at Duke three or four months, and I told him I was having to stay up until one or two o'clock in the morning to study because it takes me that long to get everything done. He said, "(Friar's last name), looking at your test scores, you're lucky to get to sleep at all!" But I came around. I was a very serious student. I didn't do anything but study."

On the importance of other student organizations – RF: "The YMCA had a very important location because it was in an office that connected the dormitories with the student union. The 'Y' was very important because a lot of the student leaders were developed there. They would serve in various leadership roles in the 'Y'. Their offices were in the most prime location. ODK – We thought a lot of them because they selected their members from the student leaders. I was a member of ODK." On the hoods worn by ODK for public tapping (Hoods that were part of the national organization's ritual shown in yearbooks from the 1930s through the 1950s resembled those worn by the KKK): "We thought it was important and not a stigma at the time."

On rivalry/relationship with the University of North Carolina (UNC) – RF: "The Duke-UNC rivalry was very intense. One night a year before the Carolina-Duke football game, there would be raids by groups from each of the universities. The other would go over and steal things and bring them back. We never did get the ram. We always had a bonfire the night before the football game. The university (Duke) was very cooperative with bonfires. They would bring in tobacco trash from the tobacco company and use that as the foundation for the bonfires. It always smelled like tobacco... We knew about the Castle. (The Order of the Gimghoul was a secret society at UNC that had a castle in the woods near their football

stadium. The group still has its castle there today.) I dated Carolina girls and never did date the women at Duke.” (His wife was a student at UNC.)

On SGA and campus wide elections – RF: “We tried to go out and get people from every part of the campus. It was very democratic.”

On student behavior – RF: “I remember they used to have ‘Keep Off the Grass’ signs – a row of signs saying the breakdown, ‘Keep Off the Grass’ – that started back in my era.”

On popular student activities at Duke – RF: “The main thing that was the most popular activity was the Sunday evening sing-a-longs. The boys would go over to the East Campus, and it was always the girls and boys together, and those were very popular...For dances, they brought in as big a band as they could afford. One that I remember was Charlie Barnett and his orchestra...Duke football was one of the number one teams in the country. (Duke went to the Rose Bowl in 1939 and hosted it in 1942.) When I first graduated, I went back every month or so. There was a lot of positive participation and activity in that direction. Just about everybody was involved. Fraternities had intramural athletics, too.”

On the food rebellion – RF: “It was during my last year in undergraduate school they had the food rebellion - started by a fellow named Brooks and a student group. The students stood up and dumped their plates on the floor. They finally were served a meal of carrots and other vegetables. The food was bad, very plain.”

On seeing any Catholic students at Duke – RF: “Peahead Walker was the head football coach at Wake Forest, and when he was recruiting the Catholic boys, he used to bring them over here and drive them up in front of the Chapel and say this was their church.” Peahead

Walker coached at Wake Forest from 1937-1950. He tried unsuccessfully to recruit Arnold Palmer to play football while he was a student there.

On men leaving college to serve in World War II – RF: “Most of them enlisted, but some were drafted. It never was much of a question for me because I was pre-med, so they immediately inducted me into the Navy. The Navy used the campus for officer training, and a large contingent of those people was there.”

On Durden’s (1993) historical interpretation of the history of student life at Duke that described membership in the Red Friars in your day as being the aspiration of every “B.M.O.C.” on West campus (the men’s campus): “Yes! You’re exactly right. It was very important. We used the term ‘B.M.O.C.’s’. The Red Friars were definitely the ‘B.M.O.C.’s’. They were small in number, and they ran everything. We knew the administration, and they knew us.”

Chapter Summary

This chapter covered the first three decades of the Friars’ existence from their founding at Trinity College in 1913 through their decision in 1943 to close for the duration of the Second World War. The senior class secret society that was comprised of the leading men at Trinity was established in the spirit of the Progressive Era and sought to advocate on behalf of students for the betterment of their institution. Their original mission of selfless service compelled them to manage student affairs while the administrative structure of their modern university was taking shape. They worked in earnest to lobby with academic and business officials for support of their athletic programs and a system of student self-

governance, as well as other initiatives that might enhance the prestige of their alma mater. The individual members of the Order reflected the demographics of the student body and the changes in enrollment that began to occur once Duke University was established around Trinity's liberal arts foundation in 1924.

When the Red Friars became active in the 1910s, even though Trinity was a coeducational institution - somewhat unusual in the South at the time, the organized aspects of college life outside of the classroom were firmly in the male domain. The voice of the male student dominated the narrative of student experience and perspective in the student newspaper, yearbook, and literary magazine, and the world of intercollegiate athletics was unquestionably the sphere of the male athlete. All of the major student organizations and most of the clubs were exclusively male, with women's groups established in their wake in emulation of an American collegiate ideal.

As the Friars saw to it that a men's student government was established in the early 1920s, other secret societies formed, and enrollment began to grow in concert with the transition to university status. The Friars began to redirect their energies towards safeguarding the prestige of their secret Order and their new university. Their efforts bolstered a larger pattern of upper-class masculine socialization that afforded men from modest backgrounds access to circles of power operationalized in socially-constructed brotherhoods in the college setting, such as national Greek-letter fraternities and all-male university secret societies (Dean, 2001).

The Friars identified the need for Duke to have a nationally-recognized men's leadership honorary society to confer prestige on their new university and secured a charter for Omicron Delta Kappa (ODK). They also launched what would become a long-term failed campaign to build a monastery as a meeting house and a shrine to the prestige of the Order. They spent the decade prior to World War II committed to raising funds for the monastery and began to lose touch with their original function as a group that sought to manage student affairs as the organizational structure of the university began to mature and non-secret entities subsumed much of their reason for existence. At the same time, their 30 years of collaboration with college officials served to establish their corporate presence as a reservoir of student power that could be tapped when student opinion was needed to help solve institutional problems.

With the men's student government established and a professional student affairs presence in place in the administrative structure of the institution in the 1930s, the Friars continued to identify student life issues they could address through the fronts of recognized student organizations, all the while maintaining their commitment to secrecy as the source of their power. By 1940, when men began leaving college because of military conscription and volunteer service, the masculine collegiate ideals embodied in the Red Friars as leaders of the major campus organizations became increasingly overshadowed by the ideals represented by the men who were leaving college to serve in the military. The stark reality of a world at war and an uncertain future precipitated their decision to deactivate the work of the Order until the crisis had passed.

The alumni Friars and honorary members from the administration who pledged to reorganize the Order made true to their promise, and a new Septemvirate would be tapped again in the spring of 1949. The next chapter will address the second half of the Red Friars' activity as a student organization on the Duke campus. It will examine how the secrecy and exclusivity of the group came under attack in the context of a complicated new world order, marked by evolving social attitudes that questioned old assumptions about gender, race, and ethnicity on the college campus and in American society at large.

CHAPTER 5: THE “BIG MAN ON CAMPUS” UNDER ATTACK: 1949-1971

The Secret Order in a Changing Society

The disruption of World War II proved to be a catalyst for changing social attitudes about racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination that would distinguish the period from 1949-1971 as a difficult era for the Order of Red Friars. The latter period spans from the time the Order was reorganized until ultimately they failed to tap new members due to the ridicule they endured in student media representations of their activities and mockery of their public tapping ritual in hooded red robes that eventually evoked a reference to the “Crimson Clan” (“Friars Tap 6, 2 decline”, May 2, 1969; ORF Records, *The Chronicle*, Duke University Archives, Box 1). This chapter will address the major changes that occurred in American higher education and locally at Duke after World War II, and it will examine some of the external forces that ultimately led to the Red Friars’ demise.

The hooded ceremonial robes the Friars used to induct new members from the 1930s to the 1960s were similar to those used by other student honorary societies at Duke and around the country, except the Friars’ robes were bright red. For contemporary scholars seeking interpretive objectivity, the hooded ritual garb is problematic because the robes worn for some groups’ initiations looked like robes worn by the Ku Klux Klan that was active in the South during this same period (“Omicron Delta Kappa Initiation Ritual”, n.d.; ODK Records, Box 1; Painter, 2010). The appearance of “KKK-like” robes in yearbook photographs in the mid-twentieth century provokes an anachronistic response loaded with presumptive interpretation some 50 years later. The concept of a select group of “leading

men” wearing hooded costumes to induct new members into their student organizations must be examined by contemporary scholars with acknowledgement that the shock the images provoke today was not shared by members of the all-white undergraduate community at the time, due to the prevailing conditions of legally-mandated racial segregation in the South and the use of religious robes that were sometimes borrowed by students for their initiation rituals (See *Figure 18*: ODK new member ceremony, placing names on key, April 17, 1951, Duke University News Service).



Figure 18. ODK new member ceremony, placing names on key, April 17, 1951, Duke University News Service.

The voices of opposition to the existence of the Red Friars registered in student media at Duke from the mid-1950s through the mid-1960s cited offense at their elitism, not the use of “KKK-like” robes in public ceremonies on the steps of Duke Chapel. Duke’s undergraduate program was not integrated until 1963, and it was not until the late 1960s that the *Chronicle* referenced how the ceremonial garb used by the honorary societies was similar to that of the Ku Klux Klan. All records about the creation of a public tapping ceremony for the Friars in 1923 indicate that the ceremonial robes were intended to heighten the mystery associated with the image of the Order as monastic in nature (“Meeting Minutes”, February 3, 1923; ORF Records, Box 2).

American attitudes about race, ethnicity, and religious inclusion began evolving dynamically in the 1950s, and the situation of Duke University as a predominantly male, all-white undergraduate community, like many institutions in the South, makes the study of the decline of the Red Friars in the 1960s all the more interesting observed through the lenses of race and gender. This chapter will explore the reorganization of the Order of Red Friars in postwar America, followed by an examination of the changes in student attitudes indicated by the so-called “crisis” that occurred in 1955 when the Friars failed to tap their requisite seven members. An interview with a Red Friar who was a member of the Septemvirate of 1950 who became the director of student activities and eventually a dean and provost provides extraordinary insight into the transformation of student values that occurred beginning with the onset of the Cold War. The chapter will conclude with a review of the events that occurred in the 1960s that reflected students’ ultimate rejection of the “BMOC”

ideal that the Order of Red Friars themselves represented, along with the testimony of a Red Friar from the Civil Rights Era who explained how the focus of students turned outward to address larger social issues, beyond the “monastery gates”.

Higher Education and Institutional Context

The United States emerged from the Second World War as a leader in a new world order. The nation ushered in the Atomic Age and welcomed returning veterans to study in colleges and universities courtesy of the Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944, the official name of the G.I. Bill. American institutions of higher education opened their doors to more than two million veterans, and the influx of servicemen created overcrowding in classrooms, libraries, and housing on campuses around the country (Clark, 1998; Mettler, 2005; Olson, 1973, 1974). College enrollments in the United States essentially doubled between 1938 and 1948 (Bender, 2008). Total enrollment at Duke increased nearly 40 percent between 1940 and 1946, from 3,685 to 5,121, as the biggest wave of veterans entered the university (Durden, 1993, p. 249, p. 465).

Although the G.I. Bill is remembered with favorable sentiment in the annals of United States history as a program that fostered the democratization of American higher education, its creation resulted in many unintended consequences, including the displacement of women in the academy. The massive G.I. enrollment had a “masculinizing” effect on college and university campuses (Bender, 2008; Schwartz, 2003). Veterans were the

majority of male students on campus and were treated as heroes and given priority in every area, setting the tone for social and academic life (Olson, 1974).

Even before the war ended, Duke hosted one of the largest Navy V-12 officer training programs in the country with more than 1,600 naval trainees entering in the summer of 1943 and their replacements rotating through the institution through February of 1946. Trinity College, the undergraduate college of arts and sciences for men at Duke, outlined enrollment priorities to manage the demand generated by the G.I. Bill as first for returning veterans, followed by “other veterans”, and the lowest priority going to high school graduates; former servicemen comprised 60 percent of the freshmen in Trinity in the fall of 1946, as well as the majority of upperclassmen (Durden, 1993, p. 465).

The infusion of male veterans into the American system of higher education accompanied a cultural shift that occurred after World War II, characterized by a desire to return to “normalcy” in traditional gender roles and a movement towards social conservatism that affirmed males as the dominant gender in a male-oriented culture (Chafe, 1972; Schwartz, 2002). The G.I. Bill ultimately displaced and disadvantaged women on many campuses who had enjoyed unprecedented attention as students and prominence as administrators during the war years (Jacobs, 1996; Schwartz, 2003). At Duke, undergraduate women comprised one-quarter of the total enrollment prior to the war, and their representation dropped to one-fifth by 1946, holding at about 1,000 students, (Durden, 1993).

In spite of the decrease in the percentage of women at Duke, female students experienced mixed success in the immediate postwar years in terms of gains and losses in

campus leadership positions. The women who had served as class officers during the war found themselves replaced in quick succession once the veteran enrollment numbers began to rise. However, the woman who became editor of the yearbook in 1944 when the male editor left midyear for military service became the first of many women to hold the position for nearly 10 years in a row. It would be almost a decade before a man would serve as editor of the *Chanticleer* again, and women having acquired the top positions of major student publications (the first woman became editor of the literary magazine during the war, as well) paved the way for a woman finally to become editor of the politically powerful student newspaper, the *Chronicle*, by 1956.

During the war, the Duke University's Woman's College preserved all of the leadership opportunities for women in their counterpart organizations to the men's, such as the women's student government association, sororities, athletics, and the residence halls. The Woman's College at Duke University was the coordinate college for undergraduate women established on the grounds of the original Trinity College campus in 1930 when the new Gothic West Campus for undergraduate men opened about one mile away. The emergence of coordinate colleges for women has been explained within the history of American higher education as a development that allowed men's colleges to maintain their prestige while managing the demand for the education of women without becoming fully coeducational; but it has been argued that women who attended coordinate colleges attained many of the same benefits as women who attended single-sex institutions, such as a supportive environment in separate residence halls, leadership opportunities in all-female

organizations, and female role models in the faculty and administration (Miller-Bernal, 2002). The women at Duke enjoyed a brief period of prominence on campus during the war years, and even though their representation would dip as part of the whole would dip slightly when the veterans enrolled en masse after the war, their expanded experience and presence on campus, albeit temporary, would serve to broaden their scope of campus involvement for years to come.

The diversification of students in the American system of higher education that occurred as a result of the G.I. Bill forever transformed the composition of the college-going population in this country, marking “the transition from the small collegiate world of the white, male, Protestant, upper middle class to a broadened population with new interests and differing capabilities” (Best, 1988, p. 182). The social integration that occurred in the military during the Second World War facilitated the democratizing force of the G.I. Bill and changed American attitudes about many social issues. Prior to the war, colleges and universities around the country observed discriminatory admissions practices, including quotas for Jewish students at elite institutions and segregation by race in the South (Cohen, 2010; Thelin, 1982). Although Duke never systematically codified admissions information by religion, race, and ethnicity prior to integration in the 1960s, a special report prepared for President Few indicated that Duke was admitting Jewish students throughout the 1930s at a rate of about three percent of the student body every year (“Jewish Students at Duke University: 1930-1936”, William Preston Few records and papers, Box 110).

The new integrative socialization process that occurred during the war, described as the “military melting pot” experience, contributed to changes in the view of who should be allowed to pursue a college education in the United States; during the war, the U.S. Navy became completely integrated, and although the Army was officially segregated, platoons of black soldiers served with white soldiers and interacted regularly, breaking down social barriers unimagined back home in the states; the horror of the Holocaust ameliorated white America’s view of Jewish-Americans as having an inferior social status and began to erode the ability of higher education institutions to discriminate admissions based on religion upon the veterans’ return from war (Bennett, 1996; Painter, 2010).

The term “ethnicity” entered into the American vocabulary in the 1940s and fostered greater acceptance of eastern and southern Europeans as “white” (Painter, 2010), which included many Jewish and Catholic soldiers who became college students upon their return. As the United States emerged from the war in a new position of international prominence, it did so with a broadened sense of social consciousness that carried over into the colleges and universities. As the conceptualization of “whiteness” expanded, a new dichotomy of white students versus black students thus emerged in the South and forced higher education institutions to address the issue of integrated admissions. Anderson (1993), writing about the dynamics of institutional racism in the post-war academy stated, “The United States could no longer maintain a pervasive system of discrimination at home while playing the leader of democracy and the ‘free world’ abroad” (p. 156).

The “Crisis” of 1955

When the Order of Red Friars was reorganized in 1949, the inflated enrollment at Duke caused by the G.I. Bill had begun to settle down (“Observations on Enrollment Figures”, December 21, 1949; A. Hollis Edens records, Box 22). Undergraduate enrollment in the early 1950s hovered around 3,500 students, and student life was thriving. The new Septemvirate charged with reactivating the work of the Order faced a markedly different institutional setting than the original Septemvirate in 1913. A great deal had changed since the Red Friars were founded to serve a student body of less than 500 at Trinity College.

In the nearly 40 years that had passed since the Red Friars were established, the modest liberal arts college had grown to become a nationally-renowned university. Six fraternities and two sororities were active at Trinity College in 1913, compared to 19 fraternities and 12 sororities in 1949. The school without a football team had played in the Rose Bowl twice, in 1939 and 1942. (In fact, Duke hosted the 1942 Rose Bowl in Durham in 1942 when large public gatherings were banned on the West Coast following the attack on Pearl Harbor.) Trinity’s students were mostly Methodist and from North Carolina, but Duke’s students now were diverse in terms of religious background and geographic origin. For the freshman class alone, only about one-third were Methodist and from North Carolina, while about 10 percent of students were Jewish, Catholic, or Greek Orthodox (“Religious Affiliation of Freshmen Admitted for Fall, 1949”, A. Hollis Edens records, Box 22). Many of Duke’s students were from the Northeast, especially New York and New Jersey.

Business as usual. Once the Red Friars were reorganized by the deans and local alumni Friars charged with ensuring the group began functioning again after the war, they launched the new era with a flurry of activity similar to their early years when they sought to manage an agenda for student life. The difference, however, was that now much of their original function had been adopted by structured aspects of the university that had matured in the Friars' absence. The dean of students position responsible for managing extracurricular life had been in place for nearly 20 years, and the athletics department and men's student government association were both more than a quarter of a century old. The new Septemvirates in the 1950s began to document the process of an annual search for a project that would distinguish the work of their group (See *Figure 19: Red Friars' tapping ceremony in front of Duke Chapel, May 5, 1952*).

With much of their original reason for existence now subsumed within the official university administrative structure and power to act afforded to elected leaders of the men's student government, the Friars spent much effort in the early 1950s on self-promotion and enhancing their status as a prestigious men's organization with a legacy to be revered. The images of the public tapping ceremonies they staged for the student body as their audience are striking. The seriousness with which they regarded their responsibility as passed down from previous generations of men who led the major campus organizations is evident in the solemn composure and expression of the Red Friars captured in photographs that appeared in the yearbook and campus newspaper. The notion that the Friars were constructing their own sense of what the ideal past of the group should be was becoming apparent.



Figure 19. Red Friars' tapping ceremony, Duke Chapel steps, old members wearing carnations, May 5, 1952, Duke University News Service.

These early Septemvirates set out to work through their various “fronts” to influence campus opinion and policy. They decided to work through student government to improve the management of the intramurals program, to work through the pep band to “harness the collegiate energy into more constructive channels” due to a recent party raid, and to “bring pressure” through the IFC and the *Chronicle* to agitate for changes in fraternity rush rules (“Meeting Minutes”, December 12, 1951, May 18, 1952, November 20, 1952; ORF Records, Box 2). They initiated a new, highly successful “Joe College” weekend, a theme party

weekend based on a popular stereotype of the college student of the Roaring 20s, but otherwise, they discussed such matters as determining candidates for the ODK honor society and “Who’s Who Among College Students in American Colleges and Universities” to recommend to the dean (“Meeting Minutes”, October 5, 1952).

At the same time as the Friars attempted to carry on business as usual, their function and role in campus life began to take on a sort of paradoxical existence. The group continued to become more concerned about managing their image as one of prestige with its power rooted in secrecy. By 1951, they installed their 600-year-old bell atop Kilgo Tower on campus. They nicknamed the bell “Charley” as a tribute to the name of the nunnery from which a Friar alumnus studying at Oxford more than 20 years prior had acquired the bell in the English countryside (“The Ancient and Contemporary History of ‘Charley’: The Red Friars Bell”, ORF Records, Box 1).

Each year moving forward, they assigned two Friars to live in the fifth floor room in Kilgo Tower to be responsible for guarding their “chapter room” and ringing the bell on special occasions of Friar activity. They intended for Charley’s “mellow and medieval tones to herald Red Friar meetings and add mysterious stature to the Order on the Duke University Campus.” The group determined they would ring the bell seven times at 7:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. on the day designated in the spring for the tapping of new members, and they would wear a red carnation in the buttonhole of their lapel on the day of the tapping. If anyone asked why they were wearing the carnation, they were not to answer (“The Ancient and Contemporary History of ‘Charley’: The Red Friars Bell”, ORF Records, Box 1).

The Septemvirate of 1954. The Chronicle's front-page coverage of the tapping ceremony for the Septemvirate of 1954 provides fascinating insight into the status of the Order of Red Friars in the university community at the time the group commanded respect and unquestioned esteemed status on campus. The headlines announced "Honoraries Tap Fourteen", and columns about both the White Duchy and the Red Friars' public tapping rituals appeared on either side of a photograph with the following caption: "TOP TAPPING – A red-hooded member of the secret order of Red Friars taps incoming initiates in front of the Chapel last Wednesday morning. In the solemn ceremony seven outstanding men in the junior class were tapped for membership in the exclusive hush-hush honorary" (See *Figure 20*: "TOP TAPPING", *The Chronicle*, Duke University, Friday, May 8, 1953).



Figure 20. "TOP TAPPING", Red Friars tapping ceremony, *The Chronicle*, Duke University, May 8, 1953.

The provocative language and awe-inspiring narrative of the accompanying article are no surprise, as one of the new Friars was the *Chronicle's* new editor:

A six-foot red-robed figure standing before the Chapel steps ended his vigil when seven campus leaders were chosen for the senior honorary of Red Friars Wednesday morning. Tapped on the shoulder to signify selection into the society, the neophytes thus began a year-long stint as a member of an honorary whose activities are completely secret. As the short ceremony began, the Chapel carillon intoned a solemn

accompaniment. One of last year's members stood behind each of the boys, students from the rising senior class, who were chosen for their outstanding leadership (*The Chronicle*, Duke University, May 8, 1953).

Among the seven men selected, they represented leadership of some of the most prominent organizations on campus, along with membership in athletic teams and staffing of the student publications. In addition to the editorship of the *Chronicle*, their Septemvirate included the president of the Men's Student Government Association, president of the IFC, president of the YMCA, fraternity presidents and vice presidents, members of the Glee Club, business manager of the yearbook, chairman of Greek Week, and various other memberships in academic honor societies and class officer positions.

The Septemvirate of 1954 would complete their year and leave a testimony written the night before their graduation entitled, "What does it mean to be a Red Friar?":

How do you express an experience that must be lived to be understood?

It means close and warm companionship, surely. It means an unequalled chance to serve the University, certainly. Perhaps, most importantly, it means a deeper comprehension of true humility. The tradition of the Friars, its great purpose of service without public glory or acclaim, leaves one with a better knowledge of the opportunities which God, in His infinite wisdom, has given man to help his fellow man for unselfish reasons ("Late at night", June 6, 1954; ORF Records, Box 2).

The list of plans for each Friar upon graduation revealed that three of the seven would attend law school, while one went on to Yale Divinity School, two into the Air Force, and one into the Navy. Although the Korean War was over, the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union was underway, stirring up nationalistic sentiment about the evils of Communism and the virtues of American democracy.

Special access to the president. With the passing of President Few in 1940 and the transition of President Flowers, his successor, into a symbolic chancellor's role in 1949, the newly inaugurated president, Dr. A. Hollis Edens, soon came under consideration by the Friars for honorary membership. Abiding by the customary standard to insure the new president had exhibited past, present, and potential for future service to the university, the group waited four years and did not invite President Edens for membership until 1953. At a banquet honoring the president's tapping, the Friars reported that, "He seemed extremely impressed in the initiation's serious purpose and symbolism" ("Meeting Minutes", November 4, 1953).

The move to induct President Edens into the Order had been a fortunate one in that he proceeded to meet regularly with the Friars and to consult with them about important matters to the university. Prior to President Edens' arrival at Duke, tuition had been kept low for a number of years, and faculty salaries had suffered. President Flowers had been sympathetic with defenders of the racial status quo, although editorials had begun to appear in the *Chronicle* challenging the university's stance on segregation (Durden, 1993). Once Edens became a member of the Order, he immediately engaged the Friars in conversations about

raising tuition, the prospect of charging an activities fee to help fund student publications and the student union, and problems arising from drinking on campus (“Meeting Minutes”, January 7, 1954, March 14, 1954; ORF Records, Box 2).

Most notably, however, in March of 1954 – a full two months prior to the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* decision that has come to be accepted as the reference point for the start of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States - President Edens consulted with the Friars regarding “their opinion on the advisability of admitting Negroes to Duke”; he discussed with them how he foresaw the integration of the Divinity School and Graduate School as “possibly inevitable.” The Friars reported that “no one present expressed any opposition to the admission of Negroes, as such, but rather they were trying to consider the matter from the standpoint of what the university policy should be, admitting caution as proceeding with regard to national and Southern opinion”; the Friars advised President Edens that they believed “admitting Negroes would not cause much uproar amongst undergraduate students and their families, although there would certainly be some discontent” (“Meeting Minutes”, March 14, 1954, ORF Records; Box 2).

President Edens would again raise the issue of integration when he met with the Friars a year and a half later. According to the meeting minutes, they discussed “what policy Duke should follow regarding the university’s position on segregation.” No further information about their conversation was recorded, but this meeting also included an intriguing discussion about why then Vice President Richard Nixon, a Duke Law School alumnus, had been refused an honorary degree by faculty vote” (“Meeting Minutes”,

November 1955, ORF Records, Box 2). Undoubtedly, the Friars and the president had met within the previous year given their earlier pattern of regular discussions, but the meeting minutes for the entire 1954-1955 academic year are mysteriously absent from the Order's archival records. The "crisis" that occurred when the group attempted to tap new members in the spring of 1955 was the likely culprit.

The end of acquiescence. The editorial that appeared in the *Chronicle* in May of 1955 anticipating the annual tapping ceremony of the Red Friars and the White Duchy (in a separate ceremony on the women's East Campus) took a markedly different tone from all previous student media coverage of the Orders' activities. The seemingly innocuous title, "Painting of the Purple" was deceptive, for it revealed a judiciously written and sardonic, measured parody of the annual public tapping ceremonies that the Friars and Duchy had conducted unimpaired by social critique since the first performance by the Friars in 1923.

Beneath the seemingly placid surface of 1950s American society and campus life, differences in opinion about the accepted social order were fermenting. Student awe and reverence for the insular world of hierarchical status sustained by the "Big Man on Campus" phenomenon and college men and women in pursuit of "prestige leadership" positions within the student body were waning. Developments in the Civil Rights Movement and the nation's involvement in the Cold War and Space Race increasingly competed for students' attention and turned their focus outward to the dynamic social world beyond the idyllic university setting.

Paul Tuerff, the new editor of *The Duke Chronicle* student newspaper was not a Red Friar, and the “Painting of the Purple” offered little camouflage that the intended targets of the literary sting were the self-appointed elite of the “exclusive hush-hush” honoraries. The editorial was printed on May 7, 1955, just days before the customary tapping of the Red Friars’ new Septemvirate was to be held in front of Duke Chapel, the literal and symbolic center of the university community:

Carnaville is a little town in the midst of a deep black forest. Every spring there is a traditional ceremony which is highly respected among the children of the village. Report has it that the ceremony, called the Painting of the Purple, takes place the day after the first spider of the year is seen crawling up the steps of the village square. All of the children gather round the square in anticipation of the dramatic demonstration. From the depths of Carnaville a rumbling bong shivers through the innocent spectators.

And then a purple-clad figure rises from a hole in the center of the square and stares at the awestruck faces of the children. With measured tread the figure begins to circle around the square. It stops in front of a pretty little girl and whips out a brush and can of purple paint. The babbling little girl becomes mute and still; by the time she is painted from curl to toenail she has become as steady and as firm as the tall pines around her. This procedure continues until there are six painted children who face the

hole in the center of the square. Six people are painted because there are six letters in the word purple. The freshly painted boys are called Purple Princes, and the girls Purple Princesses.

Looking over the purple people, we notice at once that all of them have important positions to play in the games of the children. The tall lad on the far side of the square, for example, is always the assistant jailor when they play capture the flag. And the stout fellow over there - the one with the long fox-like nose is known for his uncanny ability to seek out the best hider in that ever popular game. The pudgy girl to the left of the haw haw tree took second place in the recent hopscotch tournament. At the sound of a second rumbling bong the imposing figure dressed in purple returns to the hole in the center of the square and calls the painted children after him. They disappear into the depths of Carnaville, and when they reappear they are normal children again, but perhaps the drying of the purple paint has drawn out some of their youthful exuberance.

Tuerff's masterful use of allegory is a perfect example of Gramsci's conceptualization of the employment of political journalism by members of the subaltern strata as a non-violent means for bringing about change in the accepted social order. Tuerff's editorial publicly denounced the social system that students at Duke had sustained for many years in which a select group of senior men and women were deemed superior to their peers by virtue of their embodiment of a collegiate ideal.

According to Gramsci's theory of cultural hegemony, the norms of the dominant group will prevail only as long as those of inferior status accept them and mount no resistance. Tuerff's editorial action was a catalyst that signaled the end of acquiescence by students at Duke to a social system that fostered conformity in pursuit of "Big Man on Campus" status, although the tenacity of the "BMOC" values and ideals would insure subsequent years of battle between the Red Friars and student media for control of student opinion and power on campus.

As a result of printing "Painting of the Purple", the Friars were unable to tap their usual seven members of the rising senior class – a predicament that became known amongst the Friars and their alumni as "the crisis of 1955" ("Regrets for banquet", April 30, 1958; ORF Records, Box 1). The headlines in the *Chronicle* on May 11, 1955, read, "Red Friars Tap Five For Senior Honorary." The brief article about the event, noticeably devoid of editorial embellishment, reported that a large crowd had gathered in front of Duke Chapel "as the carillon began to ring and a hooded figure in red moved slowly toward the five candidates and struck each man on the shoulder." The article with no "by-line" (the customary attribution to the reporter writing the story) simply indicated that the tapping of five men instead of the traditional seven broke a "long-standing precedent."

A letter to the editor printed the same day in the *Chronicle* commended as courageous the three men who had rejected the invitation to be tapped into the Order that year and celebrated campus recognition that the Red Friars' tradition of tapping new members was an elitist and outmoded practice in the university's educational setting. The letter stated,

Time alone has a marvelous and satisfying way of curing evils, enlightening the oblivious and (healing) this educational body...of an ancient malady. I have watched for four years the working of the notable honorary society we all know as the Red Friars. During these four years, the watchful and critical eye of the various student bodies has detected obvious and ridiculous omissions and inclusions (regarding who was selected for the supreme reward of status).

But hiding behind the questionable fact that the qualifications for membership are unknown, this flower-ridden organization has avoided due and needed judgments.

I salute the individualism, intelligence and valor of these three prominent campus leaders who)...pointed the way to the expected results of this elongated fallacy... ignored the wants and desires of Red Friars membership...and seemed to assist this wonderful and healing time element. May the next four years witness further developments along this line (“Tradition Trembles”, letter to the editor,

The Duke Chronicle, name withheld, May 11, 1955)

The following fall semester, in meetings with President Edens, the five members of the 1956 Septemvirate expressed their concerns about the antagonistic tactics adopted by the *Chronicle* to deride the Red Friars. They discussed how unfair it was for the *Chronicle* staff to use their power to sway student opinion and noted their observed hostility towards the Friars. The following year, President Edens remarked during a dinner meeting with the Friars how it seemed the *Chronicle* had adopted a “deliberate policy that there was nothing good about the administration.” This conscientious divide that pitted the *Chronicle* staff as

adversaries of the administration and the reigning student group in the campus social hierarchy is reflective of Horowitz' (1987) theory that beginning in the twentieth century, campus "rebels" emerged in American higher education as a type of student who often worked for the student newspaper and who opposed the insularity and organized aspects of campus life and competed for possession of power on campus.

The editor-in-chief position of the *Chronicle*, after all, had been one of the original campus power positions that was regularly filled by a member of the Red Friars during their formative years. When the Friars reorganized in 1949, they were faced with the challenge of regaining editorial succession of the *Chronicle* ("Meeting Minutes", November 13, 1951; ORF Records, Box 2). The size of the student publications' staffs had grown tremendously and diversified extensively in terms of inclusion of women during the war years when the Friars were inactive. After the war, the editor's position would be held by a Friar only seven times over the 22-year-span before they disbanded in 1971.

Another threat to the Friars' unquestioned position at the pinnacle of Duke's social hierarchy was the competition they experienced as a result of the ascendancy of a new men's secret society called the "Old Trinity Club". In April of 1957, the Friars met with Bill Griffith, director of student activities and Friar alumnus from 1950 who later would become dean of students, to discuss the problem of "the hostile and competitive spirit emerging on the part of the relatively new Old Trinity Club". Rumor had it that the OTC was planning to circumvent the Friars' tapping process by taking 10 members before the Order's annual ceremony would be held in May. Several Friars had heard that the OTC was "rushing" some

of the same men who were high on the Red Friars' list for membership, however, it was determined by the Order that they would proceed as planned, confident that their legacy would sustain them. They successfully tapped a full Septemvirate in May of that year ("Meeting Minutes", April 27, 1957).

However, from 1957 to 1962, the University News Service photographed a parody of the Red Friars' tapping ceremony performed every spring on the steps of Duke Chapel. Unknown students performed a mock ceremony for a fictional secret society called, "the Order of the Chair" (See *Figure 21*: "Order of the Chair" mock tapping ceremony, June 1957, Duke University News Service). The ceremony drew large crowds and featured an elaborate dramatic tapping ceremony conducted by hooded characters in outrageous garb, a profound example of the Gramscian notion of nonviolent counterhegemonic resistance through public performance.

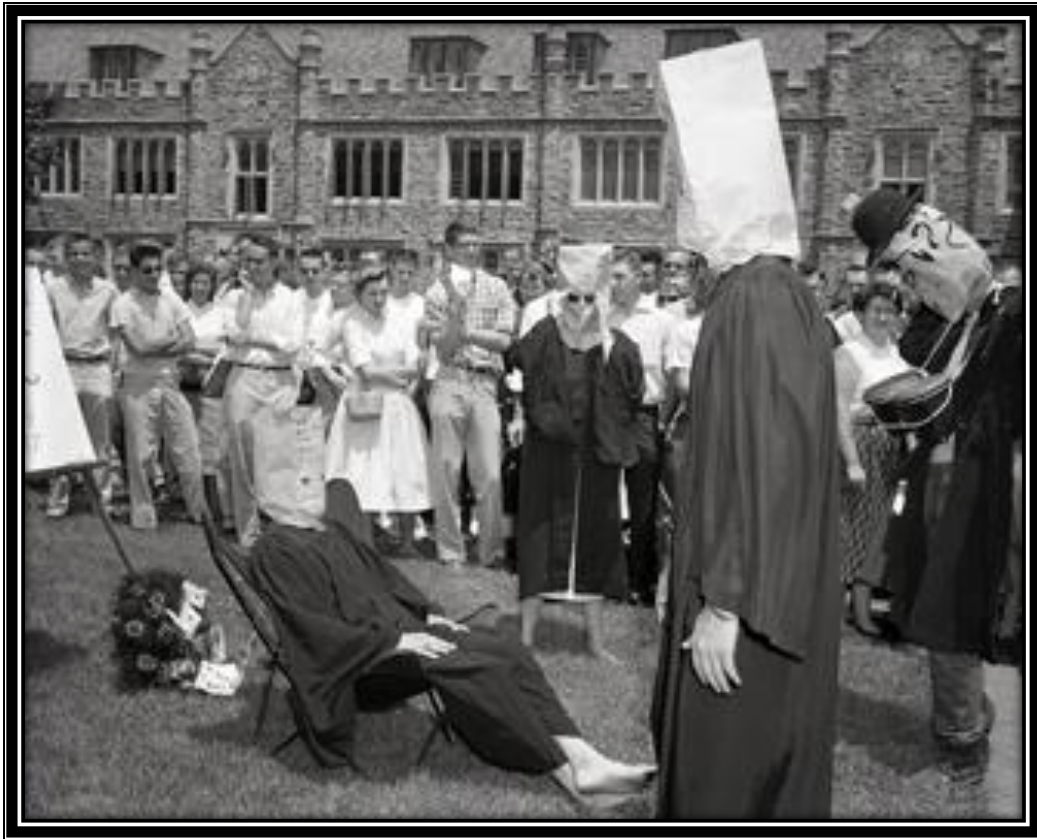


Figure 21. “Order of the Chair”, mock tapping ceremony, Duke University News Service, June 1957.

Alumni fight back. The Quintumvirate of 1956, as the five members of the Red Friars were occasionally called, made an ardent plea for support from their alumni in their letter of invitation to the annual initiation banquet. The “crisis of 1955” that resulted in their unusual small number served to reinforce the group’s mission to preserve the dignity and tradition associated with the Order. The letter read, “The Order of Red Friars is the great student tradition at our University. We exist because of present and future needs.” The letter proceeded to ask the alumni for their presence at the banquet to offer the new Septemvirate

encouragement “in the responsibilities they have accepted” (“Initiation Banquet Invitation”, March 24, 1956; ORF Records, Box 1).

The alumni responded with an outpouring of support and coaching in their letters that acknowledged they were aware of the opposition to the Friarhood enacted in recent years. Men from around the world sent in words of encouragement and offered testimonies regarding the meaning and purpose of the Order. The head of the department of psychology at Pennsylvania State University responded that leadership development was a principal function of the Friars: “wise, ethically based leaders” who were “indispensable for the successful survival of a democratic society.” An attorney replied that, “These men have been afforded a unique opportunity to effectuate the highest ideals of mankind. Herein lies the opportunity for growth of character in the service of something greater than oneself.” A Methodist minister reflected on the value of lasting friendships and “the constructive good that the organization does for Duke.” An Army lieutenant expressed gratitude for the social networks he had developed and the “true meaning and purpose of this unique group that offers service to Duke University, the community, and society.” A company president responded that membership in the Red Friars was “the highest honor that can be paid to a man at Duke University” (“Letters from Alumni”, April 9, 1956; April 12, 1956; April 25, 1956; April 27, 1956; ORF Records, Box 1).

Letters expressing similar sentiments from alumni were sent annually in response to the initiation banquet invitation, defying a growing dissonance between the memories of the functions and status the Order once maintained and the contemporary reality of the Order’s

presence in a dynamic world of changing values. A football player who was a Friar in the 1930s and later became a doctor wrote to clarify the purpose of the Order when they had expressed uncertainty about their responsibilities and duties in 1959: “Your main responsibility to Duke University is to be LEADERS throughout your senior year and to set examples for the remainder of the student body so that the University, its alumni and friends, can always be proud of its heritage.” Another Friar from the Septemvirate of 1950 wrote to emphasize “the special place (the Friars) enjoy in the history of student activities at Duke University and their increasing responsibility of working forever to maintain an institution of excellence” (“Letters from Alumni”, April 1959; May 1, 1959; ORF Records, Box 1).

The correspondence between the alumni Friars and the undergraduate members of the Septemvirates from the 1920s through the 1950s illustrated the type of exclusive male fraternal relationship that scholars have associated with the patterns of masculine socialization that emerged from the old-money New England prep school environment of the late-nineteenth century (Dean, 2001). The Friars’ alumni represented men who realized great success in public life, and they treasured their experience in the Order as a meaningful validation of their manhood while in college. These accomplished older men, including campus administrators and faculty who were either alumni or honorary members of the Order, perpetuated the inculcation of the younger men into an exclusive “brotherhood of privilege” - the type of all-male association like many others around the country during this period that sought to preserve the “rule of the best” – in this case, the leading men of the undergraduate community (Dean, 2001).

Memories of a Red Friar from the 1950s Who Would Become a Dean

A number of men who were tapped for membership in the Red Friars as students between the 1910s and 1960s later returned to Duke as faculty and administrators. In addition to the university presidents and deans who were inducted as honorary members of the Order, some former student Friars eventually became deans and members of the senior administration. They worked in various areas around campus including student affairs and the Chapel. This interview was conducted with a man who was a member of the Septemvirate of 1950, the first full year of the Friarhood after it was reactivated following World War II. He became an administrator at Duke in the 1950s and later became a dean before serving as a vice provost in the 1970s. He helped the Friars with the behind-the-scenes logistics for their annual new member rituals because he had keys to the Chapel.

This Friar has a unique perspective in that he experienced and observed the transformation of the Order from its reorganization in 1949 as a prestigious men's honorary society through its eventual demise in 1971 when students literally rejected invitations to membership. His wife joined us for the interview and added interesting commentary from her perspective as a woman who was in the nursing school at Duke in the early 1950s. She remembered the campus setting for many years thereafter since her husband continued to work there and was able to add her insight about the changes that occurred in student attitudes between the 1950s and 1970s.

For this interview, I was particularly interested in understanding the change in student sentiment that occurred in the mid-1950s as evidenced by public performances of the "Order

of the Chair” ritual that mocked the Red Friar tapping ceremonies in front of Duke Chapel. I was able to introduce yearbook and Chronicle photographs of the ODK and Red Friar tapping ceremonies to check the trustworthiness of assumptions that members of the campus community were offended by students wearing “KKK-looking” light-colored robes with tall, pointed hoods. Both the Friar and his wife were profoundly struck when viewing these images in a contemporary setting and confirmed that at the time of the ceremonies in the 1950s, the style of the robes were not the source of campus disapproval of the Red Friars, perhaps because the robes were in different colors and weren’t all white, but rather it was the notion of elitism associated with membership in a small, select, secret society.

Like the Red Friar interviewed from the World War II era, this Friar who was active in 1950 explained that his group didn’t have any contact with the White Duchy on East Campus. He said that they knew about them, but the interaction with that group would come later, after his time as a student. He further confirmed that the main reason the White Duchy, ODK, and the Red Friars became inactive was ultimately because students in the groups were opposed to their exclusivity and elitist image on campus.

On how he came to Duke - RF: “I was in the Second World War. I was a radio gunner. At the end of the war, I was on an aircraft carrier, and they decided they wanted me to spend more time and get a commission. They wanted to send me to Duke, and I said, ‘Well, where’s Duke?’ So, I basically said I’ll go on and take that, so I’ve been here for the rest of my life. I had been working in Admissions for about two years, and they got me back here to organize a student union. At that time or just before that time, they made available the old

Flowers Building area, and that was the building we developed into a student activities operation.”

On what he knew about the origins of the Red Friars – RF: “Certainly, as a student I didn’t know much about them. I think they started around 1913, but during the war (World War II) they disbanded, so I didn’t know anything about it until they tapped me with six other people (when they reorganized in the spring of 1949), and the students who did the tapping, about two months before, they’d been tapped themselves – that was the reorganization, and they didn’t know a whole lot about what they were doing either. The only reason for the seven people before us was to select the seven people to spend the whole year with the organization.”

On the Friars’ bell and Kilgo Tower – RF: “There was a faculty member named Furman McLarty (from the Septemvirate of 1927) who in the war was stationed in London, and who was a Greek professor – great guy – but basically he’d been a Red Friar, and he bought a bell. It was stored. He had it shipped here, but we got the bell operative, and we used it at the time that we had a meeting...At any rate, our successors arranged to get it up on the Tower there, in Kilgo – I think there’s only one triple bedroom up there. You went in the closet...there was the ladder that you went up into, and we had it installed, and that was used – usually rung seven times – each time they had a meeting. I think it’s still there...(the current dean of students at Duke confirmed that the bell is still in Kilgo Tower). It was sort of an apartment. It was a nice place. Two members had to live there each year so they could ring the bell.”

On how student culture changed in the 1950s and 1960s and the Friars fell out of

fashion – RF: “I think it was the whole concept of elitism. The Friars, basically, they wanted to do things that made Duke University a better place. That meant that they would do this with seven people, just as the White Duchy was the women’s group. They would be very much active in the newspaper and organizations like that, so they basically sort of controlled things that were happening. That eventually was a liability for them because the organizations, like student government, became stronger. It was a very insufferable kind of commitment. They were still in the Red Friars, but logically it just became a situation in which the organizations themselves (the ones they were running, were presidents of) could control everything they were charged with doing.”

Order of the Chair ceremonies – RF: “I can remember them. The thing was done in a sort of satirical kind of way. It was very funny. My office was right there on the corner, so I could see it. It was very satirical.” **(His wife:** “That was that whole elitism thing. They had a chair out there. I remember it. They did it for several years. They would have them all lined up – ‘the tappies’ - and they would draw big crowds.”)

On ODK in the 1960s and why they became inactive - RF: “I was advisor to ODK. We (Duke) went out of ODK for two primary reasons: One, because they didn’t accept women. The second thing, they required that you be in the top third of your class. It was an unfair criterion. We had some people who were not in the top third of their class, and they went to Harvard and law school. There were good students who were below the top third, and so when I was their advisor, I concurred that they should shut down.”

On the main student issues at Duke during his time there - RF: “The situations were different, because in 1949, one of the big issues was that we had the bus that ran between the campuses, and we paid 5 cents, and the buses were run by Duke Power Company, and the buses, they changed it from 5 cents to 10 cents – that was a big issue. The other big issue was the killing of Martin Luther King in 1968 that raised questions about issues that people were concerned about...that became a big thing...about salaries for the maids and janitors (who were all black)...When I first came to Duke we had the rooms cleaned and the bed was remade.” (“It was like that on the women’s campus, too” – **added his wife**).

On integration at Duke – RF: “It was a big deal. Students had been pushing for it.” (**His wife** – “The students who were against it didn’t talk. There were conservative students.”)

RF: “About ‘the Vigil’, I was interested that the black students didn’t identify with it. Their (the white students who were protesting about the maids and janitors being underpaid) main concern was salaries for black people. And my black friends said it makes sense for white people to take care of that situation.”

On the Old Trinity Club – RF: “The students told me they were the ones who didn’t get into the Red Friars. I don’t think there were ever any people who were Red Friars at the same time they were in the Old Trinity Club...I don’t remember them when I was a student. It was later, it’s my perception, that it became sort of a competitive situation.”

On the “Big Man on Campus” moniker associated with the Red Friars – His wife to the

RF: “It was still there in the early 50s because (my girlfriend) described you as being one of them, when she was promoting you to me!”

The Irony of Defeat

The final years of the Red Friars' activity were marked by the socially progressive youth culture that overwhelmed American colleges and universities in the 1960s and rejected the model of dominant male whiteness that groups like the Order of Red Friars had come to represent. The term "WASP" – the acronym for White, Anglo-Saxon Protestant – was popularized in the late 1950s as a sort of derogatory shorthand for the "ruling class" in America (Hacker, 1957). It was understood at the time that the term "ruling class" applied only to men, for they were the ones running the nation's institutions (Dean, 2001). The counterculture that emerged on college campuses included young men and women who recognized their own privileged status as "WASPs", but nonetheless, in directing their antagonism towards institutional leaders, they created a new generational divide.

Much irony can be observed in the situation that confronted the Red Friars as the status of their organization began to decline within the campus community. Many of the Red Friars themselves, and their counterparts in the White Duchy, were part of the progressive youth culture, and because they were leaders on campus, they both consciously and unwittingly contributed to their own undoing. The social unrest caused by the Civil Rights Movement, the Cold War, and the Vietnam draft commanded students' attention during the 1960s. Even campus leaders lost interest in the status that had been afforded the "Big Men on Campus" and their female counterparts for more than half a century.

Casting off the mantle of the "B.M.O.C.". In 1958, President Edens was a member of an American Council of Education (ACE) committee that prepared a report on the role of

leadership and character development in American colleges (“Student of Character Development in Education”, May 20, 1958, A. Hollis Edens Records, Duke University, Box 2). Citing “the Soviet challenge in space” and the need for the United States to conduct a self-analysis of its educational system, the committee endeavored to examine the role of extracurricular life in preparing the nation’s future leaders, consulting the early work of such college student development theorists as Nevitt Sanford. The report offered that,

Most college graduates would agree that their education took place as much outside of the classroom as within its narrow walls, as much a result of all that surrounds them as the formal lecture or seminar. Some refer to this larger, encompassing classroom as “the climate of the campus”. We call it the environment. But no matter what term is used, it is a factor of paramount significance in the development of character. The attitudes, the surroundings, the extracurricular activities, the manners and morals of campus all can either stimulate or stultify the purely academic endeavor (p.22).

The issue of “prestige leadership” was acknowledged by the committee as a prevalent phenomenon on many campuses where the heads of major student organizations had assumed significant power. They offered examples of universities that had attempted to “transform prestige leadership into service” by creating annual retreats for student leaders to come together with key faculty and administrators, and they urged institutional leaders to constantly re-evaluate the value of their activities and traditions: “The system, the custom, or the traditions should not be the controlling factor in whether or not particular events or

organizations continue to operate. There is as much deadwood in extra-class life as there often is in curricular offerings. Devices should be sought to undertake pruning in both areas” (p. 24).

At Duke, in 1959, the Red Friars conducted an extensive evaluation of extracurricular life and boldly recommended what “pruning” needed to be done. They left a copy of their full report, typed on crinkly pages of translucent onion-skin paper, in their organizational records, along with remnants of mimeographed copies. Although there is no documentation that the ACE study was an impetus for this task, it seems likely that President Edens had consulted with the Friars during his time serving on the committee and sought their input on the environmental conditions at Duke. The Friars produced a massive 15-page, single-spaced report that scrutinized in great detail the anti-intellectual environment they believed prevailed on West Campus.

The Friars ultimately concluded that reform of the housing system was needed, and that the fraternity system at Duke should be abolished (“House System Report”, 1959, ORF Records, Box 1). Although the Friars’ recommendations were never adopted by the university, the fact that the men making the recommendations were from seven different fraternities and held the most prominent positions on campus marked their rejection of the “Big Man on Campus” ideals of which they had realized great benefit. The seniors who prepared the report included the IFC president, the Judicial Board chair, the Men’s Student Government Association president, the YMCA president, the *Chronicle* editor, and a varsity

football player. The seriousness with which they undertook this task is evident in their narrative that provided a rationale for their recommendations.

The Friars' report offered that "the housing conditions of undergraduate men" created the "one problem with the most negative influence in our community." They explained that unnecessarily segregating undergraduate men in dormitories according to their status as freshmen, upper class fraternity men, or independents (upper class men with no fraternity affiliation) perpetuated immature activity and group psychology that undermined an "atmosphere conducive to a wholesome academic pursuit." They cited freshmen behavior, such as shaving cream and foot powder fights, excessive drinking, water-throwing, and panty raids as "hardly academic" and attributed it to their lack of a sense of belonging to the community. They described the independent students as "barbarians" who "simply feel no personal responsibility for the maintenance of the dorms", and they warned that fraternity men often joined fraternities "to escape the prospect of living in independent halls, too much like their own, and continued to endanger their academic standing through excessive drinking and pledging activities." Their detachment from their own social position as fraternity leaders and BMOCs perhaps betrayed the extent to which they had assumed the "rule of the best" mentality in judging their own social system, but their calculated rejection of all that it represented was profound.

The Friars included in their report a manifesto deriding the fraternity system for what it did to wrongly instill anti-intellectual values in vulnerable young men entering Duke. They described fraternity rush as "a confusing war" where "a freshmen learns during their

fall semester it is *very important* to join a fraternity...because he is snatched so early in his college career, he is usually unable to determine what is really valuable in college – his embryonic values and ideas were ‘eclipsed’ by rushing, now influenced by the strong values of the fraternity, of the corporate personality.” They profiled these detrimental fraternity values in terms of excessive competition for men who would add prestige to the group through athletic abilities in intramurals, appearance and reputation on East Campus (the women’s campus), and manifestation of a “social life overemphasis” accompanied by the underemphasis on academic, intellectual, and cultural pursuits.

The Friars had recognized the phenomenon that Horowitz (1987) would later describe as fraternities creating a campus social system with a pecking order of prestige based on the corporate reputation of each fraternity and the transferable prestige it offered individual members. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, the fraternity pages in the *Chanticleer* featured photos of each individual member, along with a group photo and a detailed compilation of each member’s campus activities and honors. The descriptive narrative usually laid claim to “our SGA president”, “our football captain”, and the like. Delta Tau Delta’s page in the 1941 *Chanticleer* mentioned the names of several new members who were “apprenticing under our B.M.O.C.’s” (p. 226). It was in this social context, that the Friars called for a house system similar to that at Harvard and Yale to replace the “fraternity’s function” with live-in faculty and men from all four classes living in one social unit: “Until we give Duke students reasonable living conditions and an academic atmosphere, we cannot hope to

produce undergraduate education at the level of Harvard or Yale, whom we seem to try to emulate.”

“Doubt of everything” and a new paradigm. A deeper reading of the documentation left behind by the Septemvirate of 1959 that recommended the fraternity system at Duke be abolished gives insight into the unsettling spirit of their times that impacted their thoughts and actions. This group prepared remarks for the new Septemvirate that would replace them and outlined social developments they thought would best inform them to carry on their efforts to place academics at the center of the Duke experience. They articulated how concerns with issues of the day, such as the struggle between capitalism and communism, “make us realize ideology and society are under fire and under inspection”. They explained how “disruptive forces” required “doubt of everything until proved”, and they cited cynicism, nihilism, and existentialism as relevant for consideration of societal and educational reform during unsettling times. They elaborated that social form “is not static, but dynamic” – a testimony of their openness to new ideas that launched the Red Friars into the social unrest of the 1960s (“Notes for the New Septemvirate”, Spring 1959, ORF Records, Box 1).

The Septemvirate of 1960 included members who embraced the charge to work through the Friarhood to address larger social issues, particularly racial injustice they observed both on campus and in the local community. This group continued conversations with Friar (President) Edens about the issue of segregation at Duke and recorded that “the integration issues is *the* pressing problem of the University”. Several Friars proposed the

group send letters of support for black students from North Carolina College (later known as North Carolina Central University) who were participating in “the sit-down” situation in downtown Durham. February of 1960 was when the four black students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University started what became known as the “sit-in” movement, protesting segregated dining at their local Woolworth lunch counter (“Meeting Minutes”, October 18, 1959; late October, 1959; February 11, 1960; ORF Records, Box 1).

One of the Friars took it upon himself to research the wages paid to the university’s black maids, janitors, and “hired help”; he interviewed many of them, and reported back to the Septemvirate about the unfair and low wages they had received prior to the enactment of a minimum wage law in the state (“Meeting Minutes”, January 10, 1960; ORF Records, Box 1). This Friar’s actions presaged his role as a young professor at Duke who was a central actor in the “Vigil” of 1968 when Duke students occupied the lawn in front of Duke Chapel in reaction to the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to call attention to the unfair treatment of black workers at the university. His interest in fighting racial discrimination exemplified the broadening perspective of many Duke students in the 1960s who began to work on behalf of larger social issues and who in turn lost interest in the insular status associated with membership in a prestigious honorary society.

Act II: “CLASSIFIED”

It had been seven years since the *Chronicle* published, “Painting of the Purple”, the journalistic exposé of the Friar’s public tapping ceremonies, when the Septemvirate of 1962 rewrote their own parody of the script for the ritual. The language they employed and the

sarcastic, yet playful tone of the document revealed a group taking itself much less seriously than their predecessors and managing a tradition out of obligation, rather than self-importance. A second round of mockery of the dramatic ritual of the honorary societies was underway in the early 1960s, but this time, the Red Friars themselves were the writers of their own theatrical production.

The Septemvirate of 1962 coopted the script for the public tapping ceremony that had been used by the secret Order for nearly 40 years. They reworded it for their own comic benefit as a self-deprecating testimony to their uncertainty about the relevance of their organization in an age of social unrest. Retitled, "CLASSIFIED", the rewritten script poked fun at the intent of the ceremony to inspire awe in the audience for the Order's proceedings and reframed the production in the language of a tactical mission; The first line read, "STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE: TO FIND SEVEN JUNIOR MEN WITH TWO-WORD VOCABULARIES, 'WHAT FLOWER?'" , a nod to the group's time-honored tradition of not acknowledging the question when asked why they were wearing a red carnation in their lapel on the day of Red Friar ceremonies ("CLASSIFIED**", 1962, ORF Records, Box 1).

The Friars' instructions for the ceremony included the acknowledgment that the word "Septemvirate" itself was "pretty nauseous" and that permission must be obtained to use rooms in the lower and upper Chapel for a "mystic and highly symbolic meeting" and a "highly symbolic and mystic ceremony", respectively. Other instructions included the need to give some kind of signal to one of the deans who would symbolically ring the Chapel bell some predetermined number of times, "such as 1962+7", at the appointed moment during the

tapping ceremony. It was offered that one of the Friars perhaps could give the dean “a casual Bronx cheer” or another could “execute a cool handstand.” Other playful references in the script called the new initiates “fledgling Friars” and reminded the group to get “the most worshipful blindfolds (in KKK terms, HOODS) cleaned” before the ceremony.

Other developments in the early 1960s that suggested student leaders were becoming more socially-aware and bothered by their elite status on campus included a movement on the part of ODK members (which included the Friars) to register their opposition towards the perpetuation of ODK as an exclusive student organization. At a meeting at the home of Bill Griffith, the dean of students, the main item of discussion was the problem of the concentration of campus leadership in just a few positions (“Minutes of ODK Meeting”, September 28, 1961; ODK Records; Box 2). Dean Robert Cox who advised ODK in the 1950s had several years prior responded to an inquiry from Tulane University about what activities the Rho Circle sponsored on Duke’s campus stating, “Our ODK circle does nothing in its own name but works through the YMCA and IFC to sponsor seminars”, an interesting example of the type of “prestige leadership” that was a concern of the ACE study (“Letter from Dean Cox”, October 6, 1953; ODK Records, Box 2). As the 1960s progressed, ODK’s Rho Circle on Duke’s campus became inactive, and Dean Griffith finally informed the national office in 1970 that they were unable to tap new members, citing the Cambodian and Kent State crises from the previous spring as the final determinant (“Letter to ODK National Officer”, October 6, 1970; ODK Records, Box 2).

The Order of Red Friars would follow the pattern of ODK with a dramatic decline of activity as students became increasingly disinterested in the status afforded members of the campus leadership honorary societies. According to a member of the Order from the mid-1960s, when he was tapped for membership, he wasn't even sure of what the Red Friars did (1960s Red Friar member, personal communication, February 16, 2013). He explained that the Red Friars and White Duchy members were involved in campus leadership positions because they were socially progressive and interested in activism efforts both on and off campus, so the Friars rarely met. The only item of business he remembered that they managed was the selection and tapping of the new members to replace their Septemvirate at the end of their senior year. Yet the curious induction ceremonies would continue in front of Duke Chapel each May for a few more years, provoking heightened scrutiny and skepticism about the perceived elitism of the secret societies.

One foot in the past. When the Order of Red Friars announced it would disband following its inability to tap new members in May of 1971, Dean Griffith was asked by the *Chronicle* to explain what the purpose of the Order had been. He stated that it was difficult to define the function of the Friars since “the members of each year’s group redefine it themselves” (“Red Friar alumni plan Monday meeting”, *The Chronicle*, September 1971, ORF Records, Box 1). Indeed, the meeting minutes of each new Septemvirate in the fall included the common lament articulated by the Septemvirate of 1959 as “the eternal search for a function – matching members’ interests and abilities with jobs that need doing”, and

more specifically, searching for a project that would define the group's work for their particular year ("Notes for the New Septemvirate", 1959, ORF Records, Box 1).

The transition of the entire Septemvirate each year challenged the group's continuity of purpose while at the same time it provided opportunity for evolution and change. What Dean Griffith described was a process in which the function of the Order in a particular year depended on the personalities and interests of the members of each Septemvirate. Amidst the social turmoil of the early 1960s, not all of the student leaders involved in the Red Friars were interested in social reform and discarding their hard-earned status on campus. Since a dominant style of masculine leadership characterized by manly toughness reigned supreme amongst American foreign policymakers on the national "stage" during the 1960s (Dean, 2001), some elements of that style of leadership were certainly reflected in the mechanisms of power at work on the Duke campus.

Several Red Friars were involved in the Men's Student Government project of printing a guide for freshmen to get involved on campus that was entitled, "Your Student Government: 1964-1965". The presentation of officers of the various student government bodies, including class officers and judicial board members, was tough and serious in tone. All men photographed in the booklet were dressed in suit and tie, and many were seated erect at a desk with a serious gaze – no smiles. The booklet made clear the expectation that new members of the community would get involved and someday take their place in the ranks of the leadership on campus. The description of the president of the MSGA was tough and heavy-handed, claiming it was the most highly respected and important position at Duke

University: “Along with the glory, however, goes the biggest single responsibility on the camps. The President controls practically all phases of the student’s life while at Duke in one way or another” (ORF Records, Box 1).

Other efforts made by the student leaders to exert their control in the early 1960s included initiatives to conduct elaborate evaluations of faculty that were published for the general student body from the perspective that it was the obligation of the campus leadership to educate and inform the masses. The Friars also periodically (depending on the year) continued their practice of ringing their bell in Kilgo Tower to produce an ominous audible reminder of their omnipresence on campus on days of significance for the Order. And the expectations from alumni Friars that the group would remain a strong and potent force in the campus power structure was evident even late in the decade.

Instructions for the new Septemvirate in 1970 included a list of obligations that involved arranging at least one meeting with then President Terry Sanford and arranging breakfast meetings with members of the Board of Trustees when they were in town for Board business. The group was informed that seven members of the Board of Trustees at the time were also Friars. Three board members were Friars from the 1920s. Three were from the 1930s, and one was from the 1940s. The Friars’ organizational records included a notation about which of the board committees each alumnus Friar served on (“Instructions to New Septemvirate”; ORF Records, Box 1). There is no indication, however, that the Septemvirate of 1970 was active following their induction, so the prospect that they engaged in communications with members of the Board thereafter is suspect.

The final reckoning.

A brief editorial entitled, “Mickey Mouse” appeared in the *Chronicle* on May 1, 1969, which unlike the “Painting of the Purple” in 1955 which was effective because of its literary poignancy, was effective in its brevity. The small column at the bottom of the editorial page read,

Today, in public tapping, the Red Friars are expected to make another attempt to maintain the so-called “liberal leadership” on campus as a closed group. This highly structured elite hardly seems worth attacking, except that it is symbolic of the closed community that exists among students, as well as the rest of the University. While these students communicate with each other, they just help to isolate themselves from their constituencies. The Friars serve ultimately as a mutual ego-massaging society for less than ten people. We hope they will eventually have the good sense to abolish it.

The Friars went on to perform their public tapping ceremony the next day, only to make the headlines of *The Duke Chronicle*: “Friars tap 6, 2 decline”.

Thus, would begin the slow, but certain demise of the Order. Included in the two who declined the tap for membership was the new editor of the *Chronicle*, Tom Campbell, who commented that “by its very nature, the group is a restrictive elite” and that he did “not feel that a more open community could be achieved by participation in and perpetuation of such closed and secret organizations” (May 2, 1969). The picture of the tapping that

appeared that day accompanying the article featured the Friar who was the master of ceremonies and the new initiates, all wearing hooded red robes, with the old members standing behind them in suits with red carnations in their lapels. The caption read, “The ‘Crimson Clan’ tapped six new members in a ceremony held in front of the Chapel yesterday” (See *Figure 22*: “The ‘Crimson Clan’ tapped six new members”, *The Duke Chronicle*, May 2, 1969).



Figure 22. “The ‘Crimson Clan’ tapped six new members”,
The Duke Chronicle, May 2, 1969.

The brothers later explained to the six members of the Order for 1970 that they had decided to tap them in hoods “so that, even though your names may be known and published, your group will have the choice of either publically acknowledging your corporate existence or not.” They further explained, “But know this, the cries of elitism and egoism have been heard, sometimes justifiably but most of the time spuriously, many times during the history of the Order” (“Question of Public Existence”, 1969, ORF Records, Box 1).

A *Wall Street Journal* article in 1968 had reported that the popularity of Yale’s famous secret societies was “still sought after”, although participation in fraternities on campus had been declining in recent years (Grover, November 11). The situation for the secret societies at Duke would be different. The White Duchy decided to disband in 1968, citing elitism as the reason. The group released a statement to the *Chronicle* that explained they had deliberated over the situation for a year before making the decision to disband: “The assumption that any group can objectively assess the commitment and potential of others in the community is naïve, as is the suggested possibility of selecting the seven women ‘most worthy of the honor’. The range of talents and interests of the women student accents the impossibility of the task of selecting seven as superior – or twenty-one – or forty-nine”; the statement concluded, “In a university which professes to nurture the growth and recognize the worth of each person, there is no longer room for an exclusive group which recognizes and nurtures only a few” (“Duchy statement”, *The Chronicle*, May 3, 1968).

The Friars endured the resignation of one of their members in 1970 and the embarrassment of three prospective Friars declining membership that same spring, before

finally deciding to disband in May of 1971. The *Chronicle* reported that, “In the past, the order contained what it considered to be the ‘leaders of the University’. The Friars announced they had decided the order had outlived its function to the University”, while a member of the Friars confirmed that the Order had not met for months and that the group felt they had “lost their usefulness” and that “a more legitimate organization” might take over their duties (“Travers quits Friars”, April 11, 1970; “Friars tap seven, three decline”, May 1970; “Red Friars to disband”, May 20, 1971; ORF Records, Box 1).

In the end, the *Chronicle* staff could claim some responsibility for displacing the “Big Men on Campus” who for so many years represented a monopoly of power in the hands of the select few. The grand irony of the entire situation and the powerful tenacity of the dominance of white, male hegemony in campus culture can be found in the yearbook photo that the *Chronicle* staff submitted for publication in the 1970 *Chanticleer*. The photo was taken in the Board room where the Trustees met. It appeared in the yearbook just below the photo of the Executive Committee of the Duke University Board of Trustees taken in the same location, with the difference being the masculine physicality of the *Chronicle* staff on display, along with a defiant gesture mocking the group of white men sitting above them around the table...for all to see...who was really in charge (See *Figure 23*: “Duke University Board of Trustees/*Chronicle* Staff”, *The Chanticleer*, 1970, p. 18).

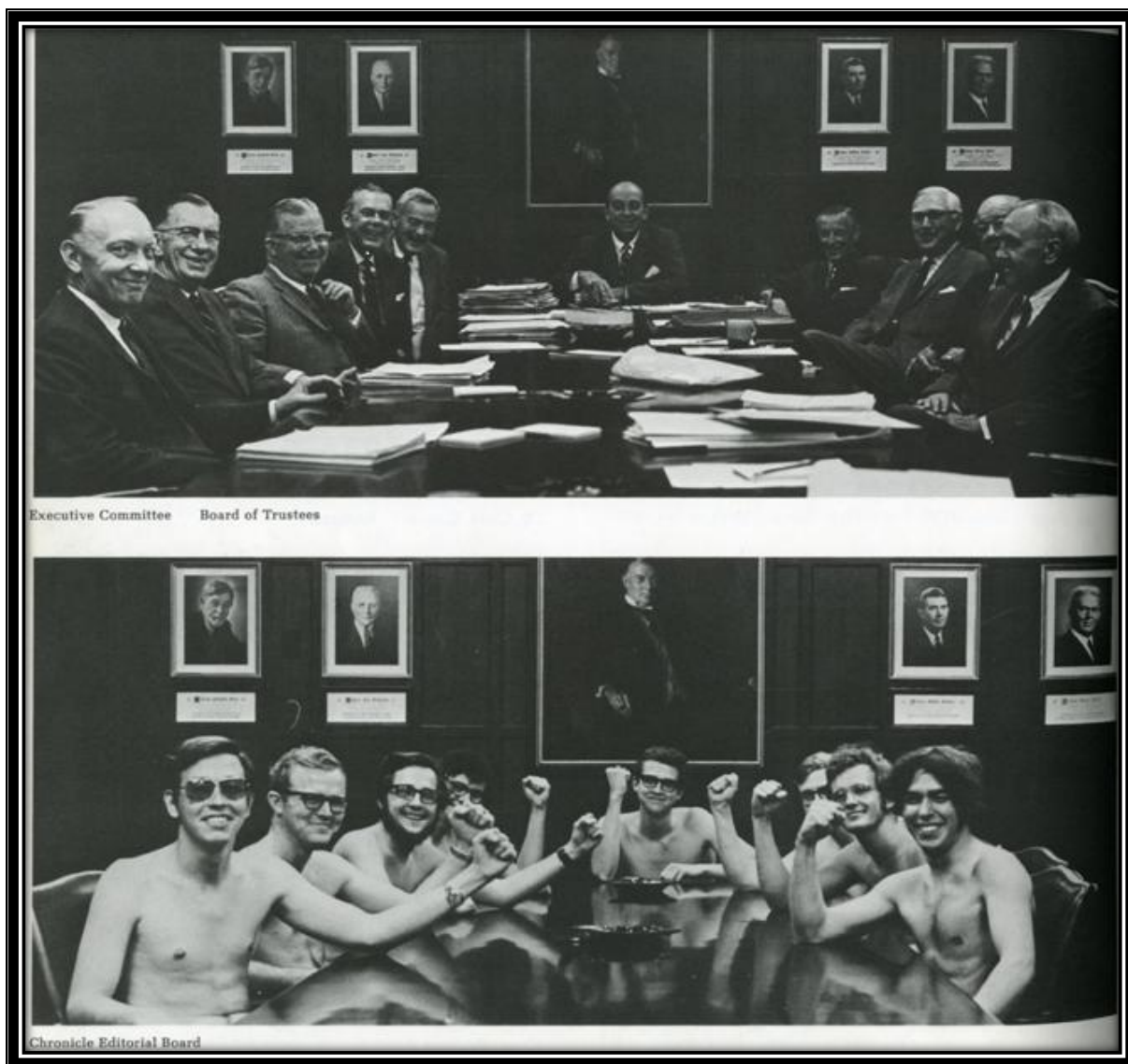


Figure 23. In the boardroom: Duke University Board of Trustees Executive Committee (top); *Chronicle* staff (bottom), *The Chanticleer*, 1970.

Memories of a Red Friar Editor of the *Chronicle* during the Civil Rights Era

Although I anticipated it might be difficult to find a Red Friar from the 1960s who would speak with me due to the stigma I assumed associated with the Order during those

days, according to the Friar I interviewed, membership in the group had become so dramatically insignificant amidst the larger controversies of the rights movements that it held little meaning in the grand scheme of his college experience. This Friar alumnus had been editor-in-chief of the *Chronicle* and was involved in civil rights activism on the Duke campus and in the greater Durham community, a profile that placed him squarely within Horowitz' (1987) conceptualization of campus "rebels" – students more focused on what was socially important beyond the campus walls, rather than those inwardly focused on acquiring status from positions of esteem within the campus community.

This Friar's memories are insightful because he provided important context for understanding how students' values had shifted in the 1960s and rendered groups like the Friars irrelevant to most students, including the types of students who were typically tapped for membership. He explained that, ironically, most of the men in the Friars and the women in the White Duchy who were tapped for membership were the same students leading major activist initiatives. His memories were most helpful for understanding how a white, male student on a predominantly white campus came to view himself as oppositional to the white, male administration, which ironically embodied the values that supported the perpetuation of elite male fraternal organizations like the Red Friars. The distinction is that by the 1960s, many students had detached themselves from the intense personal meaning and importance previous generations of students had placed on membership in secret societies as a validation of social status.

This interview also is organized by topic with the Friar's remarks presented in his own words to maximize their authenticity. I shared photographs from the *Chanticleer* to elicit his memories about Duke during the Civil Rights Era, and he recognized himself in several of the shots, including one in which he was sitting on the lawn during an organized speakout. The interview topics are presented in bold, and his unique perspective as a Red Friar who ran the student newspaper is explored as an interesting juxtaposition of two divergent types of student organizations. By the mid-1960s, the Red Friars had absorbed a great deal of criticism as an elite student group, and since the 1950s, the newspaper staff had instigated much of the critique.

On why he came to Duke and being a “young radical” in the 1960s - Red Friar (RF):

“The 60s was when Duke's ascendance in basketball started. We still had a pretty good football team, but basketball got big. I was sort of a young radical student, but I loved basketball. I came to Duke because of the Civil Rights Movement, and I knew stuff was going on down here (he was from Virginia) but I was young - 18 years old. I had been to the March in Washington. I knew this was a big deal. I could have gone to a couple of other northern schools, but it seemed like the South was more where it was happening, and when I got here, I discovered there were other kids like that. But it was a small group of kids. The thing I remember most in the 60s was that there was a real divide between the kids who wanted to be in a fraternity and the kids who saw that as kind of irrelevant as to what they wanted out of college. I was with the group of kids that was kind of making the statement that ‘I am not interested’.”

On the fraternity divide – RF: “(Duke) was still very much a school that was dominated by fraternities and how you dressed. I remember when I was already elected the editor of the *Chronicle, Gentleman’s Quarterly* called me up – they didn’t know - and said would you write a short piece on fashion on the Duke campus, and I kinda had to laugh because I was the guy that in those days wore jeans and a flannel work shirt all the time. All during the period I was there that was a distinct sort of marginalized group, but with all those other issues going on - the war more than the Civil Rights Movement - the war affected the kids that didn’t care about the Civil Rights Movement and didn’t care about those issues, but they were still going to graduate and face the draft. And all of a sudden, there was a lot more political activism, and all of a sudden there were a lot of fraternity guys coming to us asking about the draft, and what do you do about that? So the war was more of a dividing line than the Civil Rights Movement, but Duke was still very much dominated by fraternities. And my guess is, not to the degree it probably was then, but it still is, and I’m just reading a lot of stories...There was some story in the last couple of weeks...and I think that Duke has made little effort to marginalize the fraternities.”

On fitting in – RF: “I remember as a freshman you would still dress up and go to football games, and I didn’t do it after my freshman year. But everyone was trying to fit in, and that was what you did. Whereas basketball was a little rowdier, you know, a little less ‘dress up and take a date’...that kind of thing...”

On what it was like being a student at Duke in the 1960s – RF: “...with all the turmoil going on in the world...I actually came to Duke because I wanted to be involved in the Civil

Rights Movement because this was one of the hotbeds. I grew up in Virginia, and this was nearby, and I didn't know a lot about Duke, but I knew I wanted to be in the South... A lot of those people had been involved in Civil Rights, but then the ones who hadn't, well, the war heated up...the war was already going on when we all got to Duke...and people were at graduation, and all of a sudden the war becomes big on the horizon. I think one of the kids in our group was actually killed, and then one of them rose to a fairly high position in the Navy, but that was a factor for everybody, and compared to those kind of things - the draft, the war, and the Civil Rights Movement - wandering around in a secret society...I think that's why those things collapsed because people said, 'What's the relevance?'"

On why he joined the Red Friars – RF: "I thought, well, that's a good thing, so you don't turn it down, but once you got inside, you were kind of going, 'What is it that we're doing?', and the main thing we did was pick the next group, because the things that we were all doing, as editor of the paper, or head of the student government, or head of the judicial board – they were all of the things that usually the kids who were tapped were doing, that's what occupied our lives, not our involvement in this. When you said Red Friars, and I said I hadn't thought about it in 45 years, I started thinking...I couldn't really remember anything that we did. It certainly was not like a lot of student organizations like a service organization, when you went and volunteered in the hospital or something, it was just an honorary thing you got to put on your resume, and we didn't really think about it. That's the thing...the whole thing was kind of over here and irrelevant. For me, as opposed to the kids who said, 'I'm not going to do that', I didn't even think about it that much. There's a guy who said, 'You're in,

now you got to go run around and do these things.’ We were young. I think probably a lot of us didn’t think about it one way or the other very much. One of my best friends and a roommate at one point was the student government president, and when he left Duke, he moved to San Francisco and founded a hippie communion called ‘the Diggers’, so the sensibility was...it was kind of you didn’t even think about it. You were thinking about *other things*. My point is, I think it was on its last leg.”

On controversy about accepting membership in the Red Friars – RF: “Everybody had all kinds of ambiguous feelings about it because it was getting discussed. The group of guys that I was involved with probably accepted it just because someone came and said, ‘Do this’, and didn’t think about it one way or the other. And then by the late 1960s (when the newspaper editor declined membership), it had become much more of an issue, and he said it was time to take a stand and make a statement.”

On the function of the Red Friars – RF: “Really, when I started thinking about it, I didn’t remember *one thing* we did the whole year except meet at the end of the year to select the new members. I can’t remember anybody saying we’ve got to meet and figure out what makes ourselves relevant and or some good works that we should do because all of the people were involved in other things that seemed *way more* important.”

On what it meant to be a Red Friar in the 1960s – RF: “The guys I ran around with...one was student government president, and one was the head of the judicial board...Maybe we had it in the back of our minds that it (holding a major campus position) would look good on our resume one day, although it hasn’t made a bit of difference probably for most of us...you

did it because you were interested in it. And I don't remember anyone saying, 'Oh gosh, I'm going to be the head of the judicial board, and that might be an important person.' And also, the Red Friars particularly, nobody ever said, 'Oh gee, I hope I get in the Red Friars'. When they knocked on my door and said, 'Do you want to do it?', I didn't even know what it was exactly. There may have been a point at which it was a huge deal, but..." (He acknowledged nobody talked about or used the term "B.M.O.C." in those days.) "I think the culture by the 60s, even maybe for kids who thought all the social issues were totally irrelevant...all they wanted to do was get into a good law school. I think the culture had changed ...that in the general student culture, I think it (being a Red Friar) was becoming kind of like...what's the big deal."

On the role of the Young Men's Christian Association in student activism – RF: "The 'YM' and 'YW', they were very distinct at Duke because you had the women's campus and men's (campus) still at that point. That is where a lot of the progressive kids gravitated to - the YM and the YW, and they were usually progressive kids with religious backgrounds. They were progressive because their church backgrounds made them have progressive values. You know, say with the Civil Rights movement obviously...so during the period I was there, the YM and YW were some of the main organizations participating in the Civil Rights demonstrations."

On students' attitudes towards administrators regarding civil rights – RF: "The civil rights focus shifted over after the sort of active part of the movement where there were demonstrations and people going to jail, and we got involved in a lot of university employee

issues. We were there at Duke, being a young, white, proper middle-class college. We all had maids and janitors in our dormitories that cleaned our rooms, and they were paid 55 cents an hour or maybe 45 cents an hour, so we got involved in that – unionizing and organizing. They were all black, and we were all white.”

On students’ organization of the Vigil occupying the president’s home – RF: “So then when Dr. King got killed, in 68, there was a huge demonstration that we organized...the Vigil. It started out as a meeting. So we organized the Vigil, and we didn’t know what to do and wanted the university to make some response, and then we decided to tie this whole thing to doing something...because Dr. King, at the end of his life had been organizing sanitation workers, and we wanted to tie it to the university employees who were underpaid...So we said, ‘What are we going to do? So we said, ‘It’s the president’s fault, so we’re going to march to his house and occupy his house. That’s how the vigil started. Then we left his house and we moved it to the main quad. That is when a lot of the young professors sided with us, cancelled their classes and kind of got in trouble. Students were living on the quad. It lasted about a week. Joan Baez heard about it and came. But that was the tenor of the country at that point, and at that point it was pretty big. There had been the student riots at Columbia, and for a Southern college to have a demonstration that big with 1,000 students and living on the quad...that was a big deal. But at the end of the vigil, Joan Baez came out, and the trustees came out, and everybody held hands, and that was all symbolic, of course...They solved the problem eventually...They got rid of the maids.”

On whether the administration ever consulted the Red Friars for student opinion – RF:

“I don’t remember anything like that. That may be part because they would have seen some of us as sort of young and adversarial and out of control. Not all of us, but some.”

On a relationship with the president – RF:

“The president at the time, Doug Knight, and it was his house that we occupied...He was always very bitter about that, and it hurt his reputation that the students were kind of out of control during his tenure. A lot of it was the currents that were in society. He didn’t have anything to do with all the ferment that was in the Civil Rights Movement, and I guess he felt that he could have handled it better or that students shouldn’t have been so confrontational about it...That was the university’s fault, and it wasn’t his fault. He would occasionally write articles during his last years, and it seemed he was fairly bitter about it, and it was hard on him.”

On the role of student media on campus – RF:

“I think that up to a point, and it may have been into the point that we were there, it may have been a fairly prestigious thing, but I think it may have been transitioning. Then it became more of a personal expression thing. I remember a humor magazine and the Chanticleer. It was much more about photographers going out and doing all of this great photography, and there were a couple of Chanticleers with a tremendous amount of writing...creative writing...I think the same thing happened with the paper. An example of that was when I was a freshman, involved in all the civil rights. During my freshman and sophomore year, we would go off on Saturdays and get arrested and come back on Sunday night and write an article about it. And so it became much less of a thing of, ‘We are professional journalists’ in regards to working at the paper,

or ‘We are chronicling the year’. It became much more about, ‘This is what is happening, and this is something we can use as a tool to talk about the current status and current society’. I don’t ever remember wanting to be an editor of the Chronicle because it made me an important person. It was like, ‘We can do this, and we can do this, and we can do this...I think it’s because we are young, and we are reacting to the stuff that’s going on that’s exciting. In the 50s, things were kind of quiet, and people were still in sort of a post-war mentality, and like, ‘I gotta get a good job, and I’ve gotta get ahead’, and there weren’t a lot of external things to react to.”

On race relations and honorary groups’ hooded robes for public ceremonies – RF

(Duke’s undergraduate program was integrated while he was at Duke): “I don’t remember race being a big issue because I was with...actually wanted to be involved with the black kids and to accept them and be accepted by them. I think in retrospect, we didn’t do a very good job, and we weren’t very sensitive to what they were going through, and I think to the rest of the campus those black kids being there was not that big of a deal, although I know there was...It was still the South...I mean the first time I went to Chapel Hill there were still “colored only” bathrooms and water fountains. That’s *in my lifetime*, so I know there was racism, but I didn’t deal with it much because of the kids I hung out with.”

On the strange ceremonial garb used by the secret societies for tapping ceremonies –

RF: “We (he and another young journalist) used to go out to Klan rallies...He actually wrote a lot of stuff about the Klan, and we were fascinated. At that point and time, the Klan still had a booth at the state fair every year, where they sold racist records and materials... And

that was somehow strangely disconnected from (the photos of hooded honorary society garb at Duke), and maybe it was because we were white, middle-class kids, and we didn't have the same emotional connection that a first-time black student would carry from...probably... their whole life."

On why the Red Friars disbanded – RF: "As I recall it, when the White Duchy disbanded, and I was still around when the Friars disbanded...I knew a lot of the kids that participated in it...The issue for them was the elitism, not the strange trappings...so somehow we all managed – maybe through youthful naiveté - to sort of minimize this part of it (the "trappings" of racism in the hooded ceremonial garb of the secret honorary societies)".

On the importance of being a part of something – RF: "There is a tricky, over-arching question, which is, and I think about this a lot in terms of society at large and the role of religion in our lives. People need to belong to something, fraternities, or church or something. They need to have traditions, and all those things that cohere society...when organizations give purpose and meaning to an individual's life. You can't entirely say that the Red Friars are leaders, and therefore they need to be abolished, and they serve no purpose. I am not a big fan of fraternities. I think they do a lot of bad things. There are lots and lots of people that would say belonging to a fraternity is what gave meaning to their college experience and got them through college, and a few people that probably ruined their lives by being in a fraternity. And...traditions seem really important. People need it. That's why weddings and funerals are so important – to share those transitional things. So in the big picture, you'd have to wonder, as we get rid of all these kinds of things, do they become less

important? Society also feels much more fragmented and spinning apart...community and all those things..."

Chapter Summary

When the Red Friars were reactivated in 1949 after a seven-year hiatus, they resumed activity on a campus where Naval officer training and veterans returning for an education courtesy of the G.I. Bill had supplanted the insular world that once was dominated by the "Big Man on Campus". Student leaders before World War II who ran the major campus organizations and therefore were usually tapped for membership in the Order of Red Friars had embodied the masculine ideals of a muscular Christianity as socially-skilled college gentleman. For a period of years into the 1950s, amidst a national mood of conservatism and a reification of traditional gender roles, the "B.M.O.C." would enjoy a brief resurgence, but the phenomenon was no match for the social unrest that would follow.

This chapter traced a series of events in which social actors challenged the dominance of the Red Friars and their concentration of campus leadership within a small, elite secret order. The public tapping ceremonies that the Friars had performed since the early 1950s in front of Duke Chapel and their associate secret men's leadership honorary, Omicron Delta Kappa, had performed there since the 1930s, would no longer be accepted without resistance. A 1955 "Painting of the Purple" editorial in the student newspaper highlighted the whimsy of the Order's pomp and circumstance and preceded the Friars' failed attempt to tap its requisite seven members. The comedic performance of the "Order of the Chair" parody by unknown

students between 1957 and 1962 made a public mockery of the Order and further robbed them of their ceremonial dignity on their own territory on the Duke Chapel lawn.

The second period of the Red Friars' existence between 1949 and 1971 is marked throughout by the irony inherent in the developments that led to their inevitable end. The public acts of resistance were successful in large part because, like the activities of the Order, they were shrouded in secrecy. The greater irony would emerge when the members of the Order themselves began to reject their own organizations. Members of the Septemvirate of 1959 drew up a proposal that would abolish the Greek-letter fraternities in favor of a more intellectually-oriented house system similar to Duke's aspirational institutions, Harvard and Yale. Members of the Septemvirate of 1962 wrote a parody of their own new member tapping ceremony with a spirit of good humor that would indicate their recognition of a group whose time and relevancy had passed.

Powerful external societal forces undoubtedly contributed to the change in the college student leaders' values that ultimately led to men declining the invitation to membership in the Order. Most of the Red Friars in any given year were also invited to join ODK, the national all-male leadership honorary society, because both groups recognized the leaders of the major campus organizations. Beginning in the early 1960s, students expressed to the ODK advisor that they no longer cared to participate in a national organization that didn't allow women to be members and that recognized the concentration of leadership in the same few men who ran everything.

The momentum of the Civil Rights Movement and the threat posed by the Vietnam draft mobilized many students who otherwise might have directed their energies inward in a previous era. The circumstances of the times that made students more socially aware changed their attitudes about the importance of belonging to secret campus organizations that rewarded students with “prestige leadership” credentials. The expanded role women assumed in leadership of campus organizations during World War II eventually led to more accepting attitudes on the part of men on campus. The “Vigil”, as it was called, that took place when Duke students occupied the quad in front of Duke Chapel for several days following the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in 1968, was evidence of a campus community concerned with larger social issues that was forever transformed from the days when the Order of Red Friars commanded the respect of the masses.

Another irony can be pointed out in the status that the Friars had come to achieve in relationship with university officials. In what can be described as an inverse relationship that transpired during the 1960s, when students began to lose interest in the cultural meaning that once was endowed upon membership in the secret Order, members of the Order were given access to contact and meet with Friars who served on the Board of Trustees. A final irony can be observed in that the staff of the *Chronicle* who mounted opposition to the Friars’ exclusivity in the 1950s and 1960s eventually triumphed in the Order’s dissolution only to emerge as campus powerbrokers themselves, a group of predominantly white men who controlled the voice and narrative experience of the student body.

The following chapter will summarize the findings of this historical study of an all-male collegiate secret society that was active at Duke University (Trinity College prior to 1924) from 1913 to 1971. It will include a synthesis of the theory and literature that informed the study and complemented the rediscovery of extant information for the generation of basic knowledge about this phenomenon of student life. The conclusion will include a discussion about the usefulness of understanding collegiate secret societies as artifacts of the cultural hegemony that shaped the extracurriculum of American higher education as we know it today.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

This conclusion begins with a summary of the findings of this historical study in relation to the research questions that were developed to guide the study. Theoretical and practical implications of the research findings will be discussed, as they are inevitably entangled and inform the scholar practitioner about options for supporting the socialization of increased numbers of students from historically underrepresented backgrounds entering our institutions. The contribution this study makes to the history of American higher education literature will be summarized, and finally, the limitations of the study will be addressed in the presentation of ideas for further research.

Institutional leaders and higher education scholars are faced with a historical puzzle regarding the lack of scholarly literature available for understanding the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies that were a prominent type of student organization on many campuses through the early twentieth century. In fact, many of these groups have survived the scrutiny that emerged during the past century regarding their secrecy and related charges of elitism and remain active on American campuses today. This void in the higher education literature about an important historical phenomenon in student culture called for fundamental research questions to be developed to foster the discovery of basic knowledge about the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies. Therefore, the following broad research questions were developed for a historical case study about a secret society that was active at Duke University (Trinity College prior to 1924) grounded in archival research and oral history:

- 1) What were the origins of the Order of Red Friars secret society? (Why was the Order founded? What was the purpose of the secret order? Who were the founding members? What was their social position amongst other students? What were the criteria for membership? [*Whose* criteria were utilized?]) What was going on in society and American higher education that might have contributed to the founding of the secret order?)

This study discovered that when the Order of Red Friars secret society was founded in 1913 it was part of an honorary society movement that spread throughout the nation's colleges between the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century when the rise of the modern university was underway (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011). These groups were usually formed as senior class societies that recognized students for their contributions and involvement in campus life that served to raise the prestige and promote the betterment of their alma mater. According to Rudolph (1990), students who were selected for these groups were chosen in part for their outstanding character that would be akin to contemporary notions of the character of an Eagle Scout. They also were recognized due to their participation in the robust world of extracurricular life that was thriving on American college campuses during this era that celebrated the physicality of men's athletics, the social interaction of fraternity membership, and the general presentation of a handsomely-dressed gentleman who was popular with the ladies (Horowitz, 1987; Thelin, 2011).

The secrecy that characterized these groups was common practice for student groups during this era. Scholars of American higher education history have noted that due to the

tensions that existed between faculty and students during the nineteenth century over the control of the extracurriculum that students had created, the secrecy associated with Greek-letter fraternities and sororities and other secret societies which were then popular was a practical tactic employed by student groups to evade faculty interference with their outside-of-the-classroom affairs (Coulter, 1928; Stearns, 1976; Torbenson, 2005). The secrecy also added prestige to the selection for membership to these groups which served to sustain their attempts to preserve their secret activities even after faculty had discarded responsibility for oversight of the extracurriculum by the early twentieth century (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011; Veysey, 1965). Thus, the Red Friars maintained their identity as a secret society for nearly half a century until secrecy became associated with elitism to an intolerable level by undergraduate students in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Order was founded with a stated purpose of recognizing the seven leading men of the senior class for their past, present and promise of potential future service to the college, along with an obligation to provide selfless service for the betterment of the institution. Given that the Order was founded at a time when the educational administrative structures of most institutions in the country were nascent amidst the movement towards creation of the modern university, the academic and business affairs branches of the administration were all that existed at Trinity College to provide the president with support for running the affairs of the institution. As student enrollment began increasing dramatically at Trinity during the 1910s, the decade prior to the establishment of Duke University around the liberal arts

college core, the students in the Red Friars took it upon themselves with their charge of selfless service to the institution to manage student affairs.

The practical needs of the growing student body provided the Order of Red Friars with a strong sense of purpose. They met regularly throughout the academic year and routinely identified needs of the student body they could work towards resolving. They lobbied for the hiring of coaches for new athletics teams prior to the organization of a department of athletics with a director in charge. They lobbied for funding to support student media publications and musical performance groups, such as the Glee Club and the marching band. They advocated for football to return to Trinity as a varsity sport and created a men's student government association 12 years prior to the establishment of a dean of students position at Duke University, which did not happen until 1935.

The original members of the secret order during their first years of existence were men whose biographical narratives in the student yearbooks described them with accolades for their participation in the literary society debates that were among the most popular college activities in the South through the early twentieth century (Coulter, 1928), as well as outstanding athletes in basketball, track, and baseball – the college's major sports. They were leaders of their fraternities, the YMCA and numerous affinity clubs. Nearly all of the Red Friars in the early years were from small towns in North Carolina and were Methodist, as Trinity was a provincial denominational college that generally served students within the state until the 1920s (Moyen, 2004). All of the early Friars were white given that all of the students who attended Trinity during that era were white, except for a few international

students who enrolled periodically (Durden, 1993). Duke University did admit Catholic and Jewish students as early as the 1930s, but African American students were not allowed enrollment in the undergraduate student body until after the Board of Trustees approved integration after 1962.

The early Friars were part of a homogeneous student body that was typical of small, denominational colleges of their day, and they were selected for membership in the Order via a system of “college democracy” associated with this era in which students were recognized for their talents and for what they could do for their institutions, rather than for their family status or background (Horowitz, 1987; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011). The Red Friars had demonstrated their loyalty and selfless service to their alma mater beyond the customary participation in fraternities to excel in varsity and class athletics, literary society debates both on campus and in intercollegiate competition, in musical performance groups and in other affinity clubs, as well as being noted for their affable character and popularity with the coeds – all characteristics associated with being a “big man” among the otherwise homogeneous masses on campus – a phenomenon that has been validated by American higher education history scholars (Horowitz, 1987; Thelin, 2011). The criteria utilized for selection of membership to the Order of Red Friars could generally be described as the characteristics of a “new masculinity” that were admired by white, Protestant men of western European descent and modest income who were going to college at this time; it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that college became associated with upward social

mobility and was increasingly popular amongst a broader portion of the American population (Roediger, 2005; Painter, 2010; Thelin, 2011; Rudolph, 1990).

- 2) What were the functions of the Red Friars within student culture, and how did their functions change over time? (What were their major projects and activities? What social forces external to the secret order impacted their functions and criteria for membership? How were the Red Friars involved in the administration of student affairs at the university?)

As mentioned previously, when the Order of Red Friars was first founded, the men worked together for many years prior to the establishment of student affairs as a branch of the educational administrative structure of the college to advocate for the practical needs of the student body regarding their desire to sustain a vibrant extracurriculum and to bring prestige to the college through the initiatives they would endorse. The group was behind the creation of a men's student government association that operated for 12 years before the position of dean of students was established in 1935. Members of the group also were responsible for agitating for professional administrators who could specialize in student affairs to become part of the permanent administrative structure of the institution. When the Red Friars were founded in 1913, the only administrative officers at the college were the president, a dean who functioned as a sort of vice president for academic affairs, and a vice president for business affairs - which were the typical branches of educational administration in place at American colleges during this era when the structure of the modern university was still maturing (Lloyd-Jones, 1934; Niddifer & Cain, 2004; Schwartz, 2003). The early Friars

worked for the good of the college in the spirit of the Progressive Era when they were founded that fostered efforts directed towards societal reform and institutional progress.

Once the institutional leaders of Trinity College began working towards the establishment of Duke University around the college's liberal arts base, the Red Friars sought to advocate on behalf of student life initiatives that would ensure that the new university would be imbued with prestige, a pursuit that has been identified as associated with the development of institutions of higher education in this country throughout their history but especially during the era of the rise of the modern university (Veysey, 1965). The Friars were concerned that football become recognized again as a varsity sport, that the marching band be well-supported with instruments and money to fund their activities, that sports teams hire professional coaches rather than rely on alumni volunteers, and that pep rallies and parades be organized to boost school spirit and student morale. They took it upon themselves to work through their membership in recognized student clubs and organizations to promote their agenda for enhancing student life and promoting the prestige of the institution. Many of these early activities affirmed the value the men placed on athletics, both for the institution to sponsor successful athletics programs and for the student body to value and support the school's athletic endeavors.

Male athletes at colleges in the United States have realized esteemed status both within their campus community and in the broader public from the time that intercollegiate athletics were introduced in this country in the late nineteenth century until the present – a fine example of the cultural hegemony of the white, male college student who created the

distinctive components of the American college extracurriculum more than a century ago (Horowitz, 1987; Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011). The men of the Red Friars highly valued athletics and often tapped standout athletes for membership in the Order, along with all of the above-mentioned activities they promoted to insure the school's prowess as in the world of intercollegiate athletics. Their rivalry with the University of North Carolina located just 20 minutes away in Chapel Hill added fuel to their motivation to continuously seek prestige for their athletic endeavors.

Several external forces impacted the activity of the Red Friars after Duke University was established in 1924. First of all, the Friars themselves worked with the academic dean to create the Men's Student Government Association (MSGA) in 1923. The MSGA officially accepted responsibility as a self-governance body that began planning and advocating for the same types of student interests that the Friars had managed previously in secret. Since the Friars were behind the creation of the student government for the men of Trinity College, they also manipulated the succession of the presidency of the organization and had one of their own serve in that position for all but two of the 20 years the MSGA was active before the Friars had to disband temporarily for World War II. The Friars were instrumental in the creation of deans positions directly responsible for the oversight of student affairs. The dean of students and a dean of freshman position were created in 1935, and a particular candidate was hired as the director of student activities in the early 1950s due to Red Friars' conversations with the president and their influence on decisions about personnel in the institution's administrative structure.

The disruption of World War II caused by men leaving school to serve in the military both devastated the ranks of the men's fraternities and made impossible the ability of the Friars to tap members who could be assured of remaining at the college for any period of time. Thus, the Friars lost traction on their hold on some of the major campus leadership positions and positions that afforded them sources of power on campus when they were temporarily inactive between 1943 and 1949. During their hiatus, women and men not affiliated with the Friars assumed the editor-in-chief positions of the student media organizations, of which the student newspaper the *Chronicle* was becoming a critical means of influencing campus opinion. A member of the Red Friars had served as editor of the *Chronicle* for the majority of years prior to their break for the war, but they only served as editor for seven of the 28 years they were active after the war.

The rise of the Red Friars to a position of prominence on campus between the 1920s and 1940s coincided with a major resurgence in participation in collegiate activities in American higher education that was a reaction to the impersonal scale of the new modern university as opposed to the small, old time college; men selected for membership in the Friars embodied the characteristics associated with the prototype ideal of the "Big Man on Campus", a national phenomenon during this era that celebrated college men who achieved all-around accomplishments in athleticism, leadership of major campus organizations, and popularity with the coeds (Horowitz, 1987; Syrett, 2009; Thelin, 2011). As the original functions the Red Friars had adopted for oversight of student affairs were assumed by the Men's Student Government Association and deans who were specialists in this area, the

Friars functioning as a group from the late 1920s through the early 1940s became increasingly preoccupied with the project of building a monastery that would serve as a sort of shrine to their presence and legacy on campus. The individual men who were selected for membership in the Order during this period were recognized as the student leaders who “ran things” and were referred to as “Big Men on Campus” (Durdin, 1993).

It was at this point that the Order noticeably directed its focus and energies towards the sustenance of their reputation and prestige almost entirely invested in the building of a monastery meeting place. They had secured support from the president and vice president for business operations for building a medieval monastery structure in the forest near the West Campus location; however, their efforts to obtain sufficient funding from alumni went unrealized due to the economic hardship of the Great Depression. The last several Septemvirates that were active during the World War II era came to appreciate more the honor associated with the selection of membership to the Friars organization, while at the same time they acknowledged their lack of activity otherwise which understandably was measured against their uncertain future as the war escalated in both the European and the Pacific theaters. The dean of students at the time explained their purpose to them as a reward for their accomplishments at the university.

When the Red Friars were reorganized after the war in 1949, the campus had undergone an extended period of forced takeover by the Navy V-12 officer training program that had brought thousands of service men to campus who rotated through the university on an accelerated academic calendar but who participated in the life of the college while they

were there (Durden, 1993). The presence and influence of military men provided a further disruption in the reign of the “Big Man on Campus” as the type of man who was honored and held in high esteem in the campus community. The G.I. Bill that offered higher education benefits to returning veterans compounded the presence of military men through 1949 when the enrollment surge they had caused had begun to slow; but the Red Friars would experience a changed social atmosphere by the time the group sought to become active again.

The Septemvirates of the early 1950s expressed growing concern about identifying an annual project that would distinguish the work of their group, while they continued to work through their various leadership positions in other organizations to sponsor initiatives that promoted a thriving social atmosphere for students, including dances, party weekends, and pep rallies. It was during this time that the Friars enjoyed a close relationship with the new president, A. Hollis Edens, who had been appointed and began his time at Duke in 1949, the same year when the Friars were reorganized. President Edens occasionally met alone with the Friars and consulted with them regarding their opinion about raising tuition and what the university policy should be in terms of integration of the undergraduate college.

The Friars utilized their access to the president, vice presidents, and deans to lobby for stricter enforcement of campus drinking policies, the implementation of a student activities fee to support various campus activities, and consideration of an honor code to curb the problems of students cheating. Although the Friars carried on their business as usual that somewhat mirrored their functioning before the war, if not even a bit heightened by their increased access to the president, the social unrest in the South in the 1950s and the problems

the country faced regarding foreign policy and its place in a new world order began to impact attitudes and opinions within the campus community. The momentum of social change catalyzed by the *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, accompanied by increasing national debate over such issues as communism and capitalism gave rise to instability, pluralism, and dissent in public opinion, the student body, and the Red Friars themselves.

Gramsci explained that the cultural hegemony of the “ruling class”, or in this case the dominant cultural group that the Red Friars represented, would retain its cultural dominance until the subjects of their dominance acted to resist their coercive force. The Friars’ ringing of their bell from Kilgo Tower was intended to remind the campus community of their mysterious and intangible omnipresence. The failed monastery building project had been proposed as a means of exerting the prestige of their presence for all passersby. The Friars’ annual public tapping ceremonies in the most prominent location in the center of campus symbolized the anointing of the campus leaders for the coming academic year. When the new editor of the *Chronicle* wrote the “Painting of the Purple” in 1955, it initiated the end of the subaltern acquiescence to the dominance of the “Big Men on Campus”. The Order of Red Friars had come to embody an elite, concentrated locus of student power and control on the Duke campus, due to a process of social reproduction that enabled the most prominent campus leaders to sustain a socially-constructed exclusive, all-male brotherhood in the pattern of upper-class masculine socialization that had become recognizable around the country.

Thereafter, the *Chronicle* periodically included critical editorials and commentary that detracted from the stronghold of favorable campus opinion to which the Red Friars had laid claim for more than 40 years. From the late 1950s through the early 1960s, a group of unknown students produced a spring tapping ceremony for the fictitious “Order of the Chair” secret society in the same location as the Red Friars’ annual ceremony, mocking the self-importance portrayed by the Friars and thereby rejecting the ideals of the dominant social group. In a world of changing values and the emerging generation gap that challenged everything that represented the “WASP establishment”, the dissonance between the Friars’ original function of “selfless service” to the university and the “prestige honorary” group they had become grew increasingly evident. Ironically, because most of the Friars’ works were done in secret behind the fronts of recognized campus organizations, the university community was unaware of their longtime mission of service for the betterment of the university. The gravity of world events such as the Korean War and the Cuban Missile Crisis cast the Friars’ spring tapping ceremonies and carnation-wearing rituals against a backdrop that transformed their cultural meaning from the revered group it was in the 1940s to something frivolous that could be publicly mocked in the 1950s and 1960s.

By 1962, the members of the Order themselves were doubting their role and relevance in campus life. The satirical rewrite of the Friars’ initiation ceremony produced by the Septemvirate of 1962 documented the extent of their detachment from the reverence once accorded membership in the Order, its rituals, and activities; at the same time, the Septemvirate understood the sense of importance and meaning the Order still held for the

elders in the Friarhood. The relationship between the active collegiate members of the Order and the older members of the Order was an example of the kind of socially-constructed exclusive upper-class male only brotherhood that perpetuated the tradition of the “rule of the best” mentality that was prevalent in the United States at the time (Dean, 2001).

By the 1960s, student members of the ODK honorary society, which was populated by most of the Friars in any given year, expressed to the dean of students they felt that their organization was no longer relevant and that it was problematic that the major student leadership positions on campus were concentrated in just a few individuals. The ODK Circle became relatively inactive during the 1960s before disbanding in 1970 and reflected growing student sentiment shared by student student leaders that the secret honorary societies on campus were out-of-step with societal values. The student leaders selected for membership in the Red Friars and White Duchy continued to represent the power positions on campus, but the students themselves became disinterested in the prestige associated with membership in the secret orders and increasingly aware of critiques of their elitism. The White Duchy voluntarily disbanded in 1968 citing their recognition of the organization’s reputation as elitist and acknowledging it as a farce that was out of step with the sentiment of the campus community.

Ironically, by the late 1960s, even after several years of relative inactivity, the Order of Red Friars had become accepted by the Board of Trustees as an important student leadership honorary organization. Documentation of instructions for the new initiates to meet as often as once a month with Friar alumni Board members when they came to town on

trustee business provides extraordinary evidence of the status the group had achieved and the access to the formal governing body of the institution they had attained. In contrast to the Friars' early period when they asserted their organization as the entity responsible for management of student affairs prior to the establishment of that branch of oversight in the administrative structure of the university, it is ironic they would rise to such a level of recognition and access to the innermost source of institutional power, only to disband a few years later.

- 3) What values, norms, and beliefs related to a white, male collegiate ideal are observable in the activities of the individual members of the Red Friars and of the group itself? (*Whose* values, norms, and beliefs are reflected?)

The characteristics of the founding members of the Red Friars and the activities of the Order during their formative years strongly reflected the values, norms, and beliefs related to the white, male American collegiate ideal that had been established by students from an aristocratic background at the country's elite colleges in the Northeast by the end of the nineteenth century. The values of the New England boarding school that encouraged young men to conformity in pursuit of athleticism, muscular Christianity, sociability, and participation in men's fraternal organizations fueled a movement in American colleges that created the "Big Man on Campus" ideal. The pattern of upper-class masculine socialization that originated in elite institutions such as Yale, Harvard, and Princeton was emulated at younger colleges such as Trinity, and fraternal secret societies modeled after Yale's prestigious senior society Skull and Bones, inevitably took hold.

Profiles of the individual Red Friars from the time of their founding in 1913 through the time they voluntarily disbanded in 1971 are consistent with these ideals in that the leaders of the most prominent student organizations on campus were typically sought after for membership (almost all of whom were fraternity men), as well as standout athletes and captains from the major varsity sports teams, especially football, from the 1920s through the early 1940s. Positions highly valued included the presidency of the Men's Student Government Association, the men's interfraternity council that governed fraternity relations, and the president of the YMCA that was one of the most prominent men's leadership development organizations on campus and nationwide. Great importance was attributed to the editor of the student newspaper because of the potential influence over campus opinion it afforded the brotherhood, but as students outside of organized college life began to compete for editorial control of the newspaper, the Order lost its ability to control succession of this important campus power position.

The power struggle observed between the Friars and the editors of the student newspaper that began in the 1950s when the paper criticized the organization for being irrelevant and elitist reflected the shifting focus of the student body from one of insular concern with campus activities and personal status to outward concern for the larger moral issues of the day. The social discourse commanded by developments in the Civil Rights Movement, the nuclear arms race, the war in Vietnam, and the military draft increasingly impacted the importance and meaning the entire campus community had previously attributed to membership in the Order of Red Friars. The student members of the

brotherhood themselves eventually became disinterested in the Order as a means of attaining a personal reward of status and prestige amidst their activity and involvement with more pressing social issues both on campus and outside the campus community.

Before the Order of Red Friars fell out of fashion with the student body, however, as a perceived elitist and outdated student organization, it had become one of the most prominent organizations on campus and concentrated the most powerful student leadership positions within one organization. The Order served as an important resource for campus leaders seeking student opinion on controversial issues such as raising tuition, implementing a student activities fee, and developing a policy and plan for racial integration. It also functioned as a type of elite masculine institution common elsewhere around the country that perpetuated the social connections between older, powerful men with the active collegiate members who by association were imbued with power, influence, and prestige (Dean, 2001). This example of the social reproduction of status and dominance within an educational setting illustrates Bourdieu's theory about how the prevailing social order is maintained in a society by its educational system.

The matter of who met the criteria established by the Order for membership in the Red Friars is interesting when discussed in the context of the demographics of the student body and how enrollment changed over time to include students from increasingly diverse backgrounds. The criteria for membership over the 60-year period of the Friars' existence has been presented as fairly consistent and matching the profile of characteristics that were associated with the American collegiate ideal of the "Big Man on Campus" - the man who

excelled in such areas as athletics, leadership of campus organizations, and the fraternity system - which was a socially-constructed profile of a male collegiate ideal created by upper-class men in the nation's elite colleges in the late nineteenth century and therefore a conceptualization of a white man's ideal of collegiate manhood . These were the men who "ran things", so membership implied these were the men who could have power on campus; thus, as the conceptualization of "whiteness" expanded to include men from ethnic minority groups during the World War II era, these men achieved access to the esteemed social status imbued in members of the Order.

Membership in the Red Friars generally reflected the changing demographics of the student body and in fact indicated that the values of the Friars at times were more socially progressive than the institution itself and society beyond the university. The early Friars were themselves white, usually Methodists and from modest socioeconomic backgrounds. Once the student population began to diversify in terms of geography and religious background, membership in the Friars diversified accordingly. After Duke's new Gothic west campus for men opened in 1930, the institution began to draw students from a much larger geographic area beyond North Carolina and the local region. The Red Friars typically were all from North Carolina, but after 1932, the group would never have more than two members from the state.

With the geographic diversity of the growing student body came religious and ethnic diversity. As early as 1943, a member of the Red Friars was Jewish, and a Jewish student was usually a member of the Order every year thereafter when the group was active through

the time it disbanded in 1971. This affirmation of status and access to power on campus would seem to be extraordinary in that the first Jewish Friar was tapped before the end of World War II when a transformation in American attitudes towards more inclusiveness of Jews occurred. He had been captain of the tennis team and a student government officer, similar credentials to a Friar from 1938 who was described as an Irish football player, which would denote the value placed on men's athletics for validation and acceptance as worthy of "BMOC" status. Other religious diversity was noted in the Friars' organizational records in the 1950s regarding a member of the Order who was named as Catholic, and according to surnames that appear to be Italian and Irish on membership rosters in the 1930s, it is likely that religious inclusion and tolerance was more extensive than can be confirmed.

Nonetheless, observing the activities and attitudes of the men who were selected for membership in the Order of Red Friars across time, from the 1910s through the 1960s, changes in the value system they represented are illuminated. The early Friars were selected during the Progressive Era when the primary concern of college men and their colleges was the pursuit of prestige for themselves and their institutions, which in turn conferred social status highly valued in their day. Arguably, the same pursuit of social status via men's association with elite fraternal organizations has characterized the American college experience over the course of the past century; however, the disruption of World War II and the resulting social unrest of the 1950s and 1960s indeed transformed the value system of college students on American campuses during the Civil Rights Era and the war in Vietnam. Socially-progressive students - including members of the Friars themselves and especially

campus “rebels” who worked for the student newspaper - whose focus turned outward towards larger social issues, began to devalue the self-contained world of student activities created by previous generations of Duke students. They were disinterested in the status and prestige that had come to be associated with student leadership positions and rejected the notion of power concentrated in the hands of the few, especially in the form of a small, exclusive secret society.

Implications for Theory and Practice

Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony provided a powerful lens for exploring the cultural norms that today’s demographically diverse students have inherited from more homogeneous generations of students who preceded them. American higher education in the traditional campus setting arguably perpetuates as important the same components of the extracurriculum that were established by the aristocratic male students of the elite eastern colleges more than a century ago. Given the transformation of American higher education in these first decades of the twenty-first century, scholarly inquiry regarding the presence and character of secret networks of students, faculty, alumni, and administrators who were historically active and continue to have power in some colleges and universities can inform practice today.

The legacy and persistence of collegiate secret societies as a centuries-old type of student organization surviving into the present day indicates some relevance and salience for all involved, but particularly for institutional leaders interested in promoting the ideals associated with democracy in American higher education. Ultimately, this study is

significant for institutional leaders who are interested in understanding the challenges experienced by students from historically-underrepresented backgrounds when they attempt to navigate the cultural norms of American higher education institutions established by previous generations of homogeneous and privileged students.

The practical implications of this study for administrators and campus officials are two-fold. First of all, the rediscovery of basic knowledge about the origins and functions of a collegiate secret society beyond the well-known lore associated with Yale's legendary Skull and Bones lends credibility to the theory that these groups were a source of power on many American campuses during the twentieth century and are still viable sources of institutional power in many settings today. Although practitioners may not presume to manage their existence, having basic knowledge about their historic role in American higher education and potential for perpetuating a network of privileged institutional decision-making can empower administrators with an understanding about how these groups evolved and functioned.

This study offers insight into how collegiate secret societies could gain power on campus through the cultivation of relationships with campus officials, including university presidents, and maintenance of relationships with alumni who secure positions on governing boards. It offers a model that validates student leaders as an important source of power on campus outside of the formal organizational structure of the institution. College and university presidents and administrators in institutional advancement, alumni relations, and Greek affairs in particular have long understood the power that exists in the alumni body, especially in terms of campus decision-making and institutional planning priorities.

Knowledge of how the collegiate secret society can manifest as a form of shadow governance is particularly informative for campus officials charged with negotiating relationships with all stakeholders invested in the success of their institution.

Secondly, it is helpful to understand how the values of Progressive Era college students concerned with enhancing the prestige of their institutions were fueled by the spirit of progress and reform that characterized that period when improvement of social institutions, such as schools, was pronounced. It is therefore enlightening for practitioners to understand how a mission to work towards the betterment of the college or university is likely a foundational component of collegiate secret societies still operational in our contemporary settings if they were founded between the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It also is instructive to understand that groups founded in that era were likely emulating the all-male elite fraternal organizations that empowered the “rule of the best” philosophy that rewarded students for meritocratic achievement on the standards of the masculine collegiate ideal. Therefore, it is empowering to appreciate the original spirit associated with collegiate secret societies which celebrated active participation in the organized life of the college at a time when institutions were taking their modern form.

This narrative history of the rise and fall of the Order of Red Friars is useful for practitioners who consider themselves transformative intellectuals and who intend to reflect critically on the social dynamics of their campus environments and how members of the campus community are differently impacted. Although the organized aspects of extracurricular life may not carry as much promise for reward of status as was the case when

the “cult of the Big Man on Campus” was prevalent in American higher education, the tenacious legacy of the types of campus involvement that validate and affirm students’ presence in the university community still matters. Contemporary scholars are urging practitioners to be more intentionally reflective about how social class is experienced in the campus setting and how the extracurriculum that reflects the values of an aristocratic male “ruling class” from a century ago continues to shape the campus experience that characterizes American institutions in the twenty-first century (Barratt, 2012; Gricich, 2008; Hess, 2007; Martin, 2010).

Understanding collegiate secret societies as a practical need for student advocacy on campuses in the early twentieth century when only the president, academic, and business officers were part of the official administrative structure of most institutions reframes these groups in a more positive and sympathetic light. This study about a collegiate secret society in the South expands the historical knowledge about the origins and functions of these types of groups beyond the salacious contemporary legend of Yale’s Skull and Bones, America’s best-known and infamous collegiate secret society. The story of how the Red Friars managed student affairs until professional oversight was added to the university’s organizational structure also offers insight for practitioners on small, liberal arts campuses who still today experience strong entrenchment of student self-government traditions.

Beyond heightened awareness and understanding of the phenomenon of collegiate secret societies as a historical source of power on campus, student affairs practitioners could draw inspiration from this study to plan training for student leaders and colleagues focused

on raising their awareness about how social class impacts the student experience. Although race, ethnicity, and gender are generally recognized and discussed as salient aspects of student identity, the importance of considering social class identity and experience is often neglected when planning and managing extracurricular programs (Barratt, 2012). The encounters of subordinate class students with dominant group activities such as fraternity and sorority life, study abroad experiences, and intramural sports can render them excluded by default from what is celebrated as important by the campus community due to personal financial challenges and the absence of inherited cultural capital that values such involvement (Martin, 2010).

One example of an initiative that student affairs practitioners could employ to support the college socialization process for increasing numbers of students from historically underrepresented backgrounds would be to train student orientation leaders to be more conscious of social class identity and its salience for students attempting to navigate college culture. Orientation leaders are typically responsible for introducing new students to the traditions, customs, and structure of their particular college or university community. They usually facilitate informal small group discussions about the transition to college life and encourage new students to get involved in campus activities. For orientation leaders to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, awareness, and skills to make all students, regardless of social class background, feel welcome and included on campus, special training would be required beyond the traditional student leader training that addresses racial and ethnic diversity and inclusion.

Training for student affairs professionals and faculty to become more aware of how social class background impacts a student's experience within a particular campus cultural setting will become increasingly important as American colleges and universities strive to sustain a viable "bricks and mortar" college experience. Projections about the changing future of American higher education abound in terms of increasing online options, but the in-person, on-campus experience is expected to persist as valued, even as tremendous growth occurs amongst students enrolling from historically-underrepresented backgrounds (Conklin, 2011; Delbanco, 2005; Kiley, 2013; Lederman, 2011). Faculty and student affairs professionals should become more aware of how components that have come to define the American college experience might effectively exclude the majority of their incoming students from what is characterized as "mainstream" participation in their community. Cultural expectations that include buying textbooks, wearing collegiate gear, studying abroad, playing intramurals, joining a fraternity or sorority, or attending athletic events pose financial challenges that are more salient for students from lower social class backgrounds; although students from subordinate groups can learn to assimilate and mask their social class backgrounds, campus leaders can be trained to be more aware and sensitive to these students' particular challenges and needs (Barratt, 2012; Hess, 2007; Martin, 2010).

Student affairs practitioners also might work on behalf of students from historically underrepresented backgrounds to create or identify sources for financial assistance for participation in extracurricular activities. Practitioners could work with development offices and alumni organizations to create scholarships for students who lack the financial means to

participate in fraternity and sorority life or honor societies, which involves payment of membership fees and dues. They might also work to provide better information and explanation to students about scholarship monies available from national offices of fraternities and sororities and opportunities for participation in leadership development programs available at no cost to the student, similar to Perna's (2006) recommendation that better explanation of information about college access and financial aid be provided to students from historically underrepresented backgrounds and their families.

Student affairs practitioners and campus leaders could acknowledge that participation in many aspects of organized student life creates a social class divide. This predicament could be addressed on an institutional level with structured financial assistance programs and endowed scholarships, anticipating these programs will continue to be supported otherwise as important components of the extracurriculum. It is conceivable, for example, that alumni who had positive experiences participating in Greek life might be enthusiastic about creating scholarship funds to support students from underrepresented backgrounds to have the same opportunity. Stipends could perhaps be established for on-campus leadership positions, such as has been done on some campuses for newspaper staff and student government officers, so that students who need to work to pay for college wouldn't have to forego holding leadership positions.

On a more theoretical level, the case history of the Red Friars collegiate secret society that was active at Duke University between 1913 and 1971 provides a useful in-depth examination of how the cultural hegemony of the white, male student shaped higher

education in the United States over the course of the twentieth century. This study elevates the importance of understanding the tenacity of the phenomenon of the Big Man on Campus that emerged from the values of students in the elite all-male boarding schools in the Northeast who in turn created the distinctive American extracurriculum in the late-nineteenth century. The eventual rejection of the “establishment” ideals that the Order of Red Friars had come to represent within their community and the exclusivity associated with their “Big Man on Campus” ideal should offer unique insight for campus officials interested in understanding the process of social change. It provides hope and understanding based on Gramsci’s assertion that social actors can bring about change in the social order when they act to resist the coercion of the dominant group.

Gramsci’s theory of praxis can be applied to explain how the Order of Red Friars and other secret societies at Duke lost their dominant position in the social system that students created in the early twentieth century. The political journalism and theatre produced by students who took action to resist the prevailing social order of their day effectively changed the cultural meaning of the Order’s presence on the campus from one of silent acceptance to a presence that could be mocked and rejected. Therefore, the explanatory power of Gramsci’s theory of cultural hegemony was well-suited for this study and offers great potential for application now in the twenty-first century. As students from underrepresented backgrounds enter higher education communities where the values of upper-class students from generations past still prevail and shape the systems of status associated with the organized aspects of student life, practitioners would be well-served to reflect on the impact

of patterns of cultural hegemony that can be observed in the traditions and activities their students most value.

Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction illuminated the patterns of upper-class masculine socialization that can be traced from the all-male New England boarding school culture of the late-nineteenth century through the historical narrative of the Red Friars to the distinctive extracurriculum of the American college campus today. The continued emphasis on supporting men's athletics and the celebration of male physicality, as well as the social confidence associated with participation in exclusive Greek-letter fraternal organizations and leadership of campus clubs and organizations, illustrates Bourdieu's (1977) conceptualization of how cultural information passed down from one generation to another perpetuates the norms of dominant social groups and reifies social class stratification entangled in systems of higher education. The durability of the cultural hegemony that characterized the extracurriculum of American colleges and universities throughout most of the twentieth century was observable in this study of the Red Friars and therefore affirmed Bourdieu's assertion that educational institutions contribute to the reproduction of social inequities.

Bourdieu's theory is useful for practitioners seeking an understanding of how the norms of the dominant social class can persist over time in spite of enormous social change and transformation of student demographics, which is instructive for campus leaders today. In the case of the Red Friars, Gramsci's theory of praxis offered an explanation for how social actors could utilize creative, non-violent means for resisting the coercion of a dominant social group. Bourdieu's theory of social reproduction, nonetheless, provides a

useful explanation for understanding how prevailing social forces might inevitably manifest in a new way. The example of the all-male staff of the campus newspaper that eventually displaced the Red Friars as the voice of Duke's student community in 1970 foreshadowed the persistence of the male voice as the narrator of American life. The findings of the 2012 Byline Report by The OpEd Project (a nonprofit organization that studies public discourse) revealed that 63 percent of American journalists in traditional media are male, and males write 75 percent or more of the stories about hard news topics such as science, war, terrorism, global economy, and domestic politics.

In addition to the application of Bourdieu and Gramsci's social theories, the theory offered by Horowitz (1987) to explain observable patterns of student culture in the history of American higher education emerged as important in this study. Horowitz offered that throughout the course of American higher education history, three basic types of students are observable – students who participated in organized college life, students who were outsiders because they lacked the means or desire to participate in organized college life, and campus rebels (often students who wrote for the campus newspaper) who were more focused on larger social issues beyond the insular world of campus organizations. I found Horowitz' typology to be applicable to the archival data at Duke University that revealed strong and persistent cultural patterns related to organized student life, rebels more focused on larger social issues beyond the campus community, and students who were not involved in campus life. However, Horowitz characterized students who were involved in campus life (fraternities, clubs and organizations, student government, etc...) as uninterested in

academics and engaged in a perpetual war with the faculty. Although she acknowledged that during the early twentieth century, faculty began to collaborate with students to adopt their traditions and customs as the official traditions and customs of the institution, she maintained that student leaders were co-opted by administrators and were simply tokens of the newly organized administrative structure.

My findings in this study would challenge Horowitz' (1987) assumptions that students involved in campus life were uninterested in academics, that they maintained an adversarial relationship with the faculty, and that they were hapless pawns in the emergent administrative structure of American universities in the early twentieth century. The Red Friar whom I interviewed from the World War II era emphasized how he and his brothers in the secret society were the leaders of the major campus organizations (the B.M.O.C.s) but they also were serious students with aspirations for graduate study. He went to Duke to pursue a career in medicine and attended medical school at Duke upon graduation. The alumni roster of the Red Friars includes notable numbers of men who pursued graduate and professional study, including many who became college professors. The Red Friars who were the leaders of the major campus groups recorded little in their organizational records that would indicate they harbored an antagonistic stance towards the faculty. In fact, the organizational records of the Red Friars documented that the students were successful in co-opting campus leaders for the purpose of managing their agenda for student life. They initiated deans and presidents into their brotherhood and enjoyed intimate access to senior administrators for nearly half a century. The relationship between the Red Friars and college

officials, including prominent faculty, would appear to be more accurately portrayed as one of mutual benefit. Campus leaders consulted with the Red Friars to gauge student opinion and enlist their advocacy for institutional decisions. Members of the Red Friars presented their concerns and requests for assistance with student life issues directly to institutional officials at the highest level, including the president.

The most useful insight from Horowitz (1987) was her insistence that students who participated in organized campus life did not represent the experience of all students. This astute observation serves as a call to scholars to pursue a better understanding of the experiences of students excluded from historic characterizations of the American campus norm. It is with this heightened awareness that ideas for future research related to the study of collegiate secret societies are presented.

Ideas for Future Research

The limitations of the scope of this study illuminate possibilities for further research. This research project was an endeavor to begin to fill the vast gap in the scholarly literature that developed in the past century since the last substantive writing about the phenomenon of collegiate secret societies occurred. The prominence of this type of student organization last held the attention of scholars around the turn of the twentieth century when it created an administrative problem for campus leaders who were mostly faculty managing student life as a distraction from the pursuit of academic studies. The collegiate secret society ascended in the extracurriculum along with the “cult of the Big Man on Campus” between the 1920s and 1950s during the resurgence of student participation in campus activities. Both phenomena

submerged into the lost memory of institutional histories prior to the 1960s when specialized research about American higher education began in earnest.

This study makes a significant contribution to the history of American higher education by providing basic knowledge about the origins and functions of a collegiate secret society that was active at Duke University (Trinity College prior to 1924) for much of the twentieth century. This study used the case of a secret society at a college in the southern United States to achieve a better understanding of why students established this type of group and what its function was within a provincial campus community that grew into a prestigious international university. It explored how a collegiate secret society assumed responsibility for managing the extracurriculum prior to the professionalization of student affairs in the early twentieth century. It revealed how students in a prestigious secret society inducted institutional leaders as honorary members and ultimately developed relationships that conferred power on their corporate body that resulted in students having influence in campus decision-making outside of any recognized institutional structure. This form of shadow governance has been unexamined by higher education scholars who wish to understand both the rational and irrational aspects of organizational behavior in the college and university environment.

Higher education scholars and practitioners who are interested in learning more about the phenomenon of collegiate secret societies and their impact as a source of power on campus could explore more about how prevalent this type of organization was in the American college and university setting in the early twentieth century. This study was

limited to the case of one secret society for the purpose of understanding the phenomenon in depth, however, a survey of the scope of this phenomenon would continue to fill the gap in the history of America higher education literature that has only begun to be addressed by this study. Institutional histories and student media archives could be consulted to assess the breadth of this phenomenon and to learn more about the function these groups served in different types of campus environments. As affirmed by this study, student media, especially yearbooks and newspapers, offer rich source material for historical research about campus cultures that heretofore has been underutilized in American higher education scholarship.

The history of Yale's secret societies should be examined beyond the stories in the popular media about their famous members and scandalous initiation rituals for evidence that might directly tie their groups to the establishment of secret societies on other campuses. Higher education scholars already acknowledge that Yale was the originator of the majority of customs that students around the country emulated to comprise what became the distinctively American extracurriculum and that faculty from Yale were inordinately responsible for the founding of many institutions during the expansion of higher education to the West coast (Rudolph, 1990; Thelin, 2011; Veysey, 1965). It seems logical that the history of these groups should be studied for what they might add to the history of higher education scholarship regarding student culture.

In addition, higher education scholars should further explore how the values of the "big men on campus" who comprised collegiate secret societies like the Red Friars on many campuses in the early twentieth century served to instill the values of the white, male

Protestant student who held the status of the dominant social group in America in the creation of cultural traditions, expectations, and rewards of social status for participation in campus life. More critical research is needed to heighten awareness of institutional leaders about the impact that cultural norms established by the homogeneous students of the recent past continue to have as they are passed down to successive generations of students from increasingly diverse backgrounds.

In closing, scholars have long called for more studies about student culture in American higher education and how it has changed over time (Clark, 1972; Thelin, 1982; Veysey, 1965), yet the research in this area remains limited, especially for the recent past. This study addressed the gap that exists in the history of American higher education literature about collegiate culture in the South, in particular, as well as the phenomenon of the collegiate secret society as an historic source of power on campus. Utilizing archival research methods and oral history interviews, the involvement of the Order of the Red Friars in the administration of student affairs at Duke University for sixty years during the twentieth century produced basic knowledge about this phenomenon. Hopefully, it serves as an invitation to scholars and practitioners to pursue a deeper understanding of the cultural hegemony from which the Friars emerged that continues to influence campus cultures today.

REFERENCES

- Adler, J., & Talbot, M. (1991). God, men and bonding at Yale. *Newsweek*, 117(17), 66.
Retrieved 3/3/13 from <http://www.thedailybeast.com/newsweek/1991/04/28/god-men-and-bonding-at-yale.html>
- A. Hollis Edens records, University Archives, Duke University.
- Alcott, M. (1958, November 22). Look homeward, angel: Divided allegiances; Many professors attended Harvard and Yale: The game causes dilemmas, reminiscences. *The Harvard Crimson*. Retrieved 1/15/13 from www.thecrimson.com/1958/11/22.
- American Council on Education. (1937). *The student personnel point of view*. Retrieved from www.naspa.org/pubs/StudAff_1937.pdf
- Anderson, J. D. (1993). Race, meritocracy, and the American academy during the immediate post-World War II era. *History of Education Quarterly*, 33(2), 151-175.
- Anonymous. (2009, March 31). The view from inside the Machine. *The Crimson White*. Retrieved from <http://www.cw.ua.edu>
- Anyan, J. (2009). Introduction: Critical social theory, educational research, and intellectual agency. In J. Anyon (Ed.), *Theory and educational research: Toward a critical social explanation* (p. 4). New York: Routledge.
- Apple, M. (1971). The hidden curriculum and the nature of conflict. *Interchange*, 2(4), 27-40.
- Arnold-Baker, C. (2008). *The companion to British history* (3rd ed.). London: Longcross Denholm Press.

- Bagg, L. (1871). *Four Years at Yale*. New Haven, Conn.: Charles C. Chatfield & Co.
- Barratt, W. (2012). Social class and the extracurriculum. *Journal of College & Character*, 13(3). Retrieved from <http://journals.naspa.org/jcc/>
- Barzun, J., & Graff, H. F. (2003). *The modern researcher* (6th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Bederman, G. (2008). *Manliness and civilization: A cultural history of gender and race in the United States, 1880-1917*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bell, D. (1966). *The reforming of higher education: The Columbia College experience in its national setting*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bender, T. (2008). Updating higher education's past: 1940 to 2005. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 54(44)
- Best, J. H. (1988). The revolution of markets and management: Toward a history of American higher education since 1945. *History of Education Quarterly*, 28(2), 177-189.
- Biddix, J.P., & Schwartz, R.A. (2012). Walter Dill Scott and the student personnel movement. *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, 49(3), 285-298.
- Borg, C., Buttigieg, J. & Mayo, P. (1994). Introduction. Gramsci and education: A holistic approach. In C. Borg, J.A. Buttigieg, & P. Mayo *Gramsci and Education* (Eds.), (pp. 1-24). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice* (translated by Richard Nice), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. & Passeron, J. (1977). *Reproduction in education, society, and culture*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1977). *Schooling in capitalist America: Educational reform and the contradictions of economic life*. New York: Basic Books.
- Brown, D. (2003). *DaVinci Code*. New York: Doubleday.
- Brubacher, J. S. & Rudy, W. (1968). *Higher education in transition: A history of American colleges and universities, 1636-1968*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc.
- Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and practical guide*. London: Routledge.
- Chafe, W. H. (1972). *The American woman: Her changing social, economic, and political roles, 1920-1970*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Clandinin, D. J. & Rosiek, J. (2007). Mapping a landscape of narrative inquiry. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 3-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Clark, D. A. (1998). "The two Joes meet. Joe college, Joe veteran": The G. I. Bill, college education, and postwar American culture. *History of Education Quarterly*, 38(2), 165-189.
- Cohen, A. (2010). *The shaping of American higher education: Emergence and growth of the contemporary system*. (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Cohn, B. S. (1980). History and anthropology: The state of play. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 22(2), 198-221.
- Cooper, P. (2003, September 4). A mark to remember. *The Cavalier Daily*. Retrieved 9/19/09 from <http://www.cavalierdaily.com>
- Coulter, E. M. (1928). College life in the Old South as seen at the University of Georgia. New York: Macmillan Company.
- Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research for education: An introduction to theory and methods* (5th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Crocker, L. (1943). Fraternities and democracy. *The Circle: The News Magazine of Omicron Delta Kappa*, 23(1), 1-3.
- Darnton, R. (1984). *The great cat massacre: And other episodes in French cultural history*. New York: Basic Books.
- Davis, N. Z. (1981). Anthropology and history in the 1980s: The possibilities of the past. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 12(2), 267-275.
- Dean, R. D. (2001). *Imperial brotherhood: Gender and the making of cold war foreign policy*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Delbanco, A. (2005, March 10). Colleges: An endangered species? *The New York Review of Books*. Retrieved 1/20/13 from www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2005/mar/10
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). (pp. 1-32). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

- Dewey, J. (1916). *Democracy and education: An introduction to the philosophy of education*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- Di Maggio, P., & Powell, W. (1983). The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48, 147-160.
- Durden, R. F. (1993). *The launching of Duke University, 1924-1949*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Eisenmann, L. (2007). Introduction. In H. S. Wechsler, L. F. Goodchild & L. Eisenmann (Eds.), *The history of higher education* (Third ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Fitzgerald, F. S. (1921). *This side of paradise*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Fitzgerald, F. S. (1925). *The great Gatsby*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
- Foster, W. (1989). The administrator as a transformative intellectual. *Peabody Journal of Education*, 66, 5-18.
- Fraenkel, J.R., & Wallen, N. E. (2003). Content analysis. In J. R. Fraenkel & N. F. Wallen (Eds.), *How to design and evaluate research in education* (Fifth ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Freeland, R. M. (2007). The world transformed: A golden age for American universities, 1945-1970. In H. S. Wechsler, L. F. Goodchild & L. Eisenmann (Eds.), *The history of higher education* (Third ed., pp. 597-618). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. USA: Basic Books.

- Geertz, C. (1983). Blurred genres: The refiguration of social thought. In *Local Knowledge: Further essays in interpretive anthropology* (New York: 1983).
- Grbich, C. (2007). Visual interpretation. In C. Grbich (Ed.), *Qualitative data analysis: An introduction*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Grcich, K. (2008). *Beyond the gates: An exploration of socioeconomically disadvantaged students navigating the University of Pennsylvania* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAT 3310480)
- Groff, D. J. (2009). *The fraternity factor: Secret handshake to the White House* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAT 3364858)
- Grover, S. (1968, December 11). The society set: Secret groups thrive at Yale, fraternities lag: Juniors yearn for bid on 'Tap Day'; Dink Stover and Cyrus Vance. *The Wall Street Journal*.
- Hallett, T. (2003). Symbolic power and organizational culture. *Sociological Theory*, 21(2), 128-149.
- Haraway, D. (1988). Situated knowledge: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective. *Feminist Studies*, 14(3), 575-599.
- Harding, S. (1993). Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is "strong objectivity"? In L. Alcoll & E. Potter (Eds.), *Feminist epistemologies* (pp. 49-82). New York: Routledge.
- Hess, S. (2007). *Navigating class on campus: The peer culture of working class undergraduates* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (304896789)
- Hitchcock, E. (1863). *Reminiscences of Amherst College: Historical, Scientific,*

- Biographical and Autobiographical*. Northampton, MA: Bridgman & Childs.
- Horowitz, H. L. (1987). *Campus life: Undergraduate cultures from the end of the eighteenth century to the present*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Hunt, L. (1989). Introduction: History, culture, and text. In L. Hunt (Ed.), *The new cultural history*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ingold, T. (2008). Anthropology is *not* ethnography. *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 154, 69-92.
- Inventory of the Order of Red Friars Records (1913-1971). University Archives, Duke University. Retrieved from <http://library.duke.edu/rubenstein/findingaids/uaredfriars/>
- Jacobs, J. A. (1996). Gender inequality and higher education. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22, 153-185.
- Jacobson, M.F. (1998). *Whiteness of a different color: European immigrants and the alchemy of race*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Johnson, A. (1972). *Fraternities in our colleges*. New York: National Interfraternity Conference.
- Johnson, O. (1912). *Stover at Yale*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company.
- Kennedy, R. (2007). Raymond D. Nasher, 85, Dallas art collector who built a museum, dies. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2007/03/20/arts/design/20nasher.html?_r=0
- Kuh, G. D., & Whitt, E. J. (1988). *The invisible tapestry: Culture in American colleges and universities*. College Station, TX: Association for the Study of Higher Education.
- LeCompte, M.D. (2000). Analyzing qualitative data. *Theory into practice*, 39(3), 146-154.

- Lloyd-Jones, E. (1934). Personnel administration. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 5(3), 141-147.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Long, C. (2010). *Riverfront girls making the transition to high school* (Doctoral dissertation). Philadelphia, PA: Temple University.
- MacKenzie, N. (1967). *Secret societies*. Aldus Books: London.
- Magner, D. K. (1991). Alumni shut down secret society at Yale U. over attempt to admit women. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 37(32), A2.
- Martin, N. (2010). *Social class and elite university education: Bourdieusian analysis* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (3398158)
- McLachlan, J. (1974). The choice of Hercules: American student societies in the early 19th century. In L. Stone (Ed.), *The university in society, Vol. II: Europe, Scotland and the United States from the 16th to the 20th century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- McLaren, P., Fishchman, G., Serra, S., & Antelo, E. (2002). The specter of Gramsci: Revolutionary praxis and the committed intellectual. In C. Borg, J. Buttigieg, & P. Mayo (Eds.), *Gramsci and education* (pp. 147-178).
- Mead, K. (2009, April 22). Seven society announces recipients of \$14,777.77 gift. *The Cavalier Daily*. Retrieved from <http://www.cavalierdaily.com>
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). Assessing and evaluating qualitative research. In S. B.

- Merriam and Associates (Eds.), *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis* (pp. 18-32). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mertens, D. M. (2005). *Research and evaluation in education and psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Mettler, S. (2005). *Soldiers to citizens: The G.I. Bill and the making of the greatest generation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mielke, E. (2001, October 31). Secret societies: Do they still haunt campus? *The Chronicle*, Duke University.
- Miller-Bernal, L. (2002). Conservative intent, liberating outcomes: The history of coordinate colleges for women. In A. Datnow & L. Hubbard (Eds.), *Gender in policy and practice: Perspectives on single-sex and coeducational schooling* (pp. 156-171). New York: Routledge-Falmer.
- Morgan-Fleming, B., Riegle, S., & Fryer, W. (2007). Narrative inquiry in archival work. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 3-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Moyen, E. A. (2004). *Carolina's campus and community: The historical development of town and gown relations in twentieth century North Carolina* (Doctoral dissertation). Lexington, KY: The University of Kentucky.
- Niddifer, J., & Cain, T.R. (2004). Elder brothers of the university: Early vice presidents in late nineteenth-century universities. *History of Education Quarterly*, 44(4), 487-523.

Olson, K. W. (1974). *The G.I. Bill, the veterans, and the colleges*. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky.

Olson, K. W. (1973). The G. I. Bill and higher education: Success and surprise. *American Quarterly*, 25(5), 596-610.

The OpEd Project. (2012). *Who narrates the world? The OpEd Project Byline Report*.

Retrieved from http://www.theopedproject.org/index.php?option=com_content&view

Order of Red Friars records, University Archives, Duke University, 1913-1971.

Order of White Duchy records, University Archives, Duke University, 1924-1968.

Painter, N. I. (2010). *The history of white people*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Palmeiri, P.A. (2007). From Republican motherhood to race suicide: Arguments on the higher education of women in the United States, 1820-1920. In H. S. Wechsler, L. F. Goodchild & L. Eisenmann (Eds.), *The history of higher education* (Third ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Custom Publishing.

Pasco, R. J. (2003). *Capital and opportunity: A critical ethnography of students at-risk*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, Inc.

Pascarella, E. T., & Terenzini, P. T. (2005). *How college affects students: A third decade of research* (Vol. 2). Indianapolis: Jossey-Bass.

Patrick, B. M. (1942). *The front line: Materials for a study of leadership in college and after*. Durham, NC: Duke University.

- Perna, L. W. (2006). Understanding the relationship between information about college prices and financial aid and students' college-related behaviors. *American Behavioral Scientist, 49*(12), 1620-1635.
- Pike, D. W. (1939). *Secret Societies: Their Origin, History and Fate*. Oxford University Press: London.
- Pinnegar, S., & Daynes, J. G. (2007). Locating narrative inquiry historically: Thematics in the turn to narrative. In D. J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 3-34). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Porter, E. (1964). *Trinity and Duke: 1892-1924. Foundations of Duke University*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Prins, H. (2002). Visual anthropology: Guidelines for the evaluation of visual ethnographic visual media. *American Anthropologist, 104*(1): 303-306.
- Reissman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Robbins, A. (2002). *Secrets of the tomb: Skull & Bones, The Ivy League, and the hidden paths of power*. New York: Hachette Book Group.
- Roediger, D. R. (2005). *Working toward whiteness: How America's immigrants became white*. New York: Basic Books.
- Rose, R. M. (1984). *For our mutual benefit: Antebellum Georgia college student organizations* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest. (AAT 8504633)

- Rousmaniere, K. (2004). Historical research. In K. DeMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 31-50). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Rudolph, F. (1962/1990). *The American college & university: A history*. Athens: The University of Georgia Press.
- Russell, M. (2009, March 12). Suggestions for the machine. *The Crimson White*. Retrieved from <http://www.cw.ua.edu>
- Saltmarsh, J., Hartley, M., & Clayton, P. H. (2009). *Democratic Engagement White Paper*. Boston, MA: New England Resource Center for Higher Education.
- Schiff, J. A. (1999, November). Getting Yale on the right track: Town and gown rode the rails together when Yale and New Haven held joint festivities to honor the university's first leader of the 20th century. *Yale Alumni Magazine*.
- Schwartz, R. A. (2003). The rise and demise of deans of men. *The Review of Higher Education*, 26(2), 217-239.
- Sheldon, H. D. (1901). *Student life and customs*. New York: D. Appleton and Company.
- Sinclair, U. (1923). *The goosestep: A study of American education*. (2nd ed.). Pasadena, CA: Upton Sinclair.
- Stearns, P. N. (1976). Student culture as a change agent in American higher education: An illustration from the nineteenth century. *Journal of Social History*, 9(4), 526-541.

- Stearns, P. J. (1998). Why study history? (web page of the American Historical Association). Retrieved 11/20/09 from <http://www.historians.org/pubs/Free/WhyStudyHistory.Htm>
- Syrett, N. (2009). *The company he keeps: A history of white college fraternities*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.
- The Chanticleer*. (Volumes 1912 – 1971). University Archives, Duke University.
- The machine today: Menace or myth? (2007, March 31). *The Tuscaloosa News*. Retrieved 9/19/09 from <http://www.tuscaloosanews.com>
- Thelin, J. (1982). *Higher education and its useful past: Applied history in research and planning*. Rochester, VT: Schenkman Books, Inc.
- Thelin, J. (2002). As cited in Forest, J., & Kinser, K. Important books about higher education - Higher Education in the United States: An Encyclopedia ; New York: ABC-CLIO Publishers.
- Thelin, J. (2004). *A history of American higher education*. Baltimore, MD: JHU Press.
- Thelin, J. (2011). *A history of American higher education* (2nd ed.). Baltimore, MD: JHU Press.
- Thorne, (July 2000). Data analysis in qualitative research. *Evidence-Based Nursing*, 3(3), 68-70.
- Thwing, C. R. (1878). *American colleges: Their students and work*. New York: G. P. Putnam.

- Torbenson, C. L. (2005). The origin and evolution of college fraternities and sororities. In T. Brown, G. Parks & C. Phillips (Eds.), *African American fraternities and sororities: Their legacy and vision* (37-66). Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky.
- Tosh, J. (2002). *The pursuit of history* (3rd ed.). New York: Longman.
- Veblen, T. (1918) *The higher learning in America: A memorandum on the conduct of universities by business men*. New York: B. W. Huebsch.
- Veysey, L. R. (1965). *The emergence of the American university*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Welch, L. S., & Camp, W. (1899). *Yale: Her Campus, Classroom, and Athletics*. Boston: L.C. Page and Company.
- Wilder, T. (2012, Jan/Feb). Thornton Wilder's Yale. *Yale Alumni Magazine*. Retrieved 1/15/13 from <http://www.yalealumnimagazine.com/articles/3328>
- Wilkie, L. A. (2010). *The lost boys of Zeta Psi: A historical archaeology of masculinity at a university fraternity*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wolcott, H. F. (2008). *Ethnography: A way of seeing* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Wolcott, H. F. (2009). *Writing up qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- W. P. Few papers, University Archives, Duke University.
- Yale's skull and bones plans to admit women. (1991). *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 37(40), A2.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

My Perspective as a Researcher: A Transformative Worldview

My Perspective as a Researcher: A Transformative Worldview

As a scholar of American higher education and a student affairs practitioner whose career began in the 1980s, I have experienced firsthand the diversification and globalization of higher education in this country over the past quarter century. Due to my role as a dean of students at a small, liberal arts college for women in the Southeastern United States, in the midst of this growing student diversity, I have been educated by the strengthened voice of students from historically underrepresented backgrounds regarding the power of social class and privilege in the college setting and the impact it has had on their college experience. I have become increasingly aware of my obligation as a student affairs practitioner in a position of power to work on behalf of students from underrepresented backgrounds to build a more inclusive campus community true to the democratic purpose historically espoused in American higher education.

I have come to realize how my subjective perspective as a researcher is socially situated (Dinzen & Lincoln, 2005, p. 22; Haraway, 1988) and how my privileged identity as a white, Christian, heterosexual female from a middle-class, small-town background informs my work and obligates me to be mindful of my social and historical position as I endeavor to generate new knowledge. I proceed knowing that my theoretical orientation for exploring social issues fits squarely within the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2004, p. 23). I consider myself a critical theorist in the Marxist and feminist tradition in the sense that I am interested in understanding the way socially-stratified systems are structured, reproduced, and modified by social actors over time.

According to feminist scholar Sandra Harding (1993, p. 54), understanding one's "standpoint" or social and historical perspective is critical when attempting to produce knowledge in a society that is stratified in terms of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and otherwise. Harding asserted that members of dominant groups must "critically and systematically" interrogate their advantaged social positions to abrogate the effects of such advantages on their beliefs which otherwise would result in a "scientifically and epistemologically disadvantaged" social situation for generating knowledge. In light of my relativist ontological belief that concepts of reality may be reified social structures because of historical situations (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 22), I am determined to critically examine the role of socially-constructed realities in perpetuating oppressive social structures and advantaging certain groups (Mertens, 2004, p. 23).

Although my relationship with the students I wish to research is necessarily historical and archival, my work is rooted in an interpretive epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 22) that honors the humanity, perspective, and experience of those who were both members of the dominant cultural groups and outside of those groups in the collegiate setting. In this spirit of agency, I embrace narrative inquiry as both a phenomenon of study and a methodology amenable to historical and cultural inquiry (Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007, p. 5) with an awareness that those whom I study and whose narrative work I study, along with myself the researcher, have a particular history and worldview (p. 14). I am aware of the influence of the dominant social norms of our particular ethnographic settings on our

respective storytelling (Reissman, 2008, p. 124) and ultimately value our differentiated standpoints as mutually enriching the outcome of this research.

I am fully aware that my perspective in studying collegiate secret societies is rooted in my personal experience as a college student at Appalachian State University in the mountains of North Carolina in the 1980s. As an undergraduate, I was actively involved in what historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz (1987) refers to as “college life” – the organized aspects of campus life. I participated in Greek life and found membership in a sorority to be a transformational experience. Having grown up in a culturally homogeneous small town in western North Carolina, my sorority experience introduced me to people from different parts of the country with different religious backgrounds. I developed many social skills and expanded my worldview through interaction with my sorority sisters. Because of my sorority’s emphasis on leadership, scholarship, and service (as well as social life), I did well academically and enjoyed my time in college. I majored in history, thus returning to this approach for my doctoral dissertation is like coming home. I also wrote for the student newspaper and served on the editorial board for three years which, ironically, are activities Horowitz associates with iconoclastic students who are “rebels” opposed to “college life” and more interested in rectifying social injustices.

My insider perspective is further informed by my work as a student affairs practitioner with more than 25 years of experience in diverse campus settings. I have worked at both private and public institutions of varying sizes in three different regions of the country – the South, Midwest, and Northeast. I have worked in student activities and as a

dean at colleges for women (Queens College – Charlotte, North Carolina; Cedar Crest College – Allentown, PA, and Salem College – Winston-Salem, NC) which of course has heightened my awareness of gender in the higher education setting. I also worked in Greek Affairs at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania – a predominantly male institution known for its engineering programs and for having one of the largest Greek systems in the country, which served to temper my perspective on gender issues. My graduate assistantships in student life at The Ohio State University and my work in new student orientation at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro round out my extensive exposure to diverse student cultures and subcultures which shapes my approach to this topic.

Finally, as a scholar-practitioner, I approach the world as a “transformative intellectual” (Foster, 1989). I recognize that all of my experience as a student and an administrator is from predominantly white institutions where the norms of the majority have dominated student culture and traditions. The thrust of my research is about the social phenomenon of collegiate secret societies which presumably perpetuated the norms of dominant social groups on many American campuses through much of the twentieth century. Because these groups are still functioning on some campuses today, I think critically about my obligation as an administrator to better understand aspects of student culture that are socially reproduced and rooted in the values of students from a historical period characterized by students’ white, male, middle to upper class, Protestant homogeneity. I believe that by studying the early twentieth-century origins of one secret society whose members exemplified the “BMOC” ideal, I might illuminate other aspects of the uniquely

American extracurriculum, such as varsity athletics, fraternity membership, and student government, which were established amidst the cultural hegemony of that same period.

I find validation in Foster's call for college administrators to become "transformative intellectuals", viewing administration as a critical and moral obligation, requiring reflection on the social conditions of the institutions in which we wield much power as part of an historical process. In the Marxist scholarly tradition, I am concerned with understanding the processes of macrosocial oppression of which people may be unaware or upon which they do not reflect, and I value narrative inquiry as a complementary approach which offers a powerful means of connecting lived experience with socially critical theoretical concepts (Clandinin & Rosiek, 2007, p. 61; Morgan-Fleming, Riegle, & Fryer, 2007, p. 85).

For the sake of full disclosure, I was an experienced college dean when I discovered an active secret society at my institution that had been founded nearly 100 years prior. In fact, campus legend claimed that as many as four secret societies were still active. Admittedly, I was taken aback that these seemingly ancient student subcultures could be robustly functioning in the twenty-first century due to their presumably exclusive nature. However, through the process of this research, I have found evidence that would indicate on some campuses secret societies became increasingly diverse over the course of the twentieth century and operated as meritocracies that embraced the diversification of the student body at large.

Nonetheless, I have done much soul-searching about my own involvement in Greek life both as an undergraduate and a university administrator because of the exclusivity

associated with these groups. For many years it was easy to disregard comments about Greeks as students who “buy their friends” because I had a positive experience myself and felt such accusations were unfair. For college administrators around the country who may be unaware of secret societies on their campuses or believe that their presence is inconsequential, I would argue that the known existence of these groups on our campuses (whether extant or active) provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the tenacity of the cultural hegemony which produced not only collegiate secret societies celebrating the “BMOOC ideal, but similar aspects of college life that are visible all around us if we dare to look. What can we learn from knowing that the campus cultures students inherit today are rooted in the values of students from the dominant social groups of a century ago?

Appendix B

Pilot Study #1: The “Big Man on Campus” as a Cultural History Phenomenon

Pilot Study #1: The “Big Man on Campus” as a Cultural History Phenomenon

In the spring of 2010, I began to explore the potential of narrative inquiry for creating new knowledge about collegiate secret societies. I took a narrative inquiry course and designed an historical study to see what I could learn about student culture at Duke University and how it changed over time while a male secret senior honorary society and its “co-ed” female counterpart were active there (1910s to 1970s). I also enrolled in an anthropology and history seminar at Duke. Doctoral students from both disciplines and our seminar instructor, a cultural anthropologist with a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, critiqued three monographs I produced during this period. Their feedback helped me begin making design decisions about methodology and the incorporation of theory informed by the expertise of their complementary disciplinary backgrounds.

Given that Tosh (2002) asserts a critique of the available sources is the first and most important step in the process of all scholarly historical research, I was particularly interested in evaluating the usefulness of student yearbooks in searching for historical evidence of social stratification and cultural meaning. I was interested in “trying on” several social theories to assess their potential explanatory value for understanding and interpreting college student culture from the perspective of critical educational ethnography. Finally, I utilized American feminist anthropologist Sherry Ortner’s “Key Symbols” analytical methodological model (1973) to interpret the archival materials in this study. The ultimate goal of this study was to determine whether the resources available in the Duke University archives were sufficient to support a dissertation exploring the phenomenon of collegiate secret societies.

What I expected to find in the archives was the narrative of an aristocratic and elitist student body similar to Yale's which had produced the notoriously iconic "Skull and Bones" secret society. What I discovered instead was the narrative of a humble institution, unlike aristocratic Yale. Union Institute was founded in 1838 as a rural subscription school and was transformed by its leaders in the 1880s into a provincial liberal arts institution named Trinity College, eventually to become Duke University in 1924, a modern research university on a trajectory for gaining prestige among nationally-recognized institutions (Durden, 1993). When the Order of Red Friars secret society was founded at Trinity College in 1913, the student body was overwhelmingly homogeneous – mostly male, white and Protestant, and of modest income (Durden, 1993; Moyon, 2004). My first lesson learned was that the analysis of the formation of a secret society must consider the particular cultural setting of the institution in which it emerged. Institutions which boasted the presence of secret societies at some point in their history were certainly not a monolithic group (Horowitz, 1987).

When I began to analyze the data in the Trinity/Duke yearbooks, however, applying the analytical framework of Ortner's (1973) anthropological model, I quickly discovered a connection between the student culture at Trinity and the student culture at Yale. I found evidence of a stratified social system created by the students and shaped by the values of their dominant white, male majority. This hierarchical social system that reflected students' pursuit of social status by acquisition of membership in fraternities and various types of clubs, as well as participation in collegiate athletics, was recognizable also, perhaps in its

penultimate form, in descriptions of student life at Yale in the late nineteenth century (Rudolph, 1990; Veysey, 1965; Welch & Camp, 1899; Baird, 1879; Canby, 1936).

Most importantly, both the literature related to student life at Yale and the raw materials I was analyzing in the Duke archives provided descriptions of students who exemplified the social ideal of their communities and were therefore “tapped” to join exclusive secret honorary societies. The Duke yearbooks in the 1930s and thereafter included narrative passages in which students had a name for this type of student - the “Big Man on Campus” (*The Chanticleer*, 1944, 1955). Application of Ortner’s (1973) theoretical model not only helped me analyze the massive volumes of narrative and visual data in 60 years of student yearbooks, it helped me identify themes related to the “Big Man on Campus” phenomenon in the data – students’ recognition of an ideal type of student who embodied a composite of the most highly-valued campus activities and leadership positions. As a result of this analytical exercise, I was able to affirm that the sources available in the Duke University archives would be more than sufficient for conducting a study to produce basic knowledge about the origins and functions of collegiate secret societies within this particular setting.

Usefulness of theory.

Much of my inspiration for a critical historical study of the student culture at Duke University was drawn from the work of Pierre Bourdieu (1977) who critically analyzed educational systems and theorized about the role of cultural, social, and symbolic (honors and prestige) capital in relationship to educational systems and the reproduction of social

order. Bourdieu espoused a theoretical approach that incorporated elements of structural analysis and consideration of the historical and economic antecedents of social actors' experience (Moore, 2009, p. 339). In keeping with Bourdieu's integrative theoretical approach, Ortner's (1973) analytical model based on the identification of "key symbols" in a particular cultural system seemed to offer a good option for evaluating the usefulness of the sources in the Duke archives.

Ortner developed her "Key Symbols" methodological model during the cultural turn in anthropology in the 1970s when the focus began shifting from the study of social structures and systems to a concern for the interpretation of meaning in symbolic units (1973, p. 1,338). An overlay of her model on the data offered great potential for increasing my understanding of the social and cultural context from which the collegiate secret societies emerged. Ortner's model is intended to identify symbolic units within a particular cultural system that would illuminate the dominant values, orientations, and strategies for achieving success.

Reducing the data.

By immersing myself in analysis of the data in the student yearbooks, I soon realized the enormity of the data which confronted me in more than half a century of material. I realized that, additionally, student newspapers, magazines and other institutional records would present a potentially overwhelming abundance of archival information to explore. I reorganized my analysis of the yearbook data by decade and applied Ortner's (1973) theoretical framework to search for themes. I was able to reduce the data and make it more

manageable for analysis. This strategy also facilitated my ability to identify cohesive historical parameters for my study.

The data in the student yearbooks indicated the period from the early 1910s through the early 1940s was a time when the values of a homogeneous white, male student body shaped student culture at Trinity/Duke. For example, the descriptive text in the yearbooks was written in the dominate narrative of the male voice. The beginning of World War II was a clear marker of a disruption in the social order. The senior class message in the 1941 yearbook predicted in the masculine voice that spoke for everyone, “Many of us will go into the army”. In the years that followed, female students assumed many of the campus leadership positions formerly occupied by males, including editorial positions responsible for producing the student yearbooks. The “voice” of the yearbook narrators shifted to tell the story of a formerly fraternity-dominated hierarchical social order run by the “big men on campus” being supplanted during the war years by military officers in training and women in student leadership positions.

Illuminating cultural hegemony and historical context.

The historical parameters of the 1910s through the early 1940s which roughly coincided with the inter-war years served to bound a historical period when the cultural hegemony represented by the “Big Man on Campus” ideal was firmly in place. Thus, I determined that delimiting the historical period of this exploratory study from the 1910s to the 1940s would allow me to strengthen the design of my study and focus on the emergence of a collegiate secret society within its historical context when the values of the white, male

majority clearly prevailed. This historical period coincided with the formative years of the Red Friars and continued into the 1930s when the student government officers at Duke University were involved in an escalating power struggle with the academic dean responsible for student life (Durden, 1993). This delimiting of the historical period piqued my curiosity about what must have transpired when students who had made themselves responsible for managing the social organization of life outside the classroom were increasingly challenged by administrators with official authority. I discovered students with an agenda to bolster campus life in the period prior to the establishment of the student affairs administrative organizational structure which is common to most campuses today.

Interestingly, the application of Ortner's (1973) methodological model allowed me to identify key symbols in the cultural system at Trinity College/Duke University and begin to interpret meaning within this particular historical context. I was able to analyze the data in the student yearbooks and triangulate it with an institutional history written by Duke history professor emeritus, Dr. Robert Durden (1993). According to Ortner's theory, key symbols called "summarizing symbols" are emotionally powerful symbols that sum up what a social system means to its actors (pp. 1340-1342). They are primarily objects of attention and cultural respect comprised of a "conglomeration of ideas and feelings" that serve to compound experience and crystallize commitment. The most prominent summarizing symbols that I identified in *The Chanticleer*, the student yearbook, were the towering Gothic structure of Duke Chapel (after 1930) and the collegiate "Trinity" and "Duke" pennants that appeared in many photographs of the walls of student rooms. These symbols served to

compound the collective experience of a Duke education and represent the prestige associated with a classical collegiate setting.

Durden's (1993) institutional history explained that the leaders of Trinity College from the 1880s onward were concerned with establishing prestige for their institution, which came into play as they transformed the liberal arts college into a modern research university. According to Durden, they intentionally selected the "Collegiate Gothic" architecture for the building of the new West Campus marking the transition to university status and emulating the style associated with the nation's oldest and highly-regarded universities in the Northeast, as well as the mystique of old Oxford and Cambridge (p. 23). The pursuit of prestige and the differentiation of concern for male and female students was reflected in the movement of the male students to the new Gothic West Campus while designating the old East Campus, the more modest Georgian setting of the Trinity College campus, as the women's campus once Duke charted its course as a university.

By searching for "root metaphors" in the yearbooks – Ortner's (1973) term for the categories social actors develop to define success in their particular cultural system – I was able to "see" social structure and identify "types" of students as they were represented by students themselves in their yearbooks. The student editors created major sections in the books with titles that reflected a dual, gendered system for male and female students from the years just preceding World War I through the beginning of World War II. Men's groups featured in the "Activities" and "Organizations" sections of the yearbooks included the varsity athletic teams, fraternities, literary societies, secret societies, academic honorary

societies, the Y. M. C. A., men's student government, musical groups (glee club, band, etc...) and cheerleaders.

“Co-ed” groups for women included sororities, literary societies, secret societies, honorary societies, the Y.W.C.A., women's student government, and musical groups. Most of the women's groups appeared to have formed to emulate their male counterparts which restricted their membership to males. The few mixed-gender groups included the student media groups, although female members were noticeably in the minority, especially in the staff photos of the student newspaper, *The Chronicle*.

Referring back to Ortner's (1973) analytical model, searching for “root metaphors” in the data was indeed useful for illuminating the hierarchical stratification and categorization of the students who comprised the student body in terms of gender and their associations with clubs and activities. The characteristics of the students who were at the top of the hierarchical social order and who represented the dominant voice on campus for most of the period of study leading up to the Second World War were the white, male, Protestant, athletes, fraternity men, leaders of organizations, members of academic and leadership honorary societies, and active members of a variety of clubs and organizations – the “B.M.O.C.s”. A composite of the ideal characteristics that placed a student atop the social hierarchy formulated this meaningful root metaphor.

The “B.M.O.C.” acronym represented more than an abstract ideal of the “all-around” successful and accomplished student at Duke University. Individual students who participated in a variety of campus activities and who received honors for academics,

athletics, and leadership were sometimes endowed with the title of “B.M.O.C.” by their classmates because their activities matched the profile of the ideal (Patrick, 1942). They wore danglers to indicate their membership in the various campus organizations.

Students recognized membership in their various organizations as a means of accumulating social and symbolic capital for establishing their social position upon graduation (*The Chanticleer*, 1944, p. 129, and 1941, pp. 169-170). Delta Tau Delta fraternity reported in 1941 that several new members were, “apprenticing under our B.M.O.C.’s” (p. 226), one of which they identified as Charles Frances Sanborn, from East Orange, New Jersey. By the time he graduated, Sanborn had participated in varsity swimming and cheerleading for three years each, had served in leadership positions on both the men’s Pan-Hellenic council in charge of the fraternity system and the athletics council, received academic honors in economics and English, and had been selected for membership in two secret leadership honorary societies, “9019” and the Bloody Order of Sophomores which was appointed by the men’s student government to oversee the orientation and discipline of the freshman class.

In gendered contrast, many female students aspired to achieve a “B.W.O.C.” ideal that emulated the “B.M.O.C.” status they could never achieve. In fact, the all-male Order of Red Friars created the Order of White Duchy in 1924 (Duke University Archives) and in addition to general mockery within the narrative of the student yearbooks, photographs of the “most attractive” co-ed female students were featured each year in a special “Beauties” section. These co-eds were selected annually by the yearbook editors, except for 1928 when

they were selected by members of the faculty, and 1941 when the fraternity men at the University of Southern California were invited to select the “beauties” to eliminate any showing of bias from knowing the students. The 1924 yearbook staff even published a feature about “types among girls” – a backhanded superlative recognition for coeds deemed “Ugliest”, “Freshest”, “Flapperest”, “Cutest”, and “Biggest Eater” (p. 286). The 1934 yearbook included a section of photographs of coeds in full-body poses in formal attire with labels such as, “Glamorous”, “Coquettish”, “Alluring”, “Chic”, “Demure”, and “Saucy” (pp. 329-330).

Limitations of theory.

Clearly, identification of the theoretical “root metaphors” of the “B.M.O.C.” and the “Beauty” illuminated a student body with a social system for the most part segregated and ordered hierarchically by gender and by categories of student involvement and achievement in various extracurricular activities. Ortner’s (1973) “Key Symbols” analytical model proved extremely useful to me in my attempt to organize and make sense of an enormous amount of archival material contained in thirty years of student yearbooks from 1913-1942 (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003); however, when I presented my interpretation of student culture at Duke in the early decades of the twentieth century through the analytical framework of Ortner’s theory, the anthropologists in my seminar were less enthusiastic. Their impression of the application of this theory was that it made the findings of my study a bit too contrived. I did experience the process of interpreting the data through the lens of this framework as limiting and forcing my thoughts into a preconceived formula.

Although I greatly valued the utility of Ortner's theory because it facilitated the identification of social structure and increased my understanding of cultural meaning in this context, I learned that the traditional resistance of the disciplines of history and anthropology to the imposition of a theoretical framework is well-founded. I was conscious of myself searching for clues within the data to justify and validate the premises of the theoretical framework rather than working freely and inductively to interpret its meaning. I decided that I would explore other options for employing theory in the design of my dissertation and ultimately resist the application of a too prescriptive theoretical framework.

Lessons learned.

The most important lessons that I learned from conducting this pilot study and immersing myself in the archives at Duke University was that the documents available there were extraordinary and certainly sufficient to support a dissertation exploring the historical phenomenon of collegiate secret societies. The organizational records of the Order of Red Friars secret society are accessible for the entire period of their known existence (1913-1971), as are the records of the Order of White Duchy, the secret society they established for "co-ed" female students (1924-1968). Student yearbooks and newspapers produced during that same period are available as sources for triangulation of data and constant comparison analysis. In fact, the student publications are in the process of being digitized which will greatly facilitate ongoing research and reduce the physical hardship of traveling to the archives to access information. I also discovered the value of the photographs and other illustrations that appeared in the student yearbooks which would allow me to interpret

student representations of their culture utilizing visual images, in addition to the narrative text in the yearbooks and newspapers. The anthropological methods associated with visual anthropology (Prins, 2002) will enhance the trustworthiness of my cultural interpretation and data analysis.

The design of this pilot study utilized the “Key Symbols” methodological analytical framework developed by feminist anthropologist Sherri Ortner which allowed me to test the usefulness of cultural theory to interpret the data. I found the “Key Symbols” theoretical framework to be useful for organizing and reducing a tremendous amount of archival data; however, I found the process of analyzing the data to be severely constrained by my need to find evidence that would legitimize my explanation of student culture in terms of key symbols, root metaphors, and other concepts prescribed by the theory. I came to understand a great deal about the historical and cultural context of the formative years of the Order of Red Friars secret society, and I “discovered” the phenomenon of the “Big Man on Campus” associated with the cultural hegemony of the period; nonetheless, I wondered how my explanation of student culture would have changed if a theoretical framework had not been imposed.

My discomfort with applying a theoretical framework was affirmed by the feedback I received from my classmates and professor in the history and anthropology seminar at Duke. Although their overall feedback about my project was enthusiastic and positive, they recommended I consider other options for using theory that would allow my research to be more organic and emergent so that it wouldn’t seem so “forced”. They added that among the

strengths of my pilot study were the sources available in the archives and my plans for triangulation of the data with numerous sources, including institutional records and archives staff (experts on the history of Duke University).

Appendix C

Pilot Study #2: Collegiate Secret Societies Active in the Twenty-First Century

Pilot Study #2: Collegiate Secret Societies Active in the Twenty-First Century

In the fall of 2010, having completed a pilot study rooted in archival sources that illuminated the historical and cultural context of the formative decades of the Order of Red Friars and the phenomenon of the “Big Man on Campus” at Duke University, I turned my attention to the contemporary phenomenon of collegiate secret societies. I decided to design a second pilot study to explore what was generally known by administrators and students at an institution which boasted secret societies dating back to the nineteenth century. I wondered what could be learned about the origins and functions of this unique type of student association by talking with members of a campus community where these groups were still active. I also wanted to use this second study to explore more options for data collection and analysis.

Once again, I designed a pilot study using the problem-oriented approach for historical research (Tosh, 2000). On many of the nation’s older campuses, student affairs administrators may find they have inherited the remnants of a student culture anchored in student “self-governance” or the belief in the philosophy of a “student-run campus”, yet they are part of a profession that encourages intrusive involvement in the supervision and management of student culture. This potentially adversarial power dynamic creates tension between contemporary administrators who may not understand student culture as evolving from a historical process and students who express a deep-seeded commitment they ascribe to campus tradition. A primary goal of this research project was to determine how much

basic knowledge campus administrators and students had about the history of collegiate secret societies on their particular campus.

The research questions for this study were the following: What prominent aspects of life at the university have shared meaning for administrators and students and define the context of this culture-sharing group? How do administrators and students in the university community describe their collegiate secret societies? What is known by administrators and students at the university about the function of the secret societies from the time of their founding and how it has changed over time?

Regarding research design and methods, this pilot study was conducted as a qualitative study informed by historical and ethnographic methods and practices associated with community-engaged scholarship (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009). The site selected for this study was a prestigious public university in the South which documented the presence of at least 10 active secret societies on its official website. The existence of many of these groups also was documented in student yearbooks dating back to the 1880s. All things considered, I determined this university community offered a promising intensity sample – a sample of an information-rich case that manifests a phenomenon intensely (Creswell, 2007; Miles & Huberman, 1994, as cited in Creswell, 2007). In keeping with the primary tenets of qualitative research, the goals of my data collection included gaining the perspective of the university community members' worldview by facilitating a process that would allow the participants in the study to speak for themselves (Creswell, 2007; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Wolcott, 2008).

Because I was interested in interviewing campus administrators regarding their knowledge about secret societies on their campus and because I was aware that this topic could be controversial, I wanted to insure their confidentiality. I designed the study with permission from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at North Carolina State University to conduct the interviews with a guarantee of anonymity for the administrators and the institution. I was able to conduct interviews with two deans responsible for student life, as well as the university historian. Prior to going to campus to conduct the interviews, I was unsure whether these campus officials would consider this topic unsafe or threatening.

Unfortunately, I misjudged what I anticipated would be a guarded reception by university officials and community members. Upon arrival, I learned fairly quickly that the phenomenon of student secret societies was openly acknowledged and considered a source of pride. I am confident I could have received permission for interviews from the campus administrators without promising to keep the identity of their institution secret. Being able to identify the institution would have strengthened my efforts to illustrate the significance of this phenomenon in American higher education today. The student admissions tourguides even bragged about their institution rivaling Yale regarding the number of secret societies that were currently active. Each of the administrators I interviewed indicated they had no problem sharing what they knew about the phenomenon of secret societies on their campus because it was something they knew distinguished the university. An important lesson learned was that most of the data I collected during this study contained detail that would identify the institution. Therefore, I would need to seek approval from the IRB if I were to

use the data collected from this site for my dissertation so that the institution could be named and the phenomenon described in rich detail.

In addition to interviewing colleagues in student affairs, I interviewed the university historian regarding his knowledge about the origins and history of secret societies. I considered his interview a means of triangulating the data collected during the study. He also provided his personal perspective as an alumnus from the 1950s and a member of a fraternity and three student societies whose members made their identities public. I made field observations by participating in two campus tours led by undergraduate student guides – one tour focused on the university’s history, and the other tour was a traditional admissions tour. The students’ narrative of the university’s history and the explanations they provided for the secret societies were especially poignant for this study. Finally, I collected data by making site inventory photographs, mining electronic and social media, and reviewing archival documents (yearbooks and newspapers) produced by students in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Democratically-engaged interviews.

In the tradition of democratically-engaged scholarship (Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2009), I wanted to design a study that would allow me to produce knowledge about the phenomenon of secret societies in conjunction with others who would use it. Thus, I incorporated interviews with campus administrators to facilitate collaborative knowledge construction and to explore democratically-engaged scholarship strategies (O’Meara, 2002, as cited in O’Meara chapter, p.12). This plan was intended to abrogate the “Lone Ranger”

research mode associated with qualitative methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 80). After all, qualitative research is recognized for the democratic emphasis of its methods and its propensity for getting practitioners to be more reflective about their work in particular school environments (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Due to the intensity of the activity of the secret societies at this university, I considered the experience and expertise of the student affairs administrators to be an asset in the search for a practitioner's understanding of this phenomenon. I considered my colleagues to be subject-area experts given the lack of scholarly literature on this phenomenon. I utilized my time with them as an opportunity to test various theories about collegiate secret societies and to consult with them regarding their suggestions for further research on this topic.

Remembering the exploratory purpose of this pilot study, I developed a semi-structured interview guide comprised of open-ended questions to use during my interaction with each administrator, a standard convention for qualitative research pursuits (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Wolcott, 2008; See Appendix A for Interview Guide). I collected the interview data by using a digital recorder and later transcribed the interviews myself. Immediately following both interviews, in accordance with ethnographic best practices (Wolcott, 2008), I recorded my reflections about the experience with each administrator in the form of fieldnotes.

The most important thing that I learned from interviewing the student affairs practitioners was that they knew little about the origins of these groups beyond general

campus lore. Admittedly, the original purpose and function of these groups remained largely a mystery; however, they provided a great deal of insight into the functioning of these groups in their midst. They could confirm that some of the groups made their presence known in various ways throughout the academic year. Some groups would appear in hooded robes during annual ceremonies and events to show their support for student traditions such as the honor code. Both deans interviewed had received gifts and messages from secret societies that had been delivered to their offices without detection, leading to curiosity about how they had been able to gain access. One dean had participated in meetings with the leaders of secret societies who had approached him to inquire about how they might help with student life issues at the university. He confirmed the group leaders he had met over the years were diverse in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity. This finding conflicted with the historic assumption that collegiate secret societies were essentially exclusive and undemocratic in terms of student demographic diversity.

When questioned about how he thought students got into the secret societies on this campus, one dean described what he called “the conveyer belt” process. He explained that there was a perception of the membership selection process reflecting the university as an “old, all-male, white school” and that secret societies were reflective of an “old boys network”, but he said the socialization process also seemed to “funnel” students who chose to become active in campus life early on into a “pipeline” of increasingly selective social groups. He said that membership in certain fraternities and sororities seemed to “feed” some of the secret societies, and that students on “the conveyer belt” of campus involvement who

had aspirations to accumulate membership and leadership positions each year they were in college tended to be pulled into the most prestigious groups in terms of the student social hierarchy. This description of a membership selection process that incorporated both exclusive and meritocratic elements was a significant finding of my interviews with the campus administrators.

Ethnographic reconnaissance.

Noted educational anthropologist Harry Wolcott (2008) has extolled the benefits of an ethnographic approach for strengthening research concerned with understanding the culture of an identifiable group. He urges qualitative researchers working in various disciplines to infuse a study with elements of ethnography and simply make the distinction and “borrow” ethnographic techniques for the purposes of a particular study. Wolcott recommends a strategy he has coined, “ethnographic reconnaissance” as a useful fieldwork technique for qualitative researchers to employ throughout a study, but particularly at the outset, explaining that researchers should spend time in the field periodically using ethnographic techniques to survey and remain cognizant of the social and cultural context of the project (p. 187). While conducting this second pilot study, I made plans to spend time immersed in the campus community. I made two trips to the university and spent the night on campus both times. The timing of the visits was significant in that I observed student activity in the days just prior to home football games both times. People moved about the campus quickly as the air was brisk, and the university bookstore promoted sales for students, alumni, and visitors for the football weekends. School spirit was palpable.

I was fortunate in that I was able to stay overnight in housing in the center of campus which allowed me to spend time amongst undergraduates in the quiet study wing of the main library researching archival documents until late in the evening. During both visits, I wandered about the campus and took walks to explore the shops and restaurants located on the main street – the area adjacent to campus where many long-time businesses have served generations of university students. I drove around the area and became familiar with the area where the oldest of the fraternity houses are still located. Perhaps the most enjoyable part of my visits were meals at restaurants that were favorite hangouts of students and alumni, decorated with campus artifacts and memorabilia.

Following Wolcott's (2008) advice about conducting ethnographic reconnaissance, I was intentional about "having a look around" and surveying the territory to orient myself as a stranger in a new setting. As Wolcott suggested, I simply allowed my natural curiosity to lead me to places on campus and through the streets of the college town to explore what was going on, what people were doing, and to notice when and where evidence of the collegiate secret societies appeared. From these intensive periods of investigating the site, I experienced the fortuitous serendipity of the emergent nature of qualitative research. I discovered that student guides organized and ran regular daily admissions tours of campus and university history tours in the oldest part of campus. This unforeseen opportunity allowed me to interact with current students and hear their delivery of the institution's unique history, which complemented the main purpose for the scheduled visits – to conduct interviews with key administrators in the university setting.

Field observations.

Among the primary characteristics of qualitative research, qualitative methodologists assert that the researcher is the key instrument of data collection, and the research is conducted in a naturalistic setting where the actual historical and social context of the phenomenon of study may be explored (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2007). They further explain the related concept of the researcher positioning themselves in the field somewhere along a participant-observer continuum. At this point in my research, I was envisioning my position in the field more in terms of navigating the dual roles of “insider” and “outsider” relative to the research setting.

Considering my professional status and personal position, I was able to maximize my perspective as both an “insider” – a college administrator familiar with university organizations and their structural and cultural characteristics – and an “outsider” – a person unfamiliar with the particular setting of this university campus. I remained cognizant of the meaning my position as a dean of students held for my professional colleagues and students with whom I interacted during my visits to the site of the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Balancing these roles, I enjoyed the advantages of gaining access and easily conversing with the individuals at the site while being able to examine the aspects of daily life that people there take for granted from the perspective of an outsider – both important facets of sound qualitative research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Wolcott, 2008).

My field observations included participating in two campus tours – one tour was a history tour and the other was a standard admissions tour. I was able to converse informally

with the student tour guides as we walked along, and I learned much about their perceptions of the secret societies, as well as their understanding of their history. I was able to make fieldnotes while walking on the tour by carrying a notebook and writing when we stopped at various points along the tour. I don't believe my notetaking impacted the narrative of the guides because I was among parents and families making notes about the admissions process. I made expanded fieldnotes immediately following each tour. What I learned from these field observations was that the student tourguides (there were three on my history tour and one on the admissions tour) knew very little about the origins and functions of the collegiate secret societies. They explained their presence as something that distinguished the student culture of the university, similar to Yale, but they were unable to provide me with data that would help me answer the research questions for this study.

Electronic and social media.

During my initial search for potential sources available to answer the research questions for this study, I discovered numerous web pages on the university's official web site that contained narrative information and photographs about student life, traditions, customs, and the collegiate secret societies. This initial information helped me form a foundational sense of the scope and depth of the secret societies within student culture. Information available from the web site about the secret societies extended to two archived podcasts accessible from the alumni association homepage. The podcasts featured talks about the secret societies that were part of a series of programs sponsored for alumni prior to home football games in the past five years.

A series of videos about university traditions posted on the internet by a student confirmed the notion that students remain fascinated by the legends and stories related to the secret societies. The videos in the series show the student walking around various locations on campus explaining student traditions and telling stories about the secret societies. I also discovered that I could follow annual student events via YouTube postings and could see and read about the public activities of some of the secret societies during which the iconic symbols that represented their groups were displayed.

Although the data I could observe by regularly checking social media postings about the secret societies at this university, I was able to learn little that increased my understanding of the origins and functions of these groups. Most of the content posted was video of traditions and ceremonies in the campus setting, sometimes with narrative by the student making the video, but the narrative usually was a reiteration of the legends and lore associated with the secret groups. I found the social media data to be interesting and to serve as a version of ethnographic reconnaissance as it can be conducted in the digital age, but the sources of the postings were usually anonymous. I concluded that data collected from social media would be useful for a study of the secret societies as they are experienced by social actors in their contemporary setting, but for the purposes of my historical study, they were reductive in content and difficult to assess because the identity (and therefore worldview) of the person(s) who produced them was not always traceable.

Visual anthropology.

As I learned in the first pilot study at Duke University when I was interested in assessing the utility of student yearbooks for a historical study, I discovered that the use of photographs as evidence to be interpreted by the researcher is usually associated with the anthropological approach (Rose, 2007). In fact, visual anthropologists have encouraged the use of photographs in a scientific manner as a means of data collection and checking the validity of ethnographic interpretation (Collier & Collier, 1986). Collier and Collier have proposed that researchers might conduct “photographic reconnaissance” at the beginning of a study to survey and map the prominent features of a research site, a technique that meshed well with Wolcott’s (2008) more comprehensive conceptualization of ethnographic reconnaissance.

I utilized two methods associated with visual ethnography to collect data for this pilot study: photo elicitation and photo documentation. Rose (2007) explains that photo elicitation and photo documentation are methods for providing supporting evidence for the researcher’s narrative text. Photo elicitation is defined as a technique in which the researcher shows participants photographs during interviews to evoke their memories and reflections and enable their discussion about aspects of their culture they might typically take for granted. Photo documentation refers to the researcher making photographs to provide data for analysis, which can include a site inventory of prominent buildings, activities, or markers found in the research setting.

I was able to experiment with the use of photo elicitation during my interview with the University historian. The length of the interview was significantly longer than the first two interviews with the deans undoubtedly because of the expanded quantity and nature of the interview material associated with this technique (Rose, 2007). By looking through old yearbooks with the university historian, he was able to tell me about the meaning and significance of details in various photographs of the secret societies which served as a powerful means of triangulating the data I had collected during interviews with the deans and through my participant-observer experience speaking with the student tourguides during my two-day visit.

I began taking photos of the research site during my first visit to campus in October and continued in November to develop a general inventory of the architecture, landscaping, and people that characterized the site to use for reference upon my return home. In particular, I was interested in capturing images of the various secret societies' "markers" which I knew from internet research figured prominent in the university setting – painted on university buildings, stairs, and fraternity houses and featured on commemorative plaques and walkways. I was able only to photograph a small preliminary sample, but I learned a more complete site inventory could be achieved if time for a study were extended.

According to Collier and Collier (1986), surveying and mapping a research site with photography is useful as part of the first phase of fieldwork. Regarding photos made for this preliminary site inventory, I took the photographs of various campus scenes during both visits to the university with the intent of collecting images for reflection after leaving the

field site and documenting prominent areas around campus where markings of the secret societies appeared. I followed the advice of Rose (2007) and for the purpose of analysis added fieldnotes to each photo that included the date, time, and location of each photo, along with general commentary about how the photo related to the research questions.

Bogdan and Biklen (2007) offer that photographs can be useful for educational researchers to produce and employ in conjunction with other strategies for studying various spaces people occupy in educational settings, such as college “quads”. I found the use of photography helpful for examining spaces around campus to identify evidence of dominant social and cultural norms that students and administrators might take for granted. I used photography in this way to review photographs in archival documents and the images I took with my own camera.

Themes of distinction.

Once all of the data was collected, I used coded for major themes by employing sociologist Burton Clark’s (1972) conceptualization of the organizational saga in American higher education. Clark theorized that colleges and universities develop a “saga” over time that is an emotionally-loaded story perpetuated by faculty, alumni, and students that describes the unique history of an institution. According to Clark, “The more unique the history and the more forceful the claim to a place in history, the more intensely cultivated the ways of sharing memory and symbolizing the institution”. In plain language, Clark asserted

that the unique saga of a university could serve to bolster loyalty to the institution and the cohesiveness of members of the campus community.

Clark (1972) characterized alumni and undergraduate student subcultures in higher education institutions as a social base that perpetuates the saga of a particular campus due to their loyalty and pride in the distinctiveness of their institution. Clark's theory asserts that a strong institutional saga shared and passed on by members of a particular academic community can serve as a powerful cohesive force when punctuated by the notion of group uniqueness. He claims that members of a university community can exhibit emotional loyalty and sentimental belief not unlike that found in utopian communities, religious cults, and fanatical political factions.

Utilizing Clark's (1972) theoretical framework which was less prescriptive than Ortner's "Key Symbols" framework (1973), I combed through the data and determined that the saga of the history of the university indeed was characterized by community members as distinctive regarding the story of its founding by a prominent American intellectual, its architectural setting, and its secret societies. By coding the data for themes, I was able to identify these themes of "distinction" and begin to make meaning of the social situation in which the secret societies have persisted since the late nineteenth century. Keeping the identity of the institution anonymous prohibits me from discussing the distinction of the founding story, but the distinction of the campus setting and the secret societies provide good examples of how Clark's institutional saga theory could be useful for understanding historical and cultural context.

Distinction of the campus setting.

Clark (1972) speaks of the power of place in organizational saga and claims that a strong saga characterized by unique claims on history can engage one so intensely as to make one's immediacy of place overwhelmingly valuable, the institutional setting the only reality, and the outside world an illusion. He also explains that sagas can have high durability over time in structured social contexts, such as educational settings, where the imagery of the saga abounds in an "air about the place" (p. 182). Clark asserts that imagery of saga visible in the setting and reinforced by sentimental narratives expressing devotion to the institution serves to create an "air about a place", sometimes even felt by outsiders. Clark stated that in a place where believers "share an intense sense of the unique...there is a feeling that there is the small world of the lucky few and the large routine one of the rest of the world" (p. 183). As an outsider visiting campus, I certainly experienced the serene majesty of the architecture and spirit of the setting, which was reinforced by the passionate narrative of the student tourguides and the university administrators when speaking about the distinctive setting of the institution.

Distinction of the secret societies.

Clark (1972) asserts that due to a general loss of meaning in modern social life, the drama and cultural identity associated with a unique organizational saga holds great appeal for community members and can replace a sense of isolation with a powerful emotional bond. The legends and public activities of the secret societies at this institution produce grand

theater for the community members. Students and administrators are quick to point out that although very few students are members of these groups, their known existence perpetuates great intrigue and wonder about their mysterious activities. One group is known for communicating with the campus community by leaving letters in the hand of the statue of the university founder, and another group is known for leaving a letter under the seat of a first-year student at an annual ceremony at the beginning of the academic year. The unique presence of these groups in their midst is a source of pride and entertainment that has an impact disproportionate to the number of students involved.

Clark (1972) elaborates that participants in a setting with a strong institutional saga have added affect from emotional loading which “places their conception between the coolness of rational purpose and the warmth of a sentiment found in religion and magic” (p. 178). He credits this affect for turning a formal place into a beloved institution to which many participants may become passionately devoted. This notion of irrational devotion supports well my observation of students and administrators who embraced the legend and lore associated with the secret and semi-secret societies as a positive presence in the university community.

Lessons Learned.

The most important lesson that I learned from conducting a second pilot study on a campus where collegiate secret societies are known to be active is that administrators in contemporary settings may know very little about the origins and functions of these groups in their midst. In fact, the process of democratically-engaging with colleagues in student affairs

whom I would consider subject-area experts on this phenomenon revealed they have great curiosity about the criteria for membership, the selection process, and the secret ritual and activities attributed to these groups. I was able to determine that the answers to my research questions intended to generate basic knowledge about the cultural history of collegiate secret societies could not be answered by interviews with administrators. The best sources for answering these questions appeared to be archival documents because interviews with alumni who founded the secret societies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were no longer living, and interviews with students or alumni presumed to be members of secret societies who have taken oaths of loyalty and secrecy would be suspect in terms of credibility.

Another major lesson learned was that designing a study informed by ethnographic methods could greatly expand the scope of data that I could collect. I experimented with photo elicitation when I introduced college yearbooks to the university historian who was an alumnus of the institution from the 1950s. He was able to serve as a source of triangulation regarding various representations of student culture in the yearbooks during the time when he was a student. I benefitted greatly from conducting “ethnographic reconnaissance” work – a technique Wolcott (2008) introduces as useful if the researcher is not able to remain in the field for months and years on end as is characteristic of traditional ethnographic methods. I was able to plan trips to experience the social atmosphere of the cite periodically. I found the technique of photographic documentation both enjoyable and helpful for recording the iconic markings of the secret societies in the campus setting which I later used as reference material

when I returned from the field. Finally, I participated in two field observations when I joined campus tours and discussed with the student guides the history, legend, and lore related to the secret societies.

Ultimately, I was able to triangulate data from my interviews with student affairs colleagues, the university historian, field observations with student tourguides, archival documents including yearbooks and student newspapers, student postings about the secret societies on social media, and visual anthropology to generate descriptions of the secret societies; however, my goal of generating new knowledge about their origins and functions fell short. The administrators were able to provide me with new insight into the contemporary phenomenon of the secret societies, in that some groups had demographically diverse leadership and that students selected for these groups allegedly were part of an aspirational student leadership and involvement “pipeline”, but they could not explain their cultural history.

Appendix D

Document Analysis Guide

Document Analysis Guide
Student Culture at Duke University in the Twentieth Century

Document Title: _____

Publication: _____

Date: _____

Document Author/ Point of View/ Motivation

Who created the document/ for what publication?

- Why was the document created – what was the creator trying to accomplish?
- How might that affect the document content?
- Are there any indications of the author's bias/ point of view regarding the subject?
- Was the creator a witness to or participant in the event?
- Does he/she have something to lose or gain by relaying the information?

Timeframe:

- Was the document created during the time period being studied?
- If time elapsed between the event and the interpretation of the event, how much time had elapsed – did that affect the recording?
- What was the historic context of the event in terms of U.S. history and the history of higher education in this country?

Content & Background:

- How are student activities and traditions described and represented in ways that reflect cultural hegemony?
- What types of students/ groups of students are prominently featured in terms of gender, race, and social class (positively, negatively, or otherwise)?
- How are changes in student demographics reflected in the representation of diverse types of students in campus publications?

Audience:

- Who was the target audience - for whom was the document intended?
- Was the document for public or private use?

Reliability and Cross Referencing:

- Are there other sources that deal with this topic?
- How do they compare to this record – do they corroborate or contradict?

Availability:

- What enabled the document to survive?
- Who has handled/ owned it?

Adapted from a History Worksheet:

(see <http://www.ebrpss.k12.la.us/lessons/tahil/analyze/documents/document.htm>)

Appendix E

Interview Guide for Red Friars Members

Interview Guide for Order of Red Friars Members:
Duke University Alumni

1. Tell me about when you went to Duke...what the student body was like back then as compared to how people think of it now?
2. What was generally known about the collegiate secret societies at Duke (the Red Friars, the Tombs, the White Duchy)?
3. Follow-up prompts, if necessary:
 - a. ...about their origins?
 - b. ...about their role in student culture and how it changed over time?
 - c. ...about their presence and reputation in student culture when you were there?
4. What are some of your memories about being selected for the Order? (Follow-up prompt: How would you describe what it meant to be selected for the Order? What were the criteria for membership?)
5. What are some of your memories about what the Order did and why secrecy was so important?
6. Is there anything else you can tell me that might help me understand the history and purpose of the Order of Red Friars within student culture at Duke University?