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Not So Set in Stone: A Digital History of the Macalester College Campus

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Not So Set in Stone: A Digital History of the Macalester College Campus

Andie Walker

Honors Project in Digital History Communications

May 1, 2023

Abstract

College communities are constantly in flux, as students typically remain in school for only four years. However, parts of the physical environment of a college campus might last for centuries. This project investigates the evolution of Macalester College's campus and asks the following questions: What has guided the design decisions for new buildings and structures at Macalester throughout its history? How have people interacted with, manipulated, and potentially subverted these spaces and places? How is settler colonialism physically embodied at Macalester? These questions have illuminated the ways that people have attempted to control the space and place that makes up Macalester, and how people have resisted or subverted that control. I have compiled my research into a digital exhibit in order to communicate how architecture and design has served as a tool to convey Macalester's values and to shape the experiences of students as they eat, sleep, study, and socialize on campus.

Note: This project was designed to be a digital exhibit in the form of a website— not as a paper.

The following paper is the written content of the website.

The site's original url is: <https://walkerandie.github.io/mac-history/>

Introduction

College communities are constantly in flux, as students typically remain in school for only four years. However, parts of the physical environment of a college campus might last for centuries.

Not So Set in Stone looks at the evolution of Macalester College's campus in order to uncover the design decisions that have led to new buildings, the ways people have interacted with, manipulated, and subverted spaces and places on campus, and how settler colonialism is physically embodied at Macalester.

Land and Legacy

Introduction



A view of campus from the corner of Snelling and Summit, c. 1890. © Macalester College Archives.

Institutions of higher education have long histories of contributing to settler colonialism in the United States, and Macalester is no exception. The history of Macalester's campus is of course, also the history of the land it occupies and the colonial power structures that have shaped it. Understanding how those structures have shaped Macalester can help us begin to address the harmful power dynamics resulting from colonialism to this day.

The land that Macalester stands on today is made up of the homeland of the Dakota people. However, through deceptive negotiations and settler colonialist policies, the United States government took control of the land, establishing the state of Minnesota and the cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis.¹ In particular, Macalester's colonial history has been embodied by its founder, Edward Duffield Neill. In the past, history has often relied on a narrative that highlights so-called 'great men,' lifting them up as heroes, founding fathers, and role models for the future. However, Neill's role in history is far from heroic. In addition to his efforts to reform education, Neill was active in Minnesota politics and espoused dehumanizing views towards indigenous people. In an [1868 letter](#), Neill took a stand against recognizing indigenous nations, referring to Native people as "degraded" and "savage."² Neill instead advocated for forcing Native people to assimilate into American culture. Without Neill's initiative, there would be no Macalester College. However, many aspects of his approach to education and politics are now at odds with the college's values and what the Macalester community has become.

¹ Daria Chamness, "Macalester Land Plot History," Counterbalance, Macalester College Archives, <https://dwlibrary.macalester.edu/counterbalance/student-projects/macalester-land-plot-history/>

² Edward D. Neill, "Letter from Edward D. Neill to Hon. N. G. Taylor," Counterbalance, Macalester College Archives, <https://dwlibrary.macalester.edu/counterbalance/types/texts/letter-from-edward-d-neill-to-hon-n-g-taylor-effort-and-failure-to-civilize-the-aborigines/>.

The Early Life of Edward Duffield Neill

Edward Duffield Neill was born in 1823, and had a privileged childhood in Philadelphia, eventually attending prep school for two years before enrolling at Amherst College when he was 16.³ Amherst College, founded in Massachusetts in 1821, would profoundly shape Neill's worldview, and remained his central inspiration as he worked to establish Macalester later in life.⁴ Amherst emphasized a close relationship between students and faculty, hoping to instill students with critical thinking skills as well as a distinct devotion to God.⁵ Neill would later endeavor to bring this Amherst style of education westward.



Edward Duffield Neill. © Macalester College Archives.

³ Jeanne Halgren Kilde, *Nature and Revelation : A History of Macalester College* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-16.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 17.

After graduating from Amherst, Neill briefly explored career options in business and the military, before settling on attending Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts.⁶ A career in ministry was not an uncommon choice for a college graduate at the time, and after his time at the seminary, Neill was left with a passion for evangelical Presbyterianism and a future that would surely be defined by his interest in religious education.

In 1849, Neill arrived in the capital city of St. Paul less than two weeks after Minnesota was officially established as a U.S. territory.⁷ With rosy visions of Amherst on his mind, Neill hoped to establish a school in what was then the fast-growing Northwest region of the United States. However, it would take many tries for Neill to secure the right combination of mission, supporters, and funding in order to establish a school that would stand the test of time.

Neill and the Precursors to Macalester

Neill's first endeavor in education was the establishment of the Baldwin School in 1853, a preparatory academy financed by Matthias W. Baldwin of Philadelphia.⁸ The Baldwin School was built upon a philosophy of gender-segregated secondary education, although in practice, limited financial resources meant that male and female students often learned side-by-side in the same classes.⁹ These limited resources, combined with the turbulent times in Minnesota

⁶ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 17.

⁷ Ibid., 14.

⁸ Ibid., 23.

⁹ Ibid., 24. The academy for girls was called the Baldwin School, while the male counterpart was called St. Paul College. Kilde refers to the entity on the whole as Baldwin School, and it remains the Baldwin School when reestablished in 1871, so I refer to it as such.

during the lead-up to the Civil War culminated in the closure of the first iteration of the Baldwin School by 1861.¹⁰



Winslow House, the building that housed the Baldwin School. © Macalester College Archives.

Neill had also worked on early efforts to establish the University of Minnesota, becoming its first chancellor in 1858, but continuing financial issues led him to resign in 1861.¹¹ The university would not open again until 1867.¹²

¹⁰ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 31.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹² *Ibid.*, 21.

The emergence of the Civil War further derailed Neill's plans for establishing an educational institution. Neill worked as a chaplain in the Union Army, then as a secretary for Abraham Lincoln before spending time abroad, but by 1871, Neill was back in Minnesota and back at work.¹³ He reopened the Baldwin School in 1873, in a former hotel called the Winslow House. The Baldwin School rented Winslow House from Charles Macalester, a Philadelphia businessman.¹⁴ The building had previously served as a summer destination for wealthy Southern planters (and likely slave owners), but with the outbreak of Civil War, its clientele could no longer take carefree vacations up north.¹⁵ After the war, the building was simply not ideal to house a school, with too many rooms that were difficult to keep warm, and dangerous structural problems.¹⁶ However, it was still worth something, and in 1873, Neill was able to convince a reluctant Macalester to set aside Winslow House in his will in order to found a college in his name. In a stroke of luck, Macalester died only a couple of months later, and all of a sudden, Neill's dream of a college finally seemed within reach.

Choosing a Location

The decision of where to build a new college was a difficult one in the early days of Macalester, and the outcome would shape the character of the school for the rest of its history. The trustees of the college chose to sell the dilapidated Winslow House after Charles

¹³ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 31-2.

¹⁴ Ibid., 36.

¹⁵ Funk, *A History*, 37.

¹⁶ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 341.

Macalester's death and use the funds to purchase a new plot of land.¹⁷ Many potential places were considered, including plots of land north of University Avenue, in St. Anthony Park and in Minneapolis, somewhere between Fort Snelling and Bde Maka Ska.¹⁸ However, after much back and forth, the trustees came to a decision in late January 1882 and chose to purchase 160 acres of land from the estate of Thomas Holyoke.¹⁹ The land was located on the southwest corner of Snelling and Summit Avenues, right in between the urban centers of Minneapolis and St. Paul.



Map with the future campus of Macalester College highlighted in red, located on the Holyoke estate. © Macalester College

Archives.

¹⁷ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 40.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹⁹ Edward Duffield Neill Records Box 1.

The Holyoke estate, like all of the land that now houses the Twin Cities, came under United States control after Zebulon Pike arrived to the area in 1805 as part of an expedition of the Louisiana Territory.²⁰ Pike gifted money and alcohol to a group of Dakota people in exchange for 100,000 acres of land in order to build a fort— however, the agreement wasn't officially recognized by the US government until 1808.²¹ That land would eventually contain the Twin Cities. Throughout the 19th century, the land became territory of the US military before being divided up and passing through the hands of white settlers, who used intimidation tactics to keep the land prices low and under their control.²² The plot that was transferred to the trustees of Macalester College was eventually sold to Thomas Holyoke, who kept it until his death in 1880.²³

Although Macalester's location would eventually become one of its strongest selling points, initial impressions of the spot were less than ideal. Thomas McCurdy, who would later become the college's president, had a distinctly negative impression of the location when he first visited in 1883, calling it "beggarly" and noting its lack of funding and amenities.²⁴ The site was two miles away from the nearest streetcar stop, and it would be several years before the electric trolley would reach campus, thanks in part to an investment of \$6500 from the college and the donation of a chunk of its campus to form what would one day become Grand Avenue.²⁵

²⁰ Chamness, "Macalester Land Plot History."

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Quoted in Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 63.

²⁵ Ibid., 62.

Despite the initial uncertainty around the college's location, the first college catalog, released in 1885, does not hesitate to claim that presidents of colleges on the East Coast "pronounce it the best they have any knowledge of in this country." The college administration was clearly eager to establish Macalester as a peer institution to older, more established colleges on the East Coast, like Neill's idealized alma mater, Amherst. In addition to the campus's natural beauty, the catalog somewhat paradoxically praises both its isolation from the sinful temptations of city life and its proximity to the urban centers of both Minneapolis and St. Paul: "The location is beautiful and commanding [. . .] Trains pass every hour to one or other of the cities. There are no saloons or other temptations to immoral habits present. All of the advantages of the city are had, without any of the disadvantages."²⁶ Despite the urbanization and development that has taken place since 1885, Macalester's current website and marketing materials continue to highlight the college's location between the Twin Cities (although without mention of saloons).

A Colonial Legacy

Today, the founding days of Macalester and the decisions made about its location have taken on greater significance as the nation and the college begin to reckon with their colonial histories. In the summer of 2018, the college's Department of Multicultural Life drafted a land acknowledgement in coordination with the student organization Proud Indigenous People for

²⁶ Macalester College, "First Annual Catalogue," College Catalogs, Macalester College Archives, 1886, <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/catalogs/19/>, 24.

Education (PIPE).²⁷ The land acknowledgement is now often read at official college events and at the beginning of classes:

We ask that you take a moment to honor that we are on Dakota land. Macalester is situated on the ancestral homeland of the Dakota people, particularly the Sisseton and Wahpeton bands, who were forcibly exiled from the land because of aggressive and persistent settler colonialism. We make this acknowledgement to honor the Dakota people, ancestors and descendants, as well as the land itself.

Coming face to face with Macalester's colonial history has also led to physical changes on campus. In 2013, Macalester's Board of Trustees had voted to give the Humanities Building a new name: Neill Hall. The renaming was a part of a campus-wide effort to improve wayfinding, and the name change had been suggested to reduce confusion, given that many departments in the humanities were actually housed in Old Main, rather than the Humanities Building.

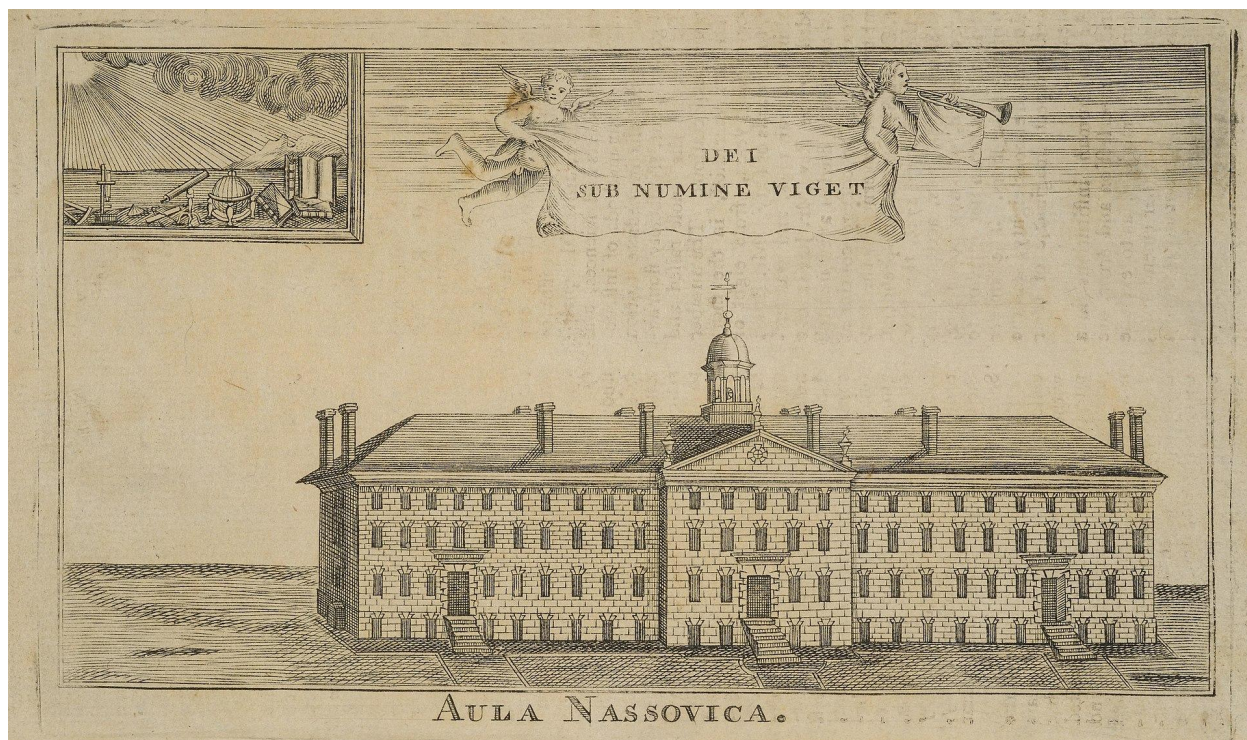
However, In 2019, student journalists for the *Mac Weekly* published a special edition of the college newspaper, *Colonial Macalester*, reporting on Macalester founder Edward Duffield Neill's hearty endorsement of white supremacy, his involvement in enforcing settler colonialism in Minnesota, and his rejection of co-education.²⁸ Their investigation led many Macalester community members to reconsider the history of the institution of Macalester and its founder, and it ultimately had a tangible impact on Macalester's campus. After the release of *Colonial Macalester*, the college chose to remove Neill's name from the building and revert it to its original name: the Humanities Building. While the story of Macalester may begin with Edward Duffield Neill, student activism has meant that it does not end with him.

²⁷ Barbara Kuzma, "DML Land Acknowledgement created this summer," *Mac Weekly*, October 11, 2018, <https://themacweekly.com/75018/uncategorized/dml-land-acknowledgement-created-this-summer/>.

²⁸ Liam McMahon, "Who was Edward Duffield Neill?" *Mac Weekly*, October 31, 2019, <https://themacweekly.com/76882/neill-hall/who-was-edward-duffield-neill/>.

Old Main²⁹

Not the Only Old Main



A 1760 engraving of Princeton University's Nassau Hall, featuring four stories and a central tower.

Like many colleges, Macalester started out with just one building: Old Main. Of course, the building wasn't called Old Main when it was built— it used to simply be the only building on campus. Buildings called “Old Main” can be found across college campuses nationwide, where one building initially served as the entirety of a school, often housing the president, professors, and students while also providing room for dining, classes, and worship.³⁰ Nassau Hall at Princeton University, built in 1756, became a particularly popular model to follow, and many original college buildings boasted 3 to 4 floors, long rectangular shapes, and central towers.³¹

²⁹ The content of this section was adapted from my in-progress capstone presentation on Nov. 10, 2022.

³⁰ Carla Yanni, *Living on Campus : An Architectural History of the American Dormitory*(Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019), 46.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 45-6.

Eventually, these colleges would expand to include more buildings, like new dormitories, chapels, and libraries, and the original building would be stuck with the “Old Main” moniker.



The East Wing of Macalester's Old Main, c. 1885-6. A young man is depicted in the foreground. © Macalester College Archives.

Money Troubles

Macalester's Old Main was built later than most, with the East Wing constructed first in 1883.³² A competition was held among architects for who would get to design the college's first

³² Alan K. Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects : A Biographical Dictionary* (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 228.

building. Multiple designs were considered, however it was the firm of Willcox and Smith who cinched the final deal.³³ In the East Wing, the basement held the communal dining room, the first floor housed the chapel and several classrooms, and the second and third floors were devoted to housing for students.³⁴



The East Wing and West Wing of Old Main in 1888, shortly after the construction of the West Wing. © Macalester College Archives.

The construction of the West Wing followed in 1887, giving the college a new reading room, several more classrooms, and a basement gymnasium. However, building the West Wing

³³ Lathrop, *Minnesota Architects*, 228.

³⁴ Henry Daniel Funk, *A History of Macalester College: Its Origin, Struggle, and Growth* (Saint Paul, Minn.: Macalester College Board of Trustees, 1910), 100.

also added a significant amount of money to the college's hefty debt, which added up to around \$125,000 by 1889. Although the Board of Trustees had recently committed not to spend any more money on new construction, they still decided to approve the addition of the West Wing to the college's main building for \$68,000, \$48,000 of which was borrowed money.³⁵

This mounting debt posed a significant challenge for the school. Henry Daniel Funk, a Macalester professor in the early 20th century, wrote in his short history of Macalester that at this point, "the college was so impoverished that its future seemed absolutely hopeless."³⁶ After an ambitious fundraising campaign, the college managed to raise enough money to stay open for the 1891-92 school year, but ran into more trouble with the Panic of 1893. It wasn't until the early 1900s that the college was able to find firm footing. Disaster was only thwarted when Mrs. William Thaw, the widow of a Pennsylvania philanthropist, purchased several acres comprising the bottom of campus for \$25,000.³⁷ The land was eventually deeded back to the school ten years later.³⁸ By the time he was writing his history of the college in 1910, Professor Funk expressed sincere relief that the college had been able to survive the financial turmoil of its early years.

³⁵ Funk, *A History*, 69, 71, 162.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 186.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 185.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 186.

Rules and Breaking Them



Female students, class of 1910, in their dorm room. © Macalester College Archives.

What was Old Main like in the early years of Macalester? The rules were pretty strict. Drinking was banned, and smoking was only allowed in particular areas. After the admission of women in 1893, there were also many rules based on gender. Women weren't allowed to step foot in the East Old Main dormitory, and dancing between men and women was strictly prohibited, since college president James Wallace believed that dancing led to "spoonery," whatever that meant. The small indiscretions of students could easily be blown out of proportion. Faculty often dined with students and also lived nearby, meaning that figures of

authority were never too far away. One incident where a female student was spotted exiting the men's dormitory caused an outcry among administrators until their investigations revealed she had merely been dropping off a book for a classmate.³⁹

However, students were still able to find ways to get what they wanted. Mac students broke their curfew, disturbed classes, and of course, danced with each other. One night in 1903, several students, men and women, snuck into the chapel to hold a dance. They covered the windows with their coats to obscure their illicit get-together, but still did not dare to turn on the lights, knowing that faculty lived so close by and might realize something was afoot.⁴⁰ President Wallace later denounced the incident as "scandalous and diabolical" once the news had broken to a local newspaper.⁴¹ Students were also caught raiding the pantry of the basement refectory, vandalizing classrooms, and committing pranks on one another. Professor Funk remarked in his history that students "enjoyed good-natured fun and indulged in college pranks and innocent abandon as all normal, healthy young men do."⁴² Despite the formal architecture of Old Main and the stringent rules of the college, students still managed to create a little chaos.

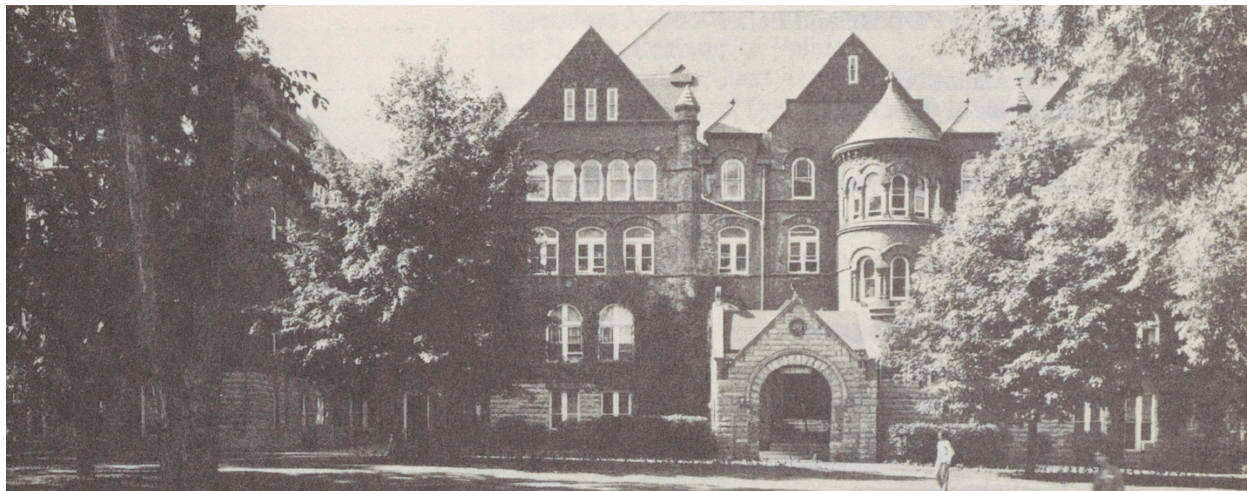
³⁹ Funk, *A History*, 90.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 137.

A Century's Worth of Change



Old Main as depicted in Macalester's 1986 college catalog. © Macalester College Archives.

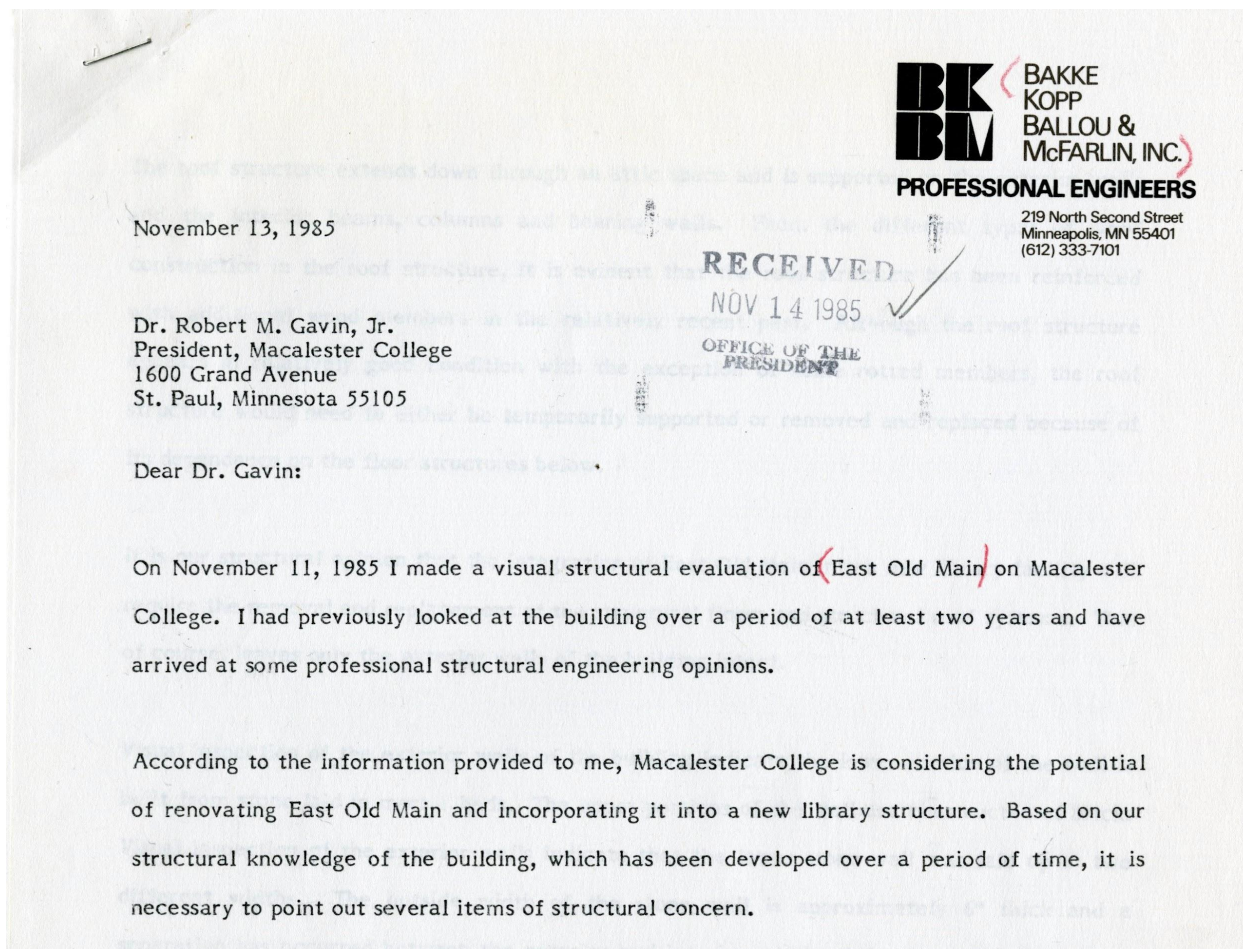
So what happened to Macalester's oldest building, the East Wing of Old Main? If you've visited campus in the last 40 years, you've likely noticed that the building does not look the same as it did in 1887. By the 1980s, Macalester had seen nearly a century's worth of change. Far from the college's only building, Old Main now housed administrative offices and a handful of academic departments, and had offered a bookstore and served as a place for students to hang out and play billiards throughout the years.⁴³

Several large dorms had now replaced the original men's dormitory in the East Wing. The campus was now furnished with science halls, a fine arts complex, a stadium, a dining hall, a student union and a chapel. And there was a dedicated library, housed in what is now Weyerhaeuser Hall, although it had been overflowing with books for years. Old Main was now used mainly for academic and administrative purposes, but its future was uncertain in a campus

⁴³ David Gehrenbeck, "Union Plans Move Ahead," *Mac Weekly*, March 3, 1950, Macalester College Archives, and Eric Vaccarella, "Mac to demolish East Old Main," *Mac Weekly*, December 13, 1985, Macalester College Archives.

that had changed so much over the past several decades. College administrators decided that the next step for the campus was to construct a new library, and if possible, they also hoped to incorporate the renovations of Old Main into the new design.

Old Main in a Precarious Position



An excerpt from Elmer J. Kopp's letter detailing the structural condition of Old Main. © Macalester College Archives.

In 1985, the president of Macalester College received a letter from engineer Elmer J. Kopp summarizing his evaluation of the East Wing of Old Main. College leaders had originally hoped that they could preserve the structure of East Old Main by using it as the basis for the

new library. However, Kopp concluded in his report that it would be “extremely difficult, if not impossible, to save” the East Wing of Old Main.⁴⁴ Renovating the building would mean gutting it— the interior walls, floors, and roof system would have to be replaced, leaving only the weakened exterior walls intact. Additionally, the vibrations from construction would further damage East Old Main’s exterior walls, while also posing a danger to West Old Main by potentially dislodging the mortar in the stone foundation.⁴⁵ A month later, another report to the library architects from a separate engineering firm confirmed that diagnosis.⁴⁶ The building would have to be demolished.

What did it mean for Macalester’s original building to be razed? Of course, this impending change had implications for the physical environment on campus. The building was vacated and a fence was placed around it during the months leading up to the demolition.⁴⁷ Many offices had to be relocated elsewhere, including Residential Life, the History and Political Science departments, and Admissions.⁴⁸ But the demolition also had more emotional and symbolic implications: the Mac community would have to say goodbye to the college’s most iconic building. The college chose to mark the impending demolition with a decommissioning ceremony in the spring of 1986, and carefully designed the event.⁴⁹ Professor of history Yahya Armajani was invited to speak about the history of the building, with a focus on the people and

⁴⁴ Letter from Elmer J. Kopp to Dr. Robert M. Gavin, Jr., November 13, 1985, box RG 12.1 Buildings on Campus, folder Old Main (East & West), Macalester College Archives.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Letter from Herberts Ule to Geoffrey T. Freeman, December 9, 1985, box RG 12.1 Buildings on Campus, folder Old Main (East & West), Macalester College Archives.

⁴⁷ “Library and East Old Main,” administrative document, box RG 12.1 Buildings on Campus, folder Old Main (East & West), Macalester College Archives.

⁴⁸ Vaccarella, “Mac to demolish East Old Main.”

⁴⁹ “East Old Main: A Transition,” event program, Friday, April 4, 1986, box RG 12.1 Buildings on Campus, folder Old Main (East & West), Macalester College Archives.

the tradition of teaching in Old Main, so as to emphasize the learning that occurred within the building rather than the building itself. Professor Armajani's talk was followed by a speech by the college president outlining the plans for the modern new library that would take East Old Main's place.

Demolition



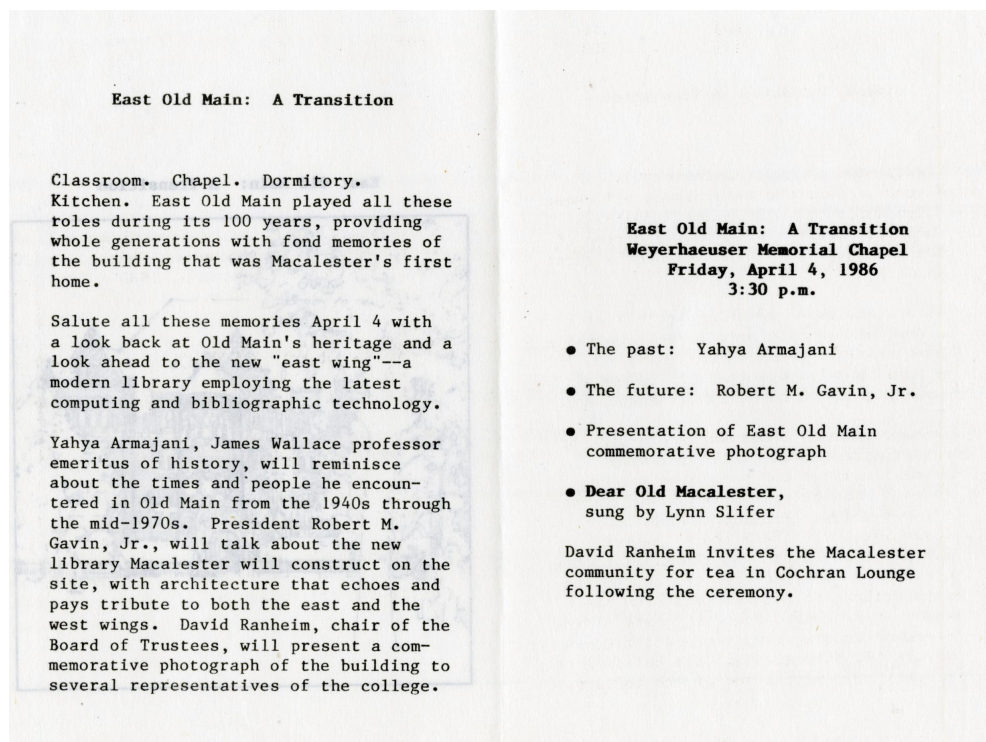
The East Wing of Old Main undergoing demolition. © Macalester College Archives.

On July 23, 1986, spectators watched as a crane with a jaw-like attachment reached over the roof of East Old Main and ate away at the structure until it collapsed.

Members of the Macalester community reacted to the demolition of Old Main in different ways. For some, the loss of East Old Main was an unfortunate but understandable moment. One alum, Paul Stoughton, class of 1929, admitted that even in 1925, the building

“was regarded as a disaster about to happen,” and noted that the fact that it “lasted another sixty years is nothing short of miraculous.”⁵⁰ Others were more emotional about the loss. In a poem titled “Ode to Old Main,” John W. Gibson wrote, “Old Main you have served us long and you have served us well/To be battered by that wrecking ball must have been hell.”⁵¹

Ultimately, the demolition paved the way for new construction. Just over two years later, DeWitt Wallace Library would open its doors for the first time, in September of 1988.⁵²



The program for the decommissioning ceremony for the East Wing of Old Main. © Macalester College Archives.

⁵⁰ Letter from Paul Stoughton to Alexander Hill, December 23, 1985, box RG 12.1 Buildings on Campus, folder Old Main (East & West), Macalester College Archives.

⁵¹ Gibson, John W. “Ode to Old Main,” poem and photo collage, July 26, 1986, box RG 12.1 Buildings on Campus, folder Old Main (East & West), Macalester College Archives.

⁵² Ethan Lebovics, “New library opens doors to students,” *Mac Weekly*, September 9, 1988, Macalester College Archives.

Old Main's Legacy



Old Main in the winter of 2022. © Andie Walker.

Today, Old Main serves as a symbol that the institution of Macalester has stood the test of time. However, its current appearance conceals its history. Looking at the building today, it is essentially impossible to see that East Old Main ever existed. Instead, the library stands in its place, and Old Main appears to be a complete building in its own right. At the time that it was built, the structure we know as Old Main was the result of poor financial planning, the opposite of the strong historical roots Old Main now implies. Old Main has seen many beginnings and

endings— the beginning of Macalester College in the 1880s, its brush with an early death, the destruction of the East Wing in 1986, and a new beginning with the construction of the library in its place. Looking at the physical spaces that make up Macalester’s campus today, it can be hard to see how much has changed over time. Buildings can seem immutable, or immovable. The story of Old Main is clear evidence that buildings are not as set in stone as they appear.

Student Housing

Introduction



A Macalester student in their plant-filled dorm room. © Macalester College Archives.

In her book exploring the history of student housing in the United States, art historian Carla Yanni argues that “the architecture of dormitories has participated in the establishment of the essential norms of American life.”⁵³ At American colleges, dormitories have served as a way to educate young adults about how to live with one another before they go out into the real world. At Macalester, dorms and the rules implemented within their walls have shaped how students sleep, eat, party, and build relationships. In particular, the design and operation of dorms at Macalester has consistently centered around the college’s philosophy of gender and sexuality. Originally, the college hoped to instill students with traditional gender roles through strict rules and separation by sex. Over time, as national attitudes changed and students challenged these rules, Macalester’s philosophy on student housing has moved away from its reliance on a binary understanding of gender— but not without challenges and missteps along the way.

⁵³ Yanni, *Living On Campus*, 1.

Women on Campus



Students pose for a photo in front of Old Main. © Macalester College Archives.

Within a few years of Macalester's founding, a new challenge would emerge in accommodating the student body on campus: women. Macalester first admitted two women in the fall of 1893. In some ways, this was not a major change for the institution. The precursor to Macalester, the Baldwin School, had served a majority of female students, and the ability to accept more students to the college meant more tuition, something the college certainly needed.⁵⁴ However, this new development went against the wishes of Macalester's founder,

⁵⁴ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 77.

Edward Duffield Neill, who declared that he would not step foot on campus while the college educated women.⁵⁵

As the story goes, President Ringland visited Neill at his home one day in hopes of discussing the issue. Neill was often characterized as quick to anger, and so it's likely that the two men argued. After their meeting, President Ringland left Neill's home, and later that afternoon, Neill suffered a heart attack and died.⁵⁶ The incident was certainly a dramatic way to mark the introduction of women to Macalester, and made it clear that women would not be able to follow the same path as their male counterparts during their time at the college. Over the next several decades, Macalester administrators would frequently limit the freedom of female students in the name of educating and disciplining them appropriately.

⁵⁵ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 80.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Deans of Women and Dorm Architecture



Students sit on the front porch of The Elms. © Macalester College Archives.

In the early 1900s, women were seen as having different needs from men when it came to education and student housing. Female students at colleges and universities in the United States, including Macalester, were often overseen by deans of women, who were responsible for “their charges’ involvement with cars, mixed-gender houses, food, and sex,” as described by Yanni.⁵⁷ Architecture was one way that college administrators could oversee their students and

⁵⁷ Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 120.

ensure their safety and morality.



Julia Johnson in her study. © Macalester College Archives.

In 1897, the college hired its first female professor, Julia Johnson, who also took on the role of Dean of Women and served as the house mother for The Elms, the residence for women located in the former president's home. Residents of the Elms contributed an hour of work each day assisting the matron of the house— providing a way for women to learn how to properly manage a home.⁵⁸ However, a dormitory designed specially for women would be ideal— it

⁵⁸ Macalester College, "Twelfth Annual Catalogue," College Catalogs, Macalester College Archives, 1896, <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/catalogs/30/>, 61.

would keep them out of boarding houses, which were seen as in opposition to a healthy learning environment, what with their lack of supervision and isolation from campus, and it would allow for special considerations for the wellbeing of female students in particular.⁵⁹ As the student body grew, it was clear that a much larger building would be needed to house female students. and plans were drawn up for what would become Wallace Hall.

Wallace Hall: Marketing and Design



WOMEN'S DORMITORY.

An illustration of Wallace Hall, taken from the 1906 college catalog. © Macalester College Archives.

⁵⁹ Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 97-8.

Great care was taken in the building and marketing of Wallace as suitable for its female occupants. Although college administrators were fine with housing male students in various places, ranging from the original dormitory in the East Wing of Old Main, to the boarding clubs at Edwards and Eutrophian Halls, as well as off campus, they carefully arranged housing accommodations for women. Wallace Hall is listed in the 1906 College Catalog as “so arranged that sunlight will fall into every room [...] The whole building will have every modern appointment and be absolutely fireproof.”⁶⁰ Wallace was designed to be a beautiful and safe place for the women of Macalester to live, with all the amenities they might need. The first floor featured a large dining hall, parlors for entertaining, and the office and quarters of the matron, while the second and third floors held bedrooms and communal bathrooms for residents.⁶¹ The layout of the rooms followed traditional conventions in the design of dormitories for women, with double-loaded corridors— making it easier to keep an eye on the comings and goings of students and their guests.⁶² In the basement, there was a gymnasium for residents to practice physical education, as recommended by the college— physical education was yet another way that the college viewed as essential in caring for female students and ensuring their health.⁶³

The construction of Wallace also helped to improve Macalester’s image and served as a draw for potential new students. The 1906 College Catalog features an illustration of Wallace Hall prominently on its first page, with Edwardian silhouetted women walking along the tree-lined sidewalk and standing in the doorways. Later, the catalog writes arrogantly that “[i]t is

⁶⁰ Macalester College, “Twenty-Second Annual Catalogue,” College Catalogs, Macalester College Archives, 1907, <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/catalogs/40/>, 18.

⁶¹ Wallace Hall plans, 1906, box ZF351.W19, Macalester College Archives.

⁶² Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 4.

⁶³ “Twenty-Second Annual Catalogue,” 24.

believed that no building of its kind west of Chicago can approach it or be compared with it in plan and equipment.”⁶⁴ At the time, Macalester was still a young institution and had little reputation to speak of, and a beautiful new residence hall with modern appointments was an opportunity to attract new students and present the college as a reputable place to live and learn. The flowery description in the catalog and the illustration of the hall helped to paint an idyllic picture of Macalester for prospective students— especially women, who the college believed had special needs that had to be taken into consideration.

Dorm Life in the Early 1900s



Spectators climb up bleachers on the athletic field, with East and West Old Main in the background, 1910. © Macalester

College Archives.

⁶⁴ “Twenty-Second Annual Catalogue,” 18.

College leaders continued to prioritize keeping relations between men and women as limited and chaste as possible in the early 1900s— often to the detriment of women in particular. Wallace Hall had been constructed at a safe distance from the men’s dormitory located in the East Wing of Old Main, which women were prohibited from entering anyways.⁶⁵ There were many similar rules in place just for women, ostensibly to keep them out of trouble.

In 1912, Del Laughlin, class of 1913 and president of the student government association, wrote a short article for the *Macalester Bulletin* describing the different places students lived and the associations in charge of them. In Old Main, thirty men lived together in what Laughlin described as “the best arranged rooms on the campus,” while others lived in the wooden frame house on campus called Edwards Hall, a nearby boarding club called Euthenian Hall, or rented rooms in private homes.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 90.

⁶⁶ Del Laughlin, “Dormitory Associations,” *Macalester College Bulletin* 1, no. 1 (October 1912), Macalester College Archives, 17-18.



Edwards Hall, c. 1892-1898. © Macalester College Archives.

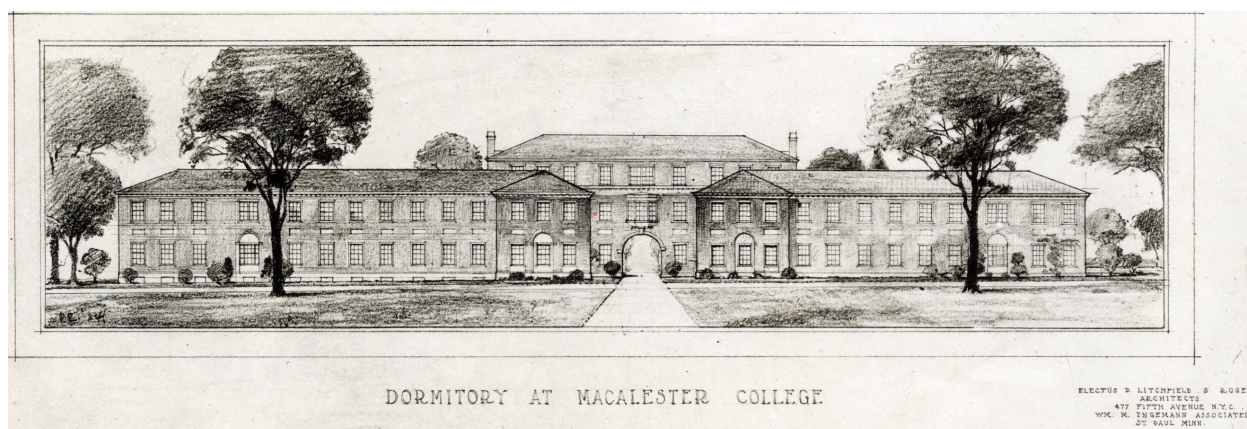
However, Laughlin writes, “chief in interest among Macalester dormitories is Wallace Hall, with its sixty-seven fair inmates.”⁶⁷ According to Laughlin, dorm life was luxurious for the fair women of Wallace, similar to how the college had marketed the hall. Speaking for the men of Macalester, he wrote that Wallace Hall, “with its beautiful location, [...] its sunny dining room, and its spacious parlors, makes the accommodations for the sterner sex seem by contrast even more crude and inadequate.”⁶⁸ However, “the girls [had to be] ‘in’ at 7:30 p. m. except by special permission” from the Dean of Women, and “lights [were] out and doors [were] locked at

⁶⁷ Laughlin, *Dormitory Associations*, 17.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

10:30” each night. On the other hand, Laughlin explains that in the men’s dormitory, the philosophy was that “every man is permitted to come, go, and do as he pleases so long as he neither breaks the rules of the college nor infringes upon the rights of the other fellow.” Living on campus meant agreeing to be subjected to the college’s rules, which often relied on double standards for women, a disparity that would last for decades.

Campus Makes Plans to Expand



Architect's sketch of Kirk Hall. © Macalester College Archives.

In 1926, Kirk Hall was constructed to house male students, the first dormitory for men constructed since the East Wing of Old Main. In contrast to the design of Wallace Hall, Kirk was built on the “Quadrangle Plan,” which consisted of a rectangular building looking down into an enclosed courtyard. Building dormitories in this style had a long history, including the oft-revered campuses of Cambridge and Oxford, however, the design gained prominence in the 20th century when administrators at Yale released a report titled “The Quadrangle Plan” in 1925.⁶⁹ Art historian Carla Yanni explains that the report served as a guiding philosophy for

⁶⁹ Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 142.

higher education that focused on building community connections between students and professors and noted that “the compactness of the square donut plan promoted closeness among the students.”⁷⁰

The quadrangle architectural form could also serve another purpose: surveillance and security. The design featured windows looking down on all sides onto a shared courtyard, creating a space physically separate from the rest of the neighborhood and somewhat reminiscent of the panopticon prison design, proposed by Jeremy Bentham in the 19th century. Michel Foucault later used the panopticon to symbolize the increased amount of government surveillance imposed upon society.⁷¹ As a college student, it was clear that privacy was not a priority when your outdoor courtyard space was in view of an array of windows. This style of architecture helped establish that college was a place where young adults would ideally learn and grow while still remaining under an appropriate amount of supervision— even if they no longer lived with their parents. Kirk Hall was built to encourage a close community among students, but its architecture also made it clear that students were far from living independently.

In addition to Kirk Hall, in 1929, the college’s president John Acheson developed a new plan to revamp the college’s curriculum and mission, which included a comprehensive plan for new facilities. The plan would lead to the construction of “at least six new buildings: a library, a classroom and administrative building, a science building, a chapel, a fine arts building, and a student activities building, each of which would be equipped with the most modern of

⁷⁰ Yanni, *Living on Campus*, 142.


⁷¹ Michel Foucault and Alan Sheridan, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Second Vintage books edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

facilities.”⁷² Unfortunately, the financial troubles of the Great Depression meant that Acheson’s plans had to be shelved, and they weren’t realized until after Acheson’s death.⁷³ With the Great Depression, enrollment dropped, and the college had to reduce tuition in order to entice students back to the school. Funding received from rent on college owned property, primarily farmland in the north of Minnesota, dropped sharply.⁷⁴ Any sort of college expansion would have to be put on hold.

Cultural Shifts: World War II

The Mac Weekly
 Liveliest College Weekly • The Paper With Imagination
 Vol. XXXI Macalester College, St. Paul 5, Minn., Friday, September 29, 1944 No. 2

Co-ed Invasion Crowds Boys From Kirk Hall




Transforming Kirk Hall, former men's residence now occupied primarily by women, into a place of feminine charms, has its ups and downs plus moments of weighty predicaments, as the pictured coeds will testify.
 Shown on the left as they climb to give the dormitory sign a new

Roll Now Tops 500

Exceeding the 500 mark, Macalester's student body now totals 505, only 180 below the all time pre-war high of 685 set in 1939.

This number is far above the August estimate of probable attendance, topping last year's enrollment of 432. Freshmen comprise three-fourths of the population, according to registration figures.

The campus ratio now stands eight to one in the women's favor. Similar trends in overwhelming female enrollment are shown in all co-educational colleges. However, the administration is looking forward to the return of service men, already begun this semester, to equalize the proportion of men and women.



reading are freshmen Peggy Masters, above, and Emarie Ewald below.
 Buried under traditional coed paraphernalia, freshmen Miriam Gottenborg, Edythe Olson and Florence Biscoe, left to right in the second picture, began their recent moving day into Kirk Hall.

Witty Drama To Hit Mac

Broadway excitement comes to the Macalester Studio with the premiere of a new modern comedy never before attempted, "A Little Honey" by William Davidson.

Under the direction of Prof. Will Peters, and with stage techniques handled by Instr. Harriet McPhetres, the newly released play will hit the Studio boards as the next major production by the Macalester Players.

The lucky Thespians who will make up the rest of seven women

Front page of the *Mac Weekly*, September 29, 1944. © Macalester College Archives.

⁷² Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 142-3.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 143, 146.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 146-7.

In the 20th century, the outbreak of world war and the emergence of national social movements both challenged and reinforced gender norms across the country. For Macalester in particular, World War II was a watershed moment. Women now vastly outnumbered men on campus, as college-aged men were needed on the battlefield, and some administrators worried that the chaos and fear that came with war would lead to sexual immorality and the degradation of norms.⁷⁵ Perhaps they were right— after all, when army air corps trainees moved into Kirk Hall, displacing their former male residents, male and female Macalester students dined together for the first time in Wallace Hall.⁷⁶ Later, in 1944, female students had to move into Kirk Hall, despite the fact that the building was designed to house men only.⁷⁷

Coed Housekeepers Have Fun in New Home

Carrying their home work further than most coeds are the girls who live at the Home Management house, 1668 Portland ave. They do their own meal planning, shopping, cooking and scrubbing. Jobs are rotated so each girl gets her chance at the various projects.



No politics enters into the parcelling out of jobs at the house. The girls simply reach their hand into a bowl of slips held by Prof. Ruth Bonde, house advisor, and become cooks, maids, scrub women or bed makers.

Excerpt of the *Mac Weekly*, October 29, 1943 shows off the residents of Macalester's Home Management house. ©

Macalester College Archives.

⁷⁵ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 177-9.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁷⁷ "Co-ed Invasion Crowds Boys From Kirk Hall," *Mac Weekly*, September 29, 1944, Macalester College Archives.

However, although traditional practices around gender were challenged in some ways, they were reinforced in others. The Home Management House was established in 1943 and offered women students interested in home economics to practice the principles they had learned while living together under one roof.⁷⁸ Residents worked together to plan meals, cook, and clean while overseen by a professor, who served as the house's advisor.⁷⁹ At the time, Macalester had a Home Economics department that offered majors and minors, with a curriculum that emphasized traditionally feminine household roles.⁸⁰ Marriages in the student body picked up speed, and the Mac Weekly began publishing a new section of the paper called "Rings from the Bell Tower," which announced engagements and weddings between students.⁸¹ Although war disrupted the normal flow of college life, it also led to a strengthening of gender norms in response to the chaos and fear that war generated.

⁷⁸ "Coed Housekeepers Have Fun in New Home," *Mac Weekly*, October 29, 1943, Macalester College Archives.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 177.

⁸¹ Ibid. Current students will note that the bell tower's significance has changed somewhat.

Postwar Construction: Gendered Divisions

The Mac Weekly

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY MEDALIST RATING THIRTY-THREE SEMESTERS ALL-AMERICAN

Vol. 43 MACALESTER COLLEGE, ST. PAUL 5, MINNESOTA—FRIDAY, SEPT. 28, 1956 No. 1



**Macalester,
College
of Scots**

New Dorms Get OK

* * * * * * * * * * * *

13 Faculty Promotions Made

Will House 132 Men, 150 Women

Four Gain Full Professorships

President Turk announces a number of faculty and administration promotions for the Macalester college fall term.

Prof. Earl Spangler has been named assistant dean of students in charge of military affairs, men's housing, foreign students, and financial aid. He continues to teach courses in American history in the history department. Dr. Peter S. Mousolite continues as the dean of students and Miss Margaret Doty continues as the dean of women.

FULL PROFESSOR

The following have been promoted to full professorships: Dr. Paul Jensen of the psychology department, Dr. Louise Curtis of the elementary education department, Dr. J. M. Adams of the religion department, and Dr. Hildegard B. Johnson of the geography department.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

These have been promoted to associate professorships: Ian Morton, music; Anthony Caponi, art; Dorothy M. Michel, women's physical education.

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR

Advanced from instructor to assistant professor are Dr. Dorothy Dodge, political science; Patricia Knight, women's physical education; Theodore C. Chicklis, economics; Richard B. Dierenfield, education, and Herman Straka, music.



Here is the architect's design of the new women's dormitory, which will be built east of Bigelow and Wallace halls. The three women's dormitories will have a common courtyard. The women's dormitory will house 150.

Enrollment Continues To Go Up

Enrollment of regular liberal arts day students numbered 1,347 Thursday for an increase of nearly 100 over last year.

Registration will continue open

Enrollment Continues To Go Up

Enrollment of regular liberal arts day students numbered 1,347 Thursday for an increase of nearly 100 over last year.

Registration will continue open



This architect's design shows the new men's dormitory which will be located on Snelling between Kirk hall and the Union. It will accommodate 132 students. The architect for both buildings is Ellerbe and Co. Architects and Engineers.

Plans and specifications have been given to contractors and bids are scheduled to be opened in October. Erection of the buildings probably will start in November.

The buildings have been designed by Ellerbe and Co. Architects and Engineers, St. Paul. Both will be three stories high and constructed of red brick. They will be built in the American Colonial style in keeping with Macalester's newer buildings.

The men's dormitory will have rooms for 132 students, with two students to a room. The women's dormitory will house 150, also with two students in a room.

Location of the men's dormitory will be on South Snelling avenue at Lincoln street, between Kirk hall and the Macalester union. Location of the women's dormitory will be at Grand avenue and Macalester street, just east of Bigelow hall, girls dormitory which was built in 1946. It will face to the west.

Both dormitories will be constructed on the "L" shape plan, and Wallace and Bigelow halls, girls dormitories, and the new women's dormitory, all will have a common courtyard.

Dr. Turk said that the increase in Macalester enrollment in recent years has made the need for additional dormitories imperative. He expressed

Front page of the *Mac Weekly* from September 28, 1956, with sketches of future dormitories Turk and Dayton Halls. ©

Macalester College Archives.

After the war, though some men and women were once again divided into separate halls, Macalester's student housing had fundamentally changed. The college's landscape began

to shift as a huge influx of students enrolled at Macalester, with the student body surpassing 1,000 for the first time.⁸² Several new residence halls were constructed to accommodate the growth. Bigelow was initially constructed in 1946 to house veteran students, though it eventually housed women.⁸³ Just over a decade later, in 1957, Turck and Dayton Halls were built to house women and men respectively.⁸⁴ During this period, the campus remained physically divided by gender— Wallace, Bigelow, and Turck Halls sat on one side of Grand Avenue, housing women, while Kirk and Dayton Halls housed men on the other side of Grand, closer to Old Main. Students continued to eat separately based on gender, until the Student Union was constructed in 1952, which replaced the Kirk Hall dining room. The Union was open to all students, however women living on campus still typically relied on their dorm dining rooms during the week.

In addition to the construction of traditional dormitories like Bigelow, Turck, and Dayton, Macalester also offered unique living situations for veteran students in particular. Several veteran students already had spouses and children, and therefore needed additional accommodations. With money from the Federal Public Housing Authority, the college constructed several apartments for veterans and their families to live on campus, and the resulting community was dubbed “Macville.” Ultimately, the end of World War II brought a surge of students, requiring the college to be nimble and creative in its construction of housing. Although men and women now had the chance to eat together regularly, individual buildings

⁸² “GI’s Boost Register Past 1,000,” *Mac Weekly*, August 9, 1946, Macalester College Archives.

⁸³ “Dorm To House 116 Vets,” *Mac Weekly*, March 22, 1946, Macalester College Archives and “Homecoming Dates?,” *Mac Weekly*, October 29, 1948, Macalester College Archives, 7.

⁸⁴ “New Dorms Named Turck, Dayton Halls,” *Mac Weekly*, October 18, 1957, Macalester College Archives, and “New Dorms Get OK,” *Mac Weekly*, September 28, 1956, Macalester College Archives.

remained segregated by gender, and the fact that Macville was arranged to accommodate the typical nuclear family reflected the college's continued comfort with traditional gender roles.

Women's Hours: Double Standards Continue



Students chat in a dorm room. © Macalester College Archives.

Steady growth continued for Macalester in the 1960s. Dupre Hall and Doty Halls, built to be men's and women's dormitories respectively, both opened during the 1964-65 school year.⁸⁵ Both featured double-loaded corridors— a sign that administrators wanted to continue exercising careful control over students and their social lives.

⁸⁵ Macalester College, "Macalester College Bulletin," College Catalogs, Macalester College Archives, 1964, <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/catalogs/93/>.

However, by the 1960s, Macalester students were increasingly questioning the ways in which campus was segregated by gender. Women were still subject to convoluted curfew rules, with the ability to stay out late some nights but not others, while men were free to come and go from their dorms as they pleased. Both men and women had reasons to oppose the rules; female students argued that they were old enough to be independent and to make their own decisions while at college and male students argued that the school's social life was hindered when women had to return earlier to their dorms or risk getting in trouble.

Macalester Women Want Right To Make Their Own Decisions

A headline from the February 25, 1966 edition of the *Mac Weekly*. © Macalester College Archives.

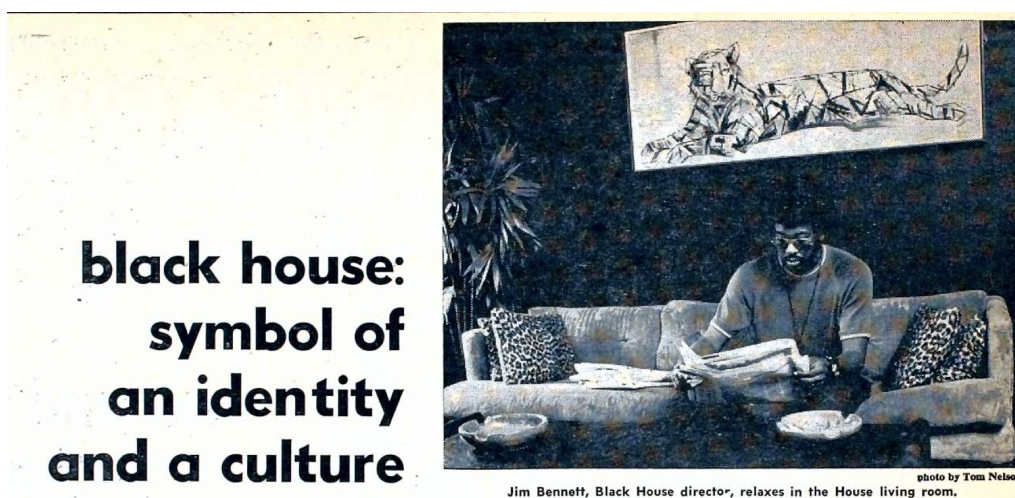
The issue of “women’s hours” was a recurring one throughout the fifties and sixties. As early as 1953, a *Mac Weekly* poll showed that 74% of students were dissatisfied with the implementation of women’s hours.⁸⁶ That dissatisfaction continued to simmer over the next several years, even as some reforms were made. Students often raised the issue during student government elections or in opinion articles for the *Mac Weekly*, but change was slow to come.⁸⁷ Other students used more guerilla tactics to protest the rules. A *Mac Weekly* article from April 1966 explains that the sign-in cards for the residents of Wallace Hall had been stolen, destroying the record of whether or not the students had used their limited number of “grace minutes” or

⁸⁶ Jack Edwards, “Dorm Hours Disliked,” *Mac Weekly*, April 10, 1953, Macalester College Archives.

⁸⁷ “Prexy Candidates Present Plans,” *Mac Weekly*, April 22, 1955, Macalester College Archives, Jon Kuklish, “Which Way Will the Door Swing?,” *Mac Weekly*, February 18, 1966, Macalester College Archives, and Anne Winter, “Macalester Women Want Right to Make Own Decisions,” *Mac Weekly*, February 25, 1966, Macalester College Archives.

“one o’clocks.”⁸⁸ Eventually, restrictions for women over 21 were removed completely, but students in their first and second year at Macalester still faced stricter rules. In 1968, the women’s hours system was significantly scaled back after successful votes in the student government.⁸⁹ The new policy only gave curfews to first semester freshmen, whose restrictions would be lifted by second semester unless their parents objected.⁹⁰ Women’s curfews were finally eliminated during the 1969-1970 school year, when the college made the decision to offer co-ed halls for the first time. After years of division, complicated rules, and dissatisfaction from students, the college eliminated one of its longest standing practices and broke down one of the most significant barriers between students on campus.

New and Non-traditional Housing Options



Headline and photograph from the May 1, 1970 edition of the *Mac Weekly* showing Jim Bennett, then Black House director, in the house's living room. © Macalester College Archives.

⁸⁸ “Grace minutes” refers to a limited number of minutes each student could use if they were running late in an emergency. “One o’clocks” refers to the similarly limited number of nights students could stay out later— until 1:00 am. “Cards Swiped!”, *Mac Weekly*, April 29, 1966, Macalester College Archives.

⁸⁹ “Women’s Hours, Open Houses, to Go into Effect,” *Mac Weekly*, November 22, 1968, Macalester College Archives.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

The options for student housing at Macalester continued to diversify after co-ed dorms were established for the first time in 1969. Over the next few decades, more options would become available to students that differed from the traditional dormitory setup. Students could now choose where to live based on their academic interests or cultural and religious backgrounds. As a part of the college's Expanded Educational Opportunities (EEO) program, Macalester opened Black House in 1969, and Hispanic House in 1974, giving students new places to live, hang out, and host events to build community.⁹¹ Those houses were eventually consolidated into the new Cultural House in the 1980s after the end of EEO. In 1970, Macalester's first language houses opened, offering students the chance to practice speaking another language with their peers at home.⁹² Hebrew House opened in 1972, providing Jewish students the opportunity to live together and giving them a space that served as a cultural and religious center.⁹³

⁹¹ "History of Multiculturalism and Internationalism at Mac," "Multiculturalism at Macalester College, Macalester College Archives, accessed April 15, 2023. <https://dwlibrary.macalester.edu/multicultural/> and James Bennett, "Black House: Symbol of an identity and a culture," *Mac Weekly*, May 1, 1970, Macalester College Archives.

⁹² Macalester College, "Macalester College Bulletin," College Catalogs, Macalester College Archives, 1970. <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/catalogs/98/>.

⁹³ Macalester College, "Macalester College Bulletin," College Catalogs, Macalester College Archives, 1972. <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/catalogs/100/>.

Evolving Philosophies of Gender

Gender-blind housing proposal gets media attention

By SHANNON MILLS and
HEATHER LENDWAY
Contributing Writers

Macalester made news locally and nationally when newspapers, radio stations and television stations reported on the possibility of gender-blind housing at the college. *The Mac Weekly* reported on the possibility in the Nov. 14 issue. The following week, the Associated Press (AP), *Star Tribune*, *Saint Paul Pioneer Press*, *New York Newsday*, *Detroit News*, *Minnesota Public Radio*, WCCO-Radio, television stations KSTP Channel 5 and KARE Channel 11 and several other newspapers across the country gave the story coverage.

The media attention generated increased discussion of the proposal on campus as well as comments from alumni and the community.

Many of the articles quoted Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students Laurie Hamre. She said she is "clueless" as to why the proposal has gotten

so much attention from the media and said she feels that the articles did not accurately describe the situation.

"Our students have a lot of choices,"

she said. "I tried to make it clear that we're not going to make this a policy [in every dorm], but they didn't pick up on that."

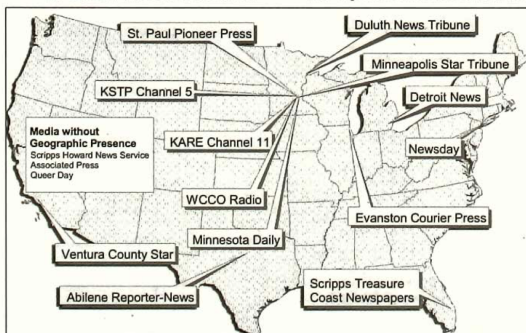
She explained that some other schools

that offer gender-blind housing require students to live on campus all four years. Since Macalester policy allows students to move off-campus after their sophomore year and since many students take advantage of this off campus option, she believes that a small pilot gender-blind housing program would meet the current demand for on-campus co-ed housing.

Since the stories were published, Hamre has received both positive and negative responses from Macalester alumni and members of the community. She said that most of those who were against gender-blind housing were not well informed of what the proposal actually entails. Some thought that the proposal was already in effect, while others thought that all students would live in gender-blind housing.

According to Hamre, the media attention has accelerated the process of reviewing the proposal. "This kicked it up to the senior staff level," she said. "We probably would have spent more time discussing it with stu-

Housing, continued on page 5



The media outlets on the map covered the gender-blind housing proposal at Macalester. The media attention has raised the profile of the proposal at Macalester. Map by Brent Hecht.

A graphic from the *Mac Weekly* shows national coverage of the college's proposed 'gender-blind' housing offerings. ©

Macalester College Archives.

New options for student housing at Macalester continued to emerge throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The Veggie Co-op, where students collaborated with one another to cook homemade vegetarian meals, opened in its original location at 37 Macalester Street in 1992.⁹⁴ George Draper Dayton Hall opened in the fall of 1997, offering a variety of suite layouts for groups of three to six students, and contrasting the traditional dormitory layout with shared bathrooms seen in the other residence halls on campus, like Kirk, Doty and Dupre, and Turck.⁹⁵ In 1995, the college also established a new residency policy that required students to live on campus for their first two years of college. Dorm life was now officially a core part of the Macalester experience.

⁹⁴ "Early birds get no food," *Mac Weekly*, February 28, 1992, Macalester College Archives.

⁹⁵ "George Draper Dayton Hall (GDD)," Macalester College, accessed April 15, 2023, <https://www.macalester.edu/residential-life/residencehalls-2/gdd/>.

With these new developments in Macalester's dorms came an evolution in the college's approach to gender and housing. A gender-blind housing pilot program that would better support LGBTQ students on campus was first proposed in the fall of 2003 and made headlines across the country. The *Mac Weekly* noted that both the Star Tribune and Associated Press had quoted Tom Prichard, then president of the Minnesota Family Council, who expressed concerns about the policy increasing "sexual promiscuity" and the spread of STIs. In 2008, all-gender housing was established in a section of Kirk, allowing students to request housing not segregated by gender. Although these policy changes helped to better accommodate LGBTQ students on campus, students have still faced barriers in requesting all-gender housing, as reported on by the *Mac Weekly* in recent years.⁹⁶

In comparison to the 1890s, dorms at Macalester are far less strict and instead focused on creating an inclusive community on campus. Buildings are no longer segregated by gender, and students enjoy the freedom of being able to come and go as they please. However, the same questions of how to best house and educate students that first emerged in Macalester's earliest years continue to shape the college's decisions around student housing.

⁹⁶ Cal Martinez, "First Year Transgender Students."

Student Unity



Students eat in Kagin Commons. © Macalester College Archives.

Residential colleges aim to educate young adults on how to live in the world independently. However, dorms are not the only buildings that have made Macalester a home for many students over the years. The Student Union, constructed in the 1950s, was the first

example of a purpose-built place for students to gather, eat, and be in community with one another. Later, the Union was followed by Kagin Commons, originally a dining hall, where all on campus students ate meals together. In the early 2000s, the current Campus Center was constructed in the place of the old Student Union. All of these buildings have served an important purpose— creating a space for Macalester students to build a community. Tracing the ways that they have changed shows us how that community has continually redefined itself, from a college made up of mostly commuter students with stark divisions along gendered lines, to a school with an on-campus residency requirement and a much more cohesive campus culture.

Creating a Place for Community



A photograph from the *Mac Weekly* shows the groundbreaking for the new Student Union. © Macalester College

Archives.

Plans for a new Student Union building began to crystallize at the end of the 1940s and into 1950. In 1949, a committee of faculty, students, and trustees, headed by college president Dr. Charles Turck met with the student union's architect, C. Howard Johnston. It was the first time that students and trustees had collaborated on a committee together, and the group continued to meet and finalize plans for the union through 1950.⁹⁷ Students seemed to be eager to hear news of the union, considering that they had all contributed a \$10 union fee at registration to help fund the new building. President Turck was careful in explaining the intended purpose of the union, explaining that it would not be for large gatherings, but that it would rather "exist primarily for two purposes: first, as a student social center and eating place, and, secondly, as a meeting spot for campus organizations."⁹⁸ Some recreational activities, like billiards, would remain in Old Main, and the gymnasium would continue to accommodate larger events, but dances could be held in the new union.⁹⁹

The design of the student union captured the interest of Macalester students throughout its construction, and its features help to illustrate the institution Macalester was becoming. For the first time, the school would have a building designated solely for non-academic purposes. The building would feature a small chapel, rooms for student organizations to meet in, a post office, a bookstore, a cafeteria and private dining rooms for other events. The union would be a gathering place for the community, separate from the classrooms and the dorms— it would be a place where the college could unite.

⁹⁷ "Students Assist in Plans for New \$500,000 Union," *Mac Weekly*, January 13, 1950, Macalester College Archives.

⁹⁸ Gehrenbeck, "Union Plans."

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

The Union Opens

The Mac Weekly

STUDENT UNION DEDICATION ISSUE

Vol. 48 Macalester College—Wednesday, February 6, 1952 No. 12



College Dedicates New Union Today

The entire Macalester community, augmented by several hundred alumni, trustees and other guests, will assemble here at 11 a.m. today for formal dedication exercises for the College's newly-completed Student Union building.

Finishing construction touches on the half-million-dollar edifice have been made this week, with full use of all facilities awaiting only the arrival of furniture and other fixtures.

Today's dedication program marks the first full-scale ceremony of its type on the Macalester campus since Bigelow hall was opened five years ago.

Dr. Arnold H. Lowe, chairman of the Macalester Board of Trustees and pastor of Westminster Presbyterian church, Minneapolis, will deliver the main address, with President Charles J. Turck giving the welcoming talk.

Also participating in the program will be two other college trustees, Dr. Irving A. West, pastor of House of Hope Presbyterian church, St. Paul, and Dr. Eldon W. Wenzel, executive director of the Presbyterian synod of Minnesota. Dr. West will give the opening prayer, with Dr. Wenzel pronouncing the benediction.

The 215-voice Macalester choir directed by Prof. Ian A. Morton will sing two numbers, Rachmaninoff's "To Thee O Lord," and "The Lord is My Shepherd," a Scottish hymn. The choir also will lead the audience in singing the College alma mater later in the program.

Following the exercises, a buffet luncheon will be held in the Union cafeteria for all students, faculty, alumni, trustees, and other guests. Serving, with the College as host, will start at noon, continuing until 1 p.m.

AMONG THE GUESTS invited to today's events are Student Union directors from all colleges and universities in the surrounding territory.

Guided tours of the new building are to be conducted this afternoon by Macalester students selected as members of the recently-inaugurated College hospitality service.

BUILDING OUTFITTED FOR NON-ACADEMIC OVERFLOW

Old Main moaned a sigh of relief today.

At last the old building is going to get a chance to grow old gracefully as student activities, that have been crowding the old guy for years, move out and into the new Student Union.

Facilities and furnishings that will complete the new Student Union building are being installed as rapidly as they can be obtained.

STUDENT organization offices are located on second floor together with the chapel, clubrooms, men's and women's faculty lounges, and seminar rooms. The student offices located on the north side now are furnished with metal tables, desks and chairs.

Two rooms will be occupied by the Community Council and MCA while the remaining office space will be assigned to various other student organizations. Only faculty or administrative offices located in the Union will be those of Union director Harold A. Goltz, Chaplain J. Maxwell Adams and Prof. A. Phillips Beeson, alumni secretary.

THE CHAPEL on second floor has been furnished with a two-manual Baldwin electronic organ. This room later will be supplied with an altar and pews seating 100 persons.

The main floor grand lounge, easily convertible into a ballroom, will be completely ready for occupancy upon arrival of the lounge furniture and two large carpets. One carpet will cover the parquet flooring in front of the fireplace and the other will be in the center of the room. A piano will be added shortly.

ALUMNI headquarters, an expandable private dining room, a browsing room and music-listening room, also on the main floor, already have been partially furnished. The alumni office is named the Julia Johnson memorial room, in memory of Macalester's first dean of women.

An elevator will supply a warming kitchen on the main floor directly with the cafeteria kitchen downstairs. Tables already are in the private dining room which can be divided into three separate rooms by means of folding walls.

DOWNSTAIRS, the cafeteria, kitchen, bookstore, and postoffice have been in full use since Jan. 3. The cafeteria, seating 300, now serves approximately 750 meals per day. Within the next few weeks soda fountain facilities there will be open throughout the day.

Dedication Program

Opening Prayer	Dr. Irving A. West
Welcome to Guests	Dr. Charles J. Turck
Macalester College Choir	Prof. Ian A. Morton, Director
"To Thee, O Lord"	Rachmaninoff
"The Lord is My Shepherd"	Scottish hymn
Address	Dr. Arnold H. Lowe
"Dear Old Macalester"	Audience
Benediction	Dr. Eldon W. Wenzel

The Student Union takes the spotlight in today's special 10-page dedication issue of *The Mac Weekly*.

For your convenience, here's an index to today's inside:

- Page 2—Editorials and letters
- Page 3—Host service organized
- Page 4, 5—Student Union photos
- Page 6—Math lectures for profs
- Page 7—Dance concert tonight
- Page 8—St. Olaf game preview
- Page 9—Rin-L lead sessions
- Page 10—Union feature material

Today's page one picture of the Union was taken by Mac yearbook photographers, Flip Schulke and Frank Stafenson.

Next issue of *The Weekly* will appear on Friday, Feb. 15, when the paper resumes its regular publication date.

The February 6, 1952 special issue of the *Mac Weekly* for the dedication of the new Student Union. © Macalester College

Archives.

The union opened partially in the winter of 1951, but it was officially dedicated on February 6, 1952.¹⁰⁰ The *Mac Weekly* published a special issue in honor of the event, writing, “Old Main breathed a sigh of relief today. At last the old building is going to get a chance to grow old gracefully as student activities, that have been crowding the old guy for years, move out and into the new Student Union.” The opening of the Student Union represented a shift in the structure of the college’s social life. In the 1950s, there was no residency requirement for students, meaning that some students chose to live off-campus rather than in the dorms. If you did live on campus, the events and social life on campus were often centered around individual dorms. With the construction of the Student Union, Mac students now had a dedicated place to hang out away from their dorms.

Divisions in the Student Body?



A photograph of students walking towards the Student Union, from the 1953 college catalog. © Macalester College Archives.

¹⁰⁰ “College Dedicates New Union Today,” *Mac Weekly*, February 6, 1952, Macalester College Archives.

Despite the benefits offered by the new union, the building's design also reflected the ways in which Macalester students and faculty were still divided. The union housed two separate lounges for faculty based on gender, with the men's lounge featuring "card tables and a pool table," while the women's lounge had "sofas, a built-in dressing table and a full length mirror."¹⁰¹ And although the new cafeteria served the male students who previously ate their meals in the dining room of Kirk Hall, the female residents of Wallace Hall and other women's dorms still took their meals in their respective dorm dining rooms, which remained segregated by gender.¹⁰² Despite the union's role as a central place on campus for all to lounge, the building's design reinforced the structural separation of men and women on campus in ways that would prove to be problematic in the future.

Not long after the union opened, problems began cropping up in the cafeteria— in particular, long lines. When the women's dining halls closed on the weekends, residents of those halls would instead eat at the union, creating a traffic jam. In a 1953 letter to the editor of the *Mac Weekly*, student Richard Morrill wrote that "[e]ating in the cafeteria on weekends is impossible with the crowd created by closing the girl's dorm dining rooms," meaning that "a large percentage of the off-campus students, Summit house girls and Kirk hall boys, who would like to eat in the cafeteria, must go out for their weekend meals."¹⁰³ Such problems continued to persist for years, until a new dining hall was constructed in the 1960s during a construction boom of new buildings on campus.

¹⁰¹ Janet Holloway, "Union? It's Coming!", *Mac Weekly*, October 19, 1951, Macalester College Archives.

¹⁰² Cleo Waldhauser, "New Mac Union Promises Relief To Crowded Campus," *Mac Weekly*, April 20, 1951, Macalester College Archives.

¹⁰³ Richard Morrill, "Old Gastric Problem Burps Up Once Again," letter to the editor, *Mac Weekly*, January 16, 1953, Macalester College Archives.

Social Concerns Continue



Kagin Commons under construction in 1963. © Macalester College Archives.

Macalester's campus saw a massive transformation during the 1960s, changing the social environment on campus. The Union, constructed in the early 1950s, served as a hub for students, but it also frequently saw long lines for meals, and reflected the divisions on campus created by residence halls that were segregated by gender. In 1964, Kagin Commons was built as a new campus-wide dining hall— hopefully helping to alleviate some of the concerns associated with the Union.



Two students eat a meal in Kagin Commons. © Macalester College Archives.

However, the transition to dining at Kagin turned out to be far from smooth. Along with the new building, the college planned to introduce a new set of cafeteria policies that included higher prices, which agitated students. As a *Mac Weekly* editorial put it, the policy changes “will

most certainly be opposed by a goodly percentage of the students, who, as is the case with most college students, usually are hard up for cash, or in other words, can just barely afford to get through college.”¹⁰⁴ Student dissatisfaction with the plan led to a dramatic protest, where hundreds of students refused to eat in the cafeteria, instead staging a protest outside of the Union and eating on the lawn.¹⁰⁵ Due to financial realities for the college, the proposed plan remained mostly in place, although students expressed that they expected the administration to communicate better with the student body in the future.¹⁰⁶ Ultimately, students adjusted to the new cafeteria plan, and with Kagin Commons as a new expanded dining hall, many of the problems that arose from dining in the Union were resolved. Now, everyone living on campus had the opportunity to dine in the same place.

¹⁰⁴ “Food By Extortion,” *Mac Weekly*, January 24, 1964, Macalester College Archives.

¹⁰⁵ “A Situation Explored,” *Mac Weekly*, March 13, 1964, Macalester College Archives.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

From Student Union to Campus Center



THE MACALESTER COLLEGE CAMPUS CENTER:

A gathering place for a growing community

The cover of a booklet outlining the plans for the new Campus Center. © Macalester College Archives.

By the 1990s, the Student Union had been in place for nearly a half century, and by the fall of 1993, the college was considering new plans for a campus center.¹⁰⁷ The new building would serve as a new central gathering place and dining hall for students, giving Kagin Commons the chance to serve another purpose.

¹⁰⁷ "Preliminary design concepts for Campus Center," *Mac Weekly*, October 29, 1993, Macalester College Archives.

These renovations represented a change in the college's approach to community. When the original Student Union and Kagin were constructed in the 1950s and 60s, the social atmosphere was quite different. Dorms were still segregated by gender, students weren't required to live on campus, and campus socializing had a more formal quality— students were required to dress up for dinner on a weekly basis.¹⁰⁸ By the 1990s, all of this had changed. The college established its residency requirement in the fall of 1995, solidifying Macalester's commitment to the belief that living on campus could have academic and social benefits for students. Much of the formality and gendered divisions between students had dissolved, and the campus was ready for a new campus center that reflected these changes.

¹⁰⁸ "Food by Extortion."

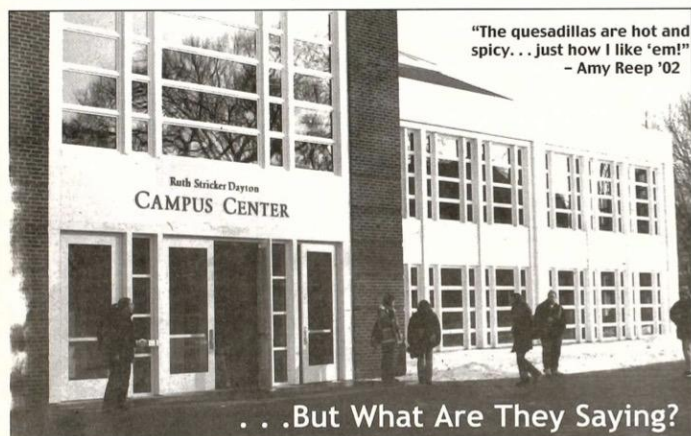
The New Campus Center

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BACKPAGE

THE MAC WEEKLY

Everyone's Talking About the New Campus Center. . .



"The quesadillas are hot and spicy. . . just how I like 'em!"
- Amy Reep '02

All photos by Megan Roy



Above: Abby Read '03 studies at a table near the new Grill. Below: On Tuesday, Hall Director Troy Seppelt welcomed students, including Dave Oliver '04, to the new student center.

"They should've put Smoker's Haven in the basement."
- Tyler Beckelman '03

. . . But What Are They Saying?

"Everything has been running smoothly, but this will be a learning experience for us."

- Gary Lensing, Manager of Bon Appetit



"The whole building smells like Kagin."
- Reid Priedhorsky '01



"It makes me want to vomit."
- John Pearson '02



"I feel like this will be a good central location, sort of a home base for the students. We've been missing that for two years now."
- Annie Estrada '03

Above: Students peruse the curries area of the new Cafe Mac. Above right: Bryn Milne '02, Amy Reep '02, and Alex McBride '02 rendez-vous outside the new Student Center. Right: Adam Denny '04, Nate Eitzmann '02, Aaron Quilmeyer '02, Kevin Whinnery '04, and Eric Chapin '03 have already staked out their territory in Cafe Mac.

"Where's the beer? The Campus Center could've been O'Gara's South."
- Dan Urevick-Ackelsberg '03

"They have Macalester chocolates in the Duty Free store."
- Jim Sallee '02

"The food has been really good so far, but it's not supposed to stay that way."
- Jemimah Hendry '03



The February 9, 2001 issue of the *Mac Weekly* showcases perspectives on the new campus center. © Macalester College

Archives.

The plans for the new campus center took time to crystallize and gain enough funds. Although the *Mac Weekly* reported on proposed designs for the Campus Center in the fall of 1993, the center didn't officially open its doors until January of 2001.¹⁰⁹

Although not all the furniture had arrived, and there were long lines for returning trays due to an error with the machine handling the trays, the *Mac Weekly* reported that the reaction from students on opening day was mostly positive. Students enjoyed having a new place to socialize, especially after the long wait for the building to open.¹¹⁰ And, they appreciated the better food options— at least, for now. One student told the *Mac Weekly* that “the food has been really good so far, but it’s not supposed to stay that way.”¹¹¹

However, the swanky new amenities also led to unexpected consequences— with an attractive new building on campus, a larger class than expected committed to Macalester the following year, and more juniors and seniors were enticed to live on campus, all of which resulted in an on-campus housing crunch during the 2002 room draw.¹¹² This increased interest in living on campus showed that the Campus Center was on track to become the new social hub for a more unified campus. The functions of the dining hall and the student union were consolidated into a new central location.

¹⁰⁹ “Campus center to open,” *Mac Weekly*, December 15, 2000, Macalester College Archives.

¹¹⁰ Nick Berning and Sarah Fazio, “Campus Center opens doors, dialogue,” *Mac Weekly*, February 9, 2001, Macalester College Archives.

¹¹¹ “Everyone’s Talking About the New Campus Center . . .,” *Mac Weekly*, February 9, 2001, Macalester College Archives.

¹¹² Bryanna Longley-Postema, “Housing shortage forces next year’s juniors off campus,” *Mac Weekly*, March 22, 2002, Macalester College Archives.

Throughout Macalester's history, buildings like the Student Union, Kagin Commons, and the Campus Center, have helped to define the social scene of the college. Early on, the smaller capacity of the Student Union and its inability to serve all the students on campus reflected the persisting divisions between male and female students, who still lived separately. Later on, the additions of Kagin Commons and the Campus Center represented the college's shift towards a more unified campus, with places where all students could gather.

Wartime, Veterans, and Community

Introduction



Air corps trainees on campus during World War II. © Macalester College Archives.

Wartime often thrust Macalester into difficult situations— political, financial, and educational. However, these challenges also offered opportunities for Macalester to redefine its identity and values in a changing world. The eruption of the two world wars in the first half of the 20th century had a profound impact on Macalester’s identity and physical campus. With America at war, the nation’s colleges and universities were expected to do their part for the war effort, and Macalester was no exception, reworking its curriculum, offering up its campus for military use, and bidding farewell to the students sent away to fight. World War I challenged the college to maintain stability through a period of uncertainty and laid the foundation for its internationalist identity, while World War II disrupted the college’s status quo and prompted a rush of new veteran students and a period of rapid growth. Finally, the Vietnam War in the 1960s pushed students to protest, and reflected a period when students were more willing to take issues into their own hands to change their campus.

War Brings Change

Macalester’s first brush with war came in 1917, when the United States officially entered World War I. US entrance into the war inflamed controversy on campus when eighty-seven students distributed a letter to local news groups and Minnesota lawmakers in February 1917, before the US declared war, advocating for American neutrality and arguing that entrance into the war “would only result in a prolongation of the conflict and an extension of its horrors into America.”¹¹³

¹¹³ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 131.

Despite the initial resistance of students to getting involved in war, wartime inevitably changed Macalester's functions and the tone of its education. By April 24, less than a month after the US entered the war, the Mac Weekly reported that twenty-nine students had already enlisted or intended to enlist. The administration also took steps to show support for American involvement in the war, and in 1918, the college became a "government sponsored Students Army Training Corps site."¹¹⁴ A Macalester College Bulletin from 1918 made it clear that it wasn't simply the United States that was at war, it was Macalester itself fighting the battle:

Macalester College has declared war with the Central Powers of Europe. There is probably no college in the United States that can boast so large a percentage of her male population at the fighting front as Macalester. Every branch of service has a Mac representative and almost every training camp in the United States has a quota from the college.¹¹⁵

After the war ended, college administrators voiced their support for the League of Nations. Although the League was ultimately unsuccessful, Macalester would continue to develop an institutional identity that incorporated internationalism.

¹¹⁴ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 133.

¹¹⁵ "Macalester in War Time," *Macalester College Bulletin* 6, no. 1 (October 1917), 4.

Helping the War Effort



OFFERED as work without academic credit, **SECRETARIAL STUDIES** give students a chance to brush up on typing and shorthand before applying for a job requiring those skills. Lois Culligan is pictured taking a letter from the dictaphone under the supervision of Margaret Adams.



THE war time program for women includes work in **FIRST AID** techniques. Following the procedure outlined in the little book, Ruth Schellberg and Ruth Baran apply a pad at the pressure point and then stretch the arm over a splint. Margaret Keeley has supposedly broken her humerus.

ANYONE who feels a desire to study the fundamental principles of animal biology and investigate representatives of the phyla of the invertebrates and vertebrates with reference to their structure, functions, and relation to environment will find that **ZOOLOGY** is just the course they have been looking for. Dr. Meserve and Marianne Reichardt disagree on the proper attitude toward a lamprey eel, which, by the way, is one of the vertebrates. The charts on the wall in back of Marianne shows that there is really more to the earthworm than usually meets the eye.



A page from the Macalester 1942 yearbook. The photo in the top right shows students engaging in wartime first aid coursework. © Macalester College Archives.

With the outbreak of World War II, Macalester's campus was thrust into an era of rapid change. When the United States officially joined the war effort after the attack on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, the atmosphere on campus was markedly different. The college catalog for the 1942-43 school year featured a new section entitled "Macalester College in War Time," and laid out the ways that the school planned to help the war effort. Echoing the college's approach to World War I, the catalog outright declared that "[t]he dominant purpose of Macalester College during the war which the United Nations are waging against Germany, Italy, and Japan is to cooperate to the utmost with every program that may be suggested by the Government or otherwise devised to help win the war."¹¹⁶ The catalog also outlined several curriculum changes that were made to support the war effort, including the institution of a physical education requirement for all students and special classes approved by the US Navy.¹¹⁷ The United States was at war, and Macalester wanted to be in lockstep with the government whenever possible.

¹¹⁶ Macalester College, "Fifty-Eighth Annual Catalogue," College Catalogs, Macalester College Archives, 1943, <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/catalogs/76/>.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Shifts in the Social Atmosphere

Page Four

THE MAC WEEKLY

Friday, January 15, 1943

Wartime Studies Clamp Brakes on Play

Crowding the greatest possible amount of education into the shortest possible time leaves campus students little time for fun.

Social dances and parties are being shoved farther and farther into the background by today's more serious college student, who is as rapidly as possible, preparing himself to meet the wartime world—and the peace that must follow.

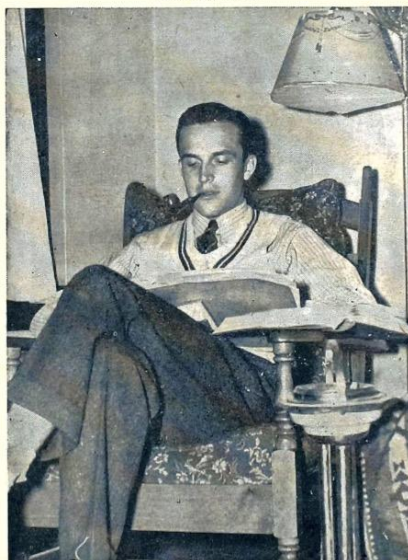
David Lyksett, who is starred on this page, is a typical student—just like the hundred others living at Kirk hall.

All men students take physical education, including military drill, carry heavier class loads. Many take courses which lead to officer training.

Photos by Ross Garrett



Wood Guns are carried during drill on the athletic field. Left to right David Lyksett, senior, Gerald Richards, junior; Robert Carter, junior, and Willis Gramith, senior.



Books and Studies require more concentration this year. Dave finds it refreshing to smoke his pipe as he reads long assignments.



Bottle Coke at the drug replaces movie dates which take more time. Lyksett and his fiancée Aileen Reichardt, senior, interrupt studies for relaxation.



Bed by Ten is the golden rule these days. Traditional burning of midnight oil is superseded by requirements of the physical fitness program.

A page from the January 15, 1943 issue of the *Mac Weekly* shows the typical activities of male students engaging in

wartime coursework. © Macalester College Archives.

In addition to curricular changes, the student body saw massive shifts as many college-aged men were drafted or enlisted to fight overseas. Campus social life was radically changed as a result. In an article in the *Mac Weekly* reflecting on his experience as a member of the class of 1945, senior Gordon Deegan remarked that the war years were “strange ones” where “men were almost an oddity” and that during the second semester, “Macites began the grand exodus to the four corners of the earth. We hated to see them go but that couldn’t stop them. We had made friends and [...] we had to start over again.”¹¹⁸

Women now outnumbered men on campus, and previously enforced rules were suddenly thrown out the window.¹¹⁹ Men and women dined together on campus for the first time when Kirk Hall was vacated to make room for army air corps trainees, and later on in the war, Kirk Hall would accommodate female residents for the first time, considering that they now made up the majority of the student body.¹²⁰ And wartime simply meant that the college experience was more turbulent than usual. Despite these shake-ups, gender inequities remained a reality on campus after the end of World War II. Halls remained segregated by gender, and women consistently faced stricter curfew rules than men. It would take decades for similar changes in policy to return to campus.

¹¹⁸ Gordon Deegan, “Seniors, Here Through War Years, Look With Pride to Mac Future,” *Mac Weekly*, December 14, 1945, Macalester College Archives.

¹¹⁹ Kilde, *Nature and Revelation*, 177-9.

¹²⁰ “Co-ed Invasion Crowds Boys From Kirk Hall.”

Postwar Growth and Challenges



"Dear Mom, I have more than 60 roommates and dozens of windows. . . . "It's not the usual dorm situation, but Dick Dierenfield and the rest of the vets now living in the gym are making the most of it until the new dorm is completed.

A photograph from the September 27, 1946 issue of the *Mac Weekly*. © Macalester College Archives.

After the war, Macalester continued to see widespread change and faced new challenges. With the passage of the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (a.k.a. the GI Bill), higher

education across the nation saw a flood of new students, often veterans, requiring colleges to quickly expand to accommodate larger student bodies.¹²¹ Macalester was no exception, and saw its highest enrollment ever by 1946, welcoming hundreds of new veteran students.¹²² This influx of students overwhelmed the college's facilities, and creativity was required when it came to housing returning veterans in comparison to the typical college student. For instance, veteran students had to be housed temporarily on cots in the gymnasium while Bigelow Hall was constructed.¹²³

In addition, many returning veterans simply had different needs. Veteran students were often older, and had spouses and young children to accommodate. Funding from the Federal Public Housing Authority made it possible to construct several temporary apartments for both single and married veterans on the south side of campus.¹²⁴ The resulting collection of homes was dubbed "Macville," and it would come to be a unique community on the Macalester campus for the next few years.

¹²¹ Serviceman's Readjustment Act (1944), National Archives, last reviewed May 3, 2022.

¹²² "GI's Boost Register Past 1,000," *The Mac Weekly*, August 9, 1946, Macalester College Archives.

¹²³ "Exams plus Exercise plus Excitement equals Frosh Week", *Mac Weekly*, September 27, 1947, Macalester College Archives.

¹²⁴ Macalester College, "Sixty-Second Annual Catalog," College Catalogs, Macalester College Archives, 1947. <https://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/catalogs/80/>, 153.

Macville



A Macalester student works on fixing up an apartment in Macville for an incoming family. © Macalester College Archives.

Macville was a unique on-campus neighborhood of apartments built to house 32 married veterans and 32 single veterans.¹²⁵ For many of the couples, living in Macville was the first time they'd lived on their own. The temporary homes allowed students to live with their spouses and families while still attending Macalester. Over time, the residents of Macville established their own community within the college, and they held elections for mayor, hosted

¹²⁵ This section has been partially adapted from my Collection Story assignment for Aisling Quigley's Digital Cultural Heritage class at Macalester College in the spring of 2022.

events, and performed at school showcases. As the *Mac Weekly* reported, one skit put on by Macville residents for the “Scotter’s Friday Night” in the spring of 1947 featured a six-foot baby, a pesky traveling salesman, and a possessed potato peeler.¹²⁶



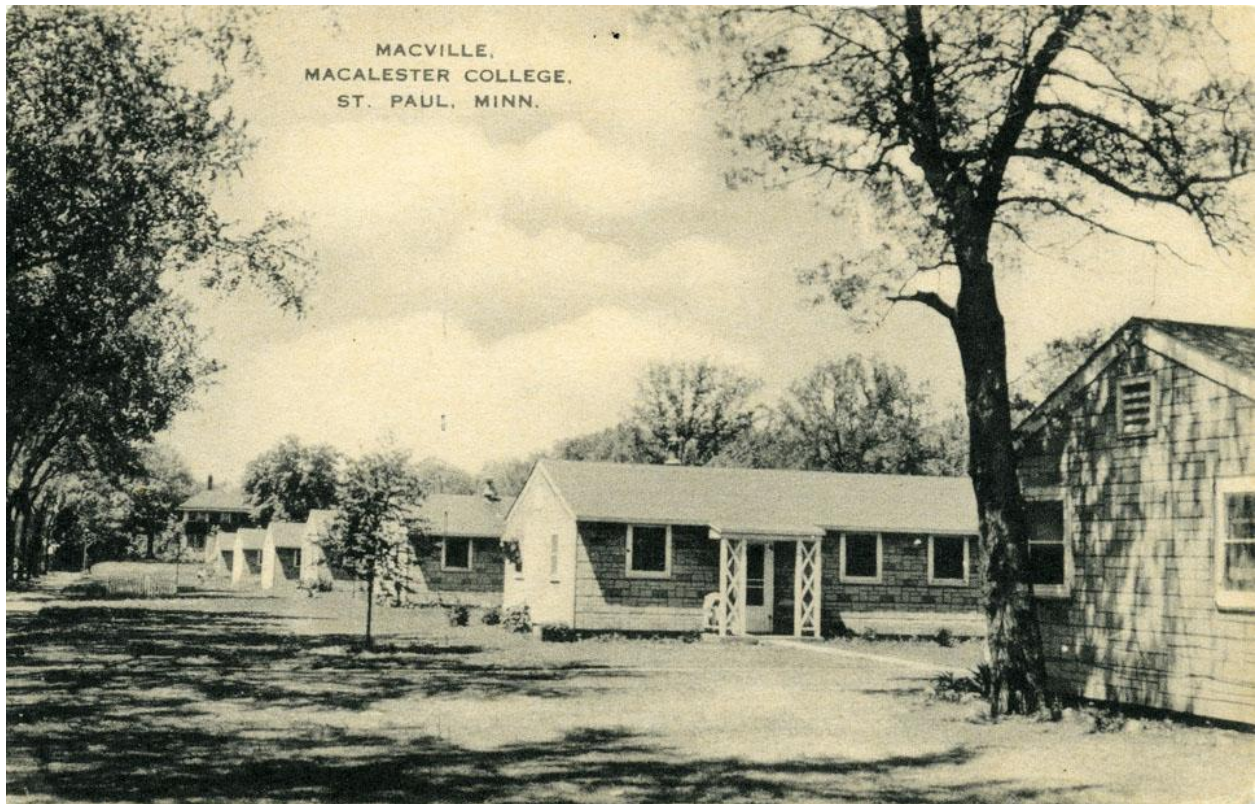
A handful of Macville's younger residents. © Macalester College Archives.

Macville was also unique in that it housed much younger people than the traditional college dorm: families often welcomed children while living in Macville. The Macalester yearbook from 1948 claimed that the Macville slogan was “Watch our population grow.”¹²⁷ The temporary nature of Macville has meant that campus today shows little evidence that it ever existed. The houses were demolished a few years after they were built, and in 1964, Macalester

¹²⁶ “All-College Revue Thrills Audience,” *Mac Weekly*, April 18, 1947, Macalester College Archives.

¹²⁷ *The Mac*, Macalester College yearbook, 1948, Macalester College Archives.

constructed the stadium in the empty area where the houses once stood. Macville represents the unconventional changes that often emerged during wartime as Macalester worked to address the challenge of educating students in a nation at war.



A postcard depicts Macville. © Macalester College Archives.

Macalester and the Vietnam War



White crosses on the lawn in front of Dupre Hall to protest the Vietnam War. The *Mac Weekly* later published the image with the caption, "May 1970: 'This is what Ohio students and Vietnam peasants have in common.'" © Macalester College

Archives.

The Vietnam War was another global conflict with repercussions for Macalester. In contrast to the World Wars, when the college mobilized in support of the war effort, the Vietnam War awakened resistance among students. Being drafted was a concern for many Macalester men, enough that the college began offering informal 'draft counseling,' to help

students understand the draft and learn more about becoming a conscientious objector.¹²⁸ With the 1960s and 70s also came a new resurgence of activism and protest on campus. The most dramatic moment was in the aftermath of the Kent State shootings in May of 1970, when four unarmed students were killed by National Guardsmen during an on campus protest of the Vietnam War.

In response to the Kent State shootings, Macalester joined the nationwide student strike. Mac students took over Grand Avenue with protests and sent a delegation of students to Washington, D.C. to discuss changes with lawmakers.¹²⁹ On May 6, the college closed for the week, and faculty voted to allow students to participate in the strike without academic penalty.¹³⁰

In contrast to the response to previous wars, students were more engaged in making change than ever before. An article in the *Mac Weekly* published in the aftermath of the school strike helped sum up the impact of the 1960s and the Vietnam War on the atmosphere at Macalester: “When we were freshmen the predominant attitudes were: (1) fundamental confidence in the responsiveness of our governmental and educational institutions; (2) broadly based willingness to let the establishment leadership carry the ball; (3) a prevailing belief in something called the public interest; and (4) a fundamentally nonpolitical self-perception. All that has changed.”¹³¹

¹²⁸ Dave List, “Mac gives the dope to reluctant soldiers once again this year,” *Mac Weekly*, October 2, 1970, Macalester College Archives.

¹²⁹ “Strike diary,” *Mac Weekly*, May 19, 1970, Macalester College Archives.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ “The years of change: a Macalester microcosm,” *Mac Weekly*, May 19, 1970, Macalester College Archives.

Throughout Macalester's history, wartime has served as a disruptive force that changed often long-held practices. Early on in Macalester's history, war pushed the college to align its policies with the government and utilize its resources to support the war effort. By the outbreak of the Vietnam War, college students were increasingly questioning authority, and Macalester's campus became the setting for anti-war protest and activism. In each case, war challenged the student body and administration to rethink the significance of a liberal arts education in the midst of conflict.

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