



# Campus Life

*Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz*

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Every generation of college students, no matter how different from its predecessor, has been an enigma to faculty and administration, to parents, and to society in general. Watching today's students "holding themselves in because they had to get A's not only on tests but on deans' reports and recommendations," Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, author of the highly praised *Alma Mater*, began to ask, "What has gone wrong—how did we get where we are today?" *Campus Life* is the result of her search—through college studies, alumni autobiographies, and among students themselves—for an answer.

She begins in the post-revolutionary years when the peculiarly American form of college was born, forced in the student-faculty warfare: in 1800, pleasure-seeking Princeton students, angered by disciplinary action, "show pistols . . . and rolled barrels filled with stones along the hallways." She looks deeply into the campus through the next two centuries, to show us student society as revealed and reflected in the students' own codes of behavior, in the clubs (social and intellectual), in athletics, in student publications, and in student government.

And we begin to notice for the first time, from earliest days till now, younger men, and later young women as well, have entered not a monolithic "student body" but a complex world containing three distinct subcultures. We see how from the beginning some undergraduates have resisted the ritualized frivolity and rowdiness of the group she calls "College Men." For the second group, the "Outsiders," college was not so much a matter of secret societies, passionate team spirit and college patriotism as a serious preparation for a profession; and over the decades their ranks were joined by ambitious youths from all over rural America, by the first college women, by immigrants, Jews, "townies," blacks, veterans, and older women beginning or continuing their education. We watch a third subculture of "Rebels"—both men and women – emerging in the early twentieth century, transforming individual dissent into collective rebellion, contending for control of collegiate politics and press, and eventually—in the 1960s—reordering the whole college/university world.

Yet, Horowitz demonstrates, in spite of the tumultuous 1960s, in spite of the vast changes since the nineteenth century, the ways in which undergraduates work and play have continued to be shaped by whichever of the three competing subcultures—college men and women, outsiders, and rebels—is in control. We see today's campus as dominated by the new breed of outsiders (they began to surface in the 1970s) driven to pursue their future careers with a "grim professionalism." And as faint and sporadic signs emerge of (perhaps) a new activism, and a new attraction to learning for its own sake, we find that Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz has given us, in this study, a basis for anticipated the possible nature of the next campus generation.

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