Princeton, Franklin and Marshall, Bucknell, and Swarthmore today epitomize the American collegiate ideal. With handsome dormitories, dining halls, gymnasiums, athletic fields, and chapels, these tranquil campuses exude tradition and stability. They give the impression that a century ago or more students lived in a similar, if more rule-bound and homogeneous, environment. If such continuity is true anywhere, it should be for these prestigious residential liberal arts colleges.

Not surprisingly, the student bodies in the late 1800s were small by today’s standards. The largest was Princeton, which grew from 264 when McCosh arrived in 1868 to 684 in 1890. The smallest was Bucknell, with seventy-one students as the 1880s closed. Franklin and Marshall ended the period with about 150 college students, as did Swarthmore. But enumerating college students overlooks the presence of subcollegiate classes on campus. At Bucknell and Swarthmore collegians were a minority during most of the period, and at Franklin and Marshall they barely outnumbered the academy and seminary students. Only Princeton was primarily collegiate, and even there preparatory classes were held in the 1870s.

By the 1880s a collegiate subculture was growing on these campuses, and its greatest promoter, the campus newspaper, decried the presence of these noncollegians. Having to share a campus with them affronted the emerging sense of collegiate dignity. In addition, a surprising number of collegiate students were not part of the community for the “normal” four years. Only about 40 percent of Swarthmore students completed their program in the 1870s and 1880s. At
Franklin and Marshall, 60 percent of students enrolled between 1853 and 1903 graduated. Catalogs regularly listed a considerable number of “special students,” the euphemism for part-time students. The student bodies were neither as stable nor as purely collegian as they would later become.¹

They were, however, racially, religiously, and ethnically homogeneous. Only one nonwhite student was recorded in the census at any of the colleges, West Indian—born William Granger of Bucknell. Each campus had difficulty enrolling as many students from the sponsoring denomination as most trustees desired, but the campuses were solidly Protestant. The rare surviving lists of religious affiliation show few Catholics and hardly any Jews. Student publications rarely mentioned ethnoreligious differences and showed little interest in doctrinal differences among Protestants. The Princetonian complained vigorously when denominationalism obstructed a faculty appointment: “That eminent and influential men should be prevented from coming to Princeton because in some of the less important points of Christian doctrine, or some of the external forms of Christian worship they differ with the majority of our faculty, is bigoted and absurd.”² Although Germanic parents of Franklin and Marshall students and Scottish and Scotch-Irish parents of Princetonians may have selected those colleges because of ethnoreligious connections, the students seem to have created a broadly “American” culture that welcomed all “WASPs.”

Official college rules mandated careful oversight of student life.


². Daily Princetonian 1 (22 September 1876): 7. Granger’s race is recorded in the Decennial Census for Union County, Pennsylvania, 1880, reel 1175. Neither pictures, college records, nor censuses suggest the presence of other nonwhites. Strangely, only a few scattered records of students’ denominational affiliation survived despite its importance to college authorities. Princeton yearbooks were the only regular source I found, published or unpublished. In these decades classes were 60–75 percent Presbyterian. The Episcopalians who vexed McCosh composed 12–15 percent of each class. Most of the rest were Protestant; about 1 percent were Catholics and none were Jewish in the years I sampled. However, 5–10 percent typically did not answer or called themselves pantheists, heathens, etc., possibly hiding skepticism or an unpopular faith.
but the limited facilities made these rules an ideal rather than a reality. Regulations for chapel services exemplify this dichotomy. Students at three colleges were required to attend chapel every weekday morning; these services also served as an assembly and a platform for visiting speakers. Quaker Swarthmore had a slightly different practice: scriptural readings followed by a period of silence just before bedtime. In the early 1870s, Princeton students had to attend Sunday afternoon Bible lectures (reinforced by a midweek review) funded by one of McCosh's Scottish-American supporters. Student misbehavior brought these to an unseemly end in 1876.

None of the colleges gave any thought to dropping compulsory chapel after Harvard did so in 1886. But the reality of the required Sunday observances was shaped by physical limitations. These were not campuses dominated by stately chapels; in 1865 only Princeton had a chapel, and it was modest. The other three colleges conducted their weekday services in assembly halls, some of them too small for the whole student body. The founders of Swarthmore consciously rejected having a meetinghouse on the grounds. (Traditionalists eventually won and constructed one.) Franklin and Marshall had only an austere room for services in the early 1870s. A drive to fund construction of a chapel fell afoul of the panic of 1873, and a small extension onto Old Main had to suffice. Bucknell students attended Sunday services in various Lewisburg churches until William Bucknell donated a chapel in 1885. In 1886 Princeton moved its services into an elegant new Romanesque chapel. College religion was coming to demand less austere piety and more ornate quarters. 3

When it comes to those essential components of "traditional" college life, dormitories and dining halls, only Swarthmore provided room and board for virtually all of its students—and the paternalistic guidance that implied in Victorian society. With their deep commitment to guarded education, the backers of Swarthmore refused to open the institution until a mammoth stone building was completed in which all preparatory and collegiate students could eat and sleep.

Other than a small number of "townies" who lived at home, all students lived under the same roof with the faculty. The 1870 census taker found President Parrish, six instructors, a matron, and a caterer living in the main building. In the summer of 1880 it housed eleven members of the faculty as well as numerous maids, laundresses, and cooks, according to the census. In the dining room, the sexes dined together at tables presided over by a faculty member; this was followed by a chaperoned social hour. Steam heat, gas lights, and regular exercise were supposed to protect the health of staff and students, as dormitories were notoriously unhealthy. It was not fireproof, however, and it burned to the ground in 1881. Luckily, guarded education had wealthy supporters; Swarthmore was financially strapped, but funds immediately appeared to supplement insurance and to rebuild Old Main.

Such carefully structured in loco parentis could not exist at the other campuses. Bucknell required all students to live on campus, except for the 15 percent or so who lived at home. However, unless one wished to dine with the preparatory students, students had to leave campus for their meals. At one-half to two-thirds of the cost of campus dining, students could join a club and eat at a boardinghouse.

Franklin and Marshall, perhaps influenced by German tradition, had no dormitory facilities at first. The 1869–70 catalog listed thirteen students living at home; the other fifty-nine lived in boardinghouses, each generally run by a married woman and accommodating five to ten students. Only two students lived apart from other students, and they may have been living with relatives who had a different last name. These were not “bachelor pads,” but neither was this guarded education. In the early 1870s the college purchased a large boardinghouse, but a majority of the students continued to live either at home or in private rooms.
Most surprisingly, Princeton did not fulfill this collegiate ideal. It had long required students to live on campus if there was space, but as early as the 1840s there were too few rooms. The doubling of enrollment during McCosh’s presidency forced increasing numbers of students to live off-campus. The 1870 and 1880 censuses show student boardinghouses dotting the town, many of them apparently run by students. Ever since the commons had been disbanded in 1855, groups of about fifteen students had formed eating clubs that made private arrangements with local landlords. Woodrow Wilson, for instance, was one of fourteen students who constituted “The Alligators” and rented a house across the street from the campus. These informal organizations were usually temporary, but after an attempt to restore the campus dining halls failed and fraternities were banned in the mid-1870s, permanent eating clubs with their own buildings began to be incorporated.

McCosh squeezed the housing situation further when he moved students out of Nassau Hall. Only three of the buildings constructed during his twenty-year presidency were dormitories. One was an elegant Victorian Gothic structure that appealed to wealthy students. Appalled by the growing opulence of the campus, McCosh had a more modest and cheaper alternative constructed to attract poorer students, especially those preparing for the ministry. Since McCosh was educated in Scottish universities where students lived in private “digs,” it was not second nature to him to make dormitories a high priority. But neither was he deviating as far from American practice as one might assume.

Such departures from the conventional image of the denominational college partially stem from economic limitations. Except for some liberal Quakers, authorities at all four colleges wanted chapels. But assembly halls and local churches provided acceptable alternatives while money was limited, whereas science buildings were expensive facilities for which no alternatives existed. Each college constructed and equipped at least one in the 1870s and 1880s, and several built observatories. These required a considerable outlay and commitment to science, and meant forgoing other facilities. Except at

Swarthmore dormitories and dining halls were sacrificed. Young alumni were more eager to contribute gymnasiums and athletic fields. Boardinghouses were still a respectable middle-class institution, usually cheaper than college-run equivalents. Running what was, in effect, a huge hotel was an administrative burden. In addition, even if dormitories were considered good for the soul, they were a mixed blessing for the body. Alarming numbers of their residents had died from various maladies over the years. Later would come “the boardinghouse evil” and wealthy donors eager to contribute neo-Gothic dormitories, but between the Civil War and 1890 only an institution with a unique commitment to social isolation, like Swarthmore, acted fully in loco parentis.

The growing desire of students for a genteel life-style met with the strongest resistance from Swarthmore authorities. In its first years Swarthmore emphasized the gentler, more optimistic side of Quakerism. President Parrish believed “the innate innocence of children furnishes the key to that method of development which is beginning to be recognized by enlightened educators.” Complaints about his permissiveness contributed to Parrish’s removal. His successor was Edward Magill, a former New England schoolmaster who was ready to impose the rules desired by more conservative managers. His “Laws of Swarthmore College Relating to Students” were required reading for all students, who chafed for years under rules that even forbade male and female students from walking together on the grounds. In addition to the usual restrictions on drinking, smoking, and profanity, Swarthmore banned dancing, music in any form, and most art, and required “plain speech” and “plain dress.” In 1882 the faculty prevented formation of a glee club on the grounds that it might perform bawdy songs. That same year a student request to play baseball with other colleges met a similar fate, although occasional intercollegiate matches were permitted. When the managers rejected the gift of a

7. Quoted in Babbidge, 88–89.
8. See Edward Parrish to Martha Tyson, 19 November 1869, Parrish Presidential Papers (Friends Historical Library), for an example of Parrish defending his ideas. Babbidge, 96, 139–43; Emily Cooper Johnson, *Dean Bond of Swarthmore* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., ca. 1930), 133–35; *Phoenix* 1 (April–May 1882), 2 (December 1882). The minutes of the faculty and the trustees are very helpful. See esp. Swarthmore College, Faculty, Minutes (Friends Historical Library), 3 December 1877, 25
piano for the lobby of the main building in 1886, the student newspaper reminded them that the type of student at Swarthmore had "undergone a radical change in the last two decades. Young Friends perform on all kinds of musical instruments, just the same as people belonging to other denominations." 

When enrollment dropped severely, the managers finally considered complaints from students and recent graduates. The investigation brought some relief. President Magill began holding informal weekly conferences with students. The Phoenix liked the idea, though it doubted that give-and-take was possible with Magill. Two other reforms pleased students more. The first was the hiring of Dean Elizabeth Bond, who expunged many of the most stringent rules and retrieved the banished piano for the lobby. 

Second, the presence of preparatory students in the same building encouraged the continuance of a rigorous form of in loco parentis that affronted the collegians' dignity. The Phoenix editorialized that "ultimately one of the two things must happen, either the Prep must go, or the college man will go." The board of managers phased out the former in 1890. The Phoenix approvingly commented that "there has begun an era of reformation at Swarthmore, and we sincerely hope that the good will go on.

Similar though less intense conflicts occurred on other campuses where the responsibility for discipline rested more fully with the faculties. In the 1870s disciplinary actions were taken at most of their weekly meetings. Students often appeared before the faculty either to confess or to defend themselves. In one case, Anthony Comstock appeared before the Franklin and Marshall faculty to display obscene literature that had been intercepted on the way to a student. Another


10. Babbidge, 144-53; Johnson, 61-238; *Phoenix* 6 (October 1886).
13. Veysey's depiction of the faculty penchant for extracting confessions is borne out in these colleges' records, but his attribution of an authoritarian mentality seems severe. The tradition of religious confession and the need for an excuse to lighten unenforceably severe formal penalties may better explain it. Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 35.
student was expelled for having been “guilty of a crime the punish-
ment of which he avoided only by marriage.”

Most problems were more mundane, such as intoxication, smoking, leaving campus without permission, and creating general disturbances. The faculty sought to control the movement of students and reviewed student requests for school holidays and parental requests for home visits. Students sometimes succeeded in getting classes canceled in order to see a circus or take part in a political parade, but just as often they failed. Behavior apparently affected grading; at Franklin and Marshall the faculty invoked a system of demerits, and the Princetonian complained that “all marking should be strictly on scholarship.”

Most Princeton students broke the rules. Half admitted drinking alcohol, and a majority had smoked, danced, played cards, and attended the theater at a time when college authorities opposed all of these activities.

Princeton students ran afoul of the combined forces of the Presbyterian press and the faculty during a short-lived attempt to revive the commons. The Princetonian complained: “It is quite generally known that the Observer [a New York City Presbyterian newspaper] lifted its voice, and our billiard tables were removed. . . . [Now there is] the appearance of a letter in the Evangelist, protesting, on temperance grounds, against the use of wine-sauce on puddings.”

The next issue reported: “The [faculty] Committee on Morals, Discipline, and Diet (apparently) has banished the sparkling but seductive ‘wine-sauce’ from the festive boards of the College Commons. . . . The spectacle of three eminent scholars and theologians seriously devoting themselves to the petty business for which the Committee on Morals and Discipline seems to have been constituted, is sufficient to excite laughter in gods and men.”

Such assiduous faculty paternalism declined in the 1880s. The Franklin and Marshall, Princeton, and Bucknell faculty minutes show markedly fewer disciplinary cases. Most such cases in the 1880s in-

14. Franklin and Marshall College, Faculty, Minutes (Franklin and Marshall Archives), 10 March 1881, September 1878, and 10 March 1881.
15. Princetonian 10 (26 October 1885).
16. Princeton University, Nassau Herald (1888), 77–78. Polls in other years revealed similar behavior.
17. Princetonian 1 (30 November and 14 December 1876). This controversy may have contributed to the students turning away from the commons and to its collapse the following year.
olved absence from or inattention in class and chapel, or intoxication; there are few signs of student rebellion or of faculty enforcement of minor rules. With looser oversight, the smoldering discontent at Bucknell and the near-strike by Princeton students in the 1870s were not repeated in the next decade. Tolerance of the multiplying student organizations helped reduce student-faculty tensions.

The changing approach to fraternities illustrates an important shift in faculty attitudes toward student conduct. The growth of these secret societies disrupted campuses across the country in the 1860s and 1870s as authorities tried to suppress them. At Bucknell, President Loomis destroyed Phi Kappa Psi and Theta Delta Chi in 1871, but Sigma Chi fought back and its supporters helped oust the president. His successor, President Hill, rescinded the ban on fraternity membership, and two immediately resurfaced. At Princeton, President McCosh also warred with secret societies and succeeded in dismissing five members of the Society of Love and Pleasure. As at Bucknell, Princeton fraternities had powerful alumni backers, including wealthy alumni from New York. But despite an alumni protest meeting at Delmonico’s, the ban stood. McCosh’s idea of forming a third literary society and his brief experiment with a college dining hall were unpopular alternatives. The formation of “eating clubs” served a similar if somewhat less pernicious purpose, which McCosh eventually accepted. Franklin and Marshall required students to sign a pledge to abstain from fraternities; but two of the boarding arrangements in Lancaster secretly turned into fraternities, and their existence was eventually tolerated. Even Swarthmore accepted fraternities in 1888.

Thus, in the 1880s college authorities reduced their often futile attempts to control student life. Usually championed by younger faculty and alumni, fraternities and other student organizations gained more tolerance, if not full acceptance. The activities later threatened

18. The threatened strike was reported in William B. Scott, Some Memoirs of a Paleontologist (ca. 1930, Princeton University Manuscript Collection, typescript), 47.
to become the center of collegiate life. But in the late 1880s, most college authorities were grateful for their beneficial effect on student behavior.

Students created a new style of social life. The antebellum extracurriculum consisted of literary societies and extemporaneous student activities, which included occasional rebellions. As younger students disappeared from the campuses and collegians developed a more genteel self-image, pranks and rebellions gave way to formally organized activities. Fraternities, musical groups, and athletic clubs appeared sporadically in the 1860s and became fixtures by the 1880s.

College authorities were upset by the threat the new groups posed to the popularity of literary societies, which remained the dominant student organizations through the 1870s. Campus authorities viewed them as essential complements to the classical curriculum. Declamations and debates offered opportunities to deal with contemporary political and social issues that got little classroom attention. The societies' libraries contained recent or popular works neither used in courses nor held in the college library. These collections often outnumbered those of college libraries and were more accessible.20

The literary societies held an honored place in the college community, strongly supported by faculty and older alumni. Before 1880 most students joined, and the faculty reserved one evening a week for their meetings, a practice that was maintained long after their popularity declined. The academic prizes at the colleges were awarded by the societies. Their alumni dinners and debates were a feature of commencement. Their prestige was indicated by possession of impressive buildings at Princeton and at Franklin and Marshall and of private rooms at Swarthmore and Bucknell.21

The literary societies lost their preeminence in the 1880s. The broadened curriculum and improved college libraries impinged on their role, and other activities competed for attention. Bucknell's reinstated fraternities and Princeton's new eating clubs provided al-

20. See Bucknell University's Theta Alpha Literary Society, Minutes (Bucknell University Archives). The proceedings of the Princeton and Swarthmore literary societies are also available in their archives.

21. Catalogs give detailed information about the literary societies. The minutes mentioned above are helpful, as is the history of a Franklin and Marshall society: Henry J. Young, Historical Account of the Goethean Literary Society, 1835–1940, Franklin and Marshall College Studies, no. 3 (Lancaster, Pa., 1941).
ternative sources of fellowship. Franklin and Marshall's firmer stand against social alternatives, however, preserved much of the strength of the Goethean and Diagnothian societies until the turn of the century. Literary societies, which had competed fiercely in their heyday, were forced to sponsor joint publications and debates to remain viable. The number of meetings declined in the 1880s as the societies became a specialized interest of a minority. The secretary of Theta Alpha at Bucknell unwittingly made an important point when he recorded, “no society [meeting tonight] owning to big blazing bonfire and lively time on the campus in honor of the great football victory over Dickinson College.”

Students' energies went increasingly into other activities, particularly athletics. Although students had always played games informally, in the 1860s and 1870s organized intercollegiate sports caught their imaginations. In 1869 Princeton played Rutgers in what is usually considered the first intercollegiate football game. Swarthmore students fielded football teams in the 1870s; Bucknell followed suit in 1883, and Franklin and Marshall in 1887. Baseball and track teams

22. Theta Alpha, Minutes, 2 November 1888; Oliphant, 156–59, 170–72. Bucknell's College Herald (1870–80) and Franklin and Marshall's College Student (1880–1915) were both published jointly by the literary societies. Young, 35–55.
competed sporadically before becoming permanent fixtures in the late 1880s.

Most older faculty and trustees were ambivalent about these developments. Puritan strictures against exercise gave way to a belief that exercise promoted morality and health. The opportunity to reverse the perception that college was harmful to one's health attracted college authorities, but most favored European-style gymnastics. The first structure Swarthmore erected after completing the main building was a gymnasium. At Princeton, the first addition to the campus under McCosh was a gymnasium that he welcomed for its potential in "promoting morality and preventing mischief by fully occupying the physical energy of our youth."23

The presidents and faculties of the 1860s and 1870s were less enamored of the student-initiated intercollegiate spectator sports, fearing that they encouraged gambling and discouraged scholarship. President Loomis banned baseball at Bucknell, and McCosh tried to limit the travels of Princeton's baseball team. By the 1880s, most faculty members accepted athletics and shifted their attention to gaining control over the student-run teams. Princeton's Committee on Athletics and the Musical Clubs was, according to Ronald Smith, the first faculty committee in the country devoted to regulating the new organizations. McCosh initiated several unsuccessful attempts to forge intercollegiate agreements regulating athletics.24

Public support for organized athletics had been growing since the 1840s and the English muscular Christianity movement provided a religious rationale for athletics. Many younger faculty and most students supported the new ethos. At Bucknell, Loomis's successor lifted the ban on baseball. McCosh tempered his criticisms after realizing the promotional possibilities. Soon he was encouraging an alumnus to stir up support in Kentucky, as one of their native sons, "Mr. Ballard[,] has won us great reputation as Captain of the football

23. James McCosh to R. Bonner, 29 December 1870, McCosh Papers (Princeton University Manuscript Collection). See also McCosh's address in Princeton College, Opening Exercises of the Gymnasium (Princeton, 1870) for his approach to exercise.

Fig. 13. Princeton plays Yale before a fashionable crowd in New York City, 1889.

team which beat both Harvard and Yale." Muscular Christianity was winning converts.

Football—not yet very popular with the general public—emerged as the collegiate game. Enthusiasm reached a fever pitch at Princeton in the mid-1870s, with the Yale game becoming a major social event in New York for which the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher shortened his Thanksgiving sermons. Teams at the Pennsylvania colleges led more precarious existences. In 1885 President Magill, an opponent of intercollegiate athletics, received a self-congratulatory letter from a like-minded fellow president proclaiming that "we can now rejoice together over the symptoms discernible in Princeton, Harvard, Yale

25. McCosh to Logan Murray, 2 December 1878, McCosh Papers (Princeton University Archives). The faculty minutes at all four colleges show numerous requests by athletic and other organizations for permission to practice, perform, or travel. On the changing attitudes toward exercise and athletic organizations, see Melvin L. Adelman, A Sporting Time: New York City and the Rise of Modern Athletics, 1820–1870 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 269–86.
and of *their* growing disgust with *such* muscular culture."26 The president's joy was premature; by 1890 football was an obsession at all four colleges.

Student interest in athletics was erratic at first. Bucknell's *College Herald* editorialized that walking provided sufficient exercise for young scholars. But soon all of the student newspapers were avidly supporting their teams. The lament in the *Phoenix* that laziness reigned supreme at Swarthmore reflected the paper's support of muscularity. The student press enthusiastically embraced the new athleticism, often draping athletics in moralistic Victorian language.27 Woodrow Wilson's editorials in the *Princetonian* typified the boosterism that dominated student newspapers. Of seventy-two editorials attributed to his pen, twenty-two concerned athletics. Wilson glorified victory, lambasted those who failed to support athletics, criticized teams' failures, and carped about victorious rivals.28 Similar editorials appeared regularly in all the campus newspapers in the 1880s. Whether or not the Napoleonic wars were decided on the cricket fields of Eton and Harrow, fin de siècle American worship of the active life was surely fostered on college playing fields.

Students created a variety of organizations. Dramatic productions ran afoul of some administrators, but student thespians persisted and won some important adherents. President Hill's wife helped Bucknell's drama club, and even James McCosh, after prolonged hostility, eventually conceded that there was some redeeming virtue to drama.29 Banjo clubs, glee clubs, and orchestras also overcame religious prejudice. As with athletics, student newspaper editors felt justified in freely criticizing performances and students who did not attend.

Students even institutionalized religious activities. College religious societies predated the Civil War, but in the 1870s they exhibited a new style and vigor. For example, Princeton's Philadelphian Society, founded in 1825, gained new energy in the mid-1870s when it dropped

26. J.H.A. Bomberger (Ursinus College) to Edward Magill, 8 April 1885, Magill Papers (Friends Historical Library); *College Herald* 6 (November 1875).

27. For instance, fourteen years after Bucknell's paper lauded walking, its successor was wildly supporting football; *University Mirror* 8 (October 1889); Adelman, 252–55.


its sectarian Presbyterian ties and opened membership to all Protestants. The society participated in revivals that periodically swept the campus, sent student groups to visit potential converts, and held fervent evening meetings. In his early years McCosh imported evangelists like Dwight Moody to spark revivals; later, student organizations initiated them.\(^{30}\)

Student religious organizations developed intercollegiate connections. Princeton student Luther Wishard pioneered the collegiate branch of the YMCA by organizing delegates from twenty-one colleges at the YMCA's 1877 national convention. The death of a pious Princeton graduate two years later inspired a bequest that gave Princeton the first campus YMCA building in the country. Branches were soon established at Bucknell and at Franklin and Marshall. The Swarthmore board of managers, still uncomfortable with evangelical Protestantism, rejected a student application to create a YMCA in 1888.\(^{31}\)

Princetonians also played a prominent part at Dwight Moody's Northfield conferences and in its stepchild, the Student Volunteer Movement. Wishard convinced Moody to establish a summer collegiate conference at Northfield, Massachusetts, in 1885, where several Princetonians promoted student missionary work. The result was the Student Volunteer Movement, through which students of various evangelical faiths shouldered “the white man's burden.” Bucknell also sent a delegate to Moody's conference and established a campus branch of the Student Volunteer Movement.\(^{32}\)

Student publications reflected the changing nature of student life.

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30. Philadelphian Society, *Constitution and By-Laws* (Princeton, 1874). Later versions have less sectarian membership requirements. See the *Princetonian* 10 (29 January 1886) for notice of one intercollegiate meeting. William M. Sloane, ed., *The Life of James McCosh* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1896), 229–30. Revivals were also reported at Franklin and Marshall and at Bucknell, but details survive only of those at Princeton. *Princeton College Bulletin* 12 (May 1901): 84–85; Charles H. Hopkins, *History of the YMCA in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951), 285; John T. Duffield, *Historical Discourse on the Second Presbyterian Church of Princeton* (Princeton, 1897). McCosh reported fully on one to the trustees on 26 June 1876, noting particularly the Episcopalians' tepid response. The Princeton records are also the only ones that give much indication of actual religiosity. Scattered reports suggest that about one-half of the students were actively religious in the 1870s, with the figure rising to about two-thirds during a revival.

31. Hopkins, 276–85; Philadelphian Society, *One Hundred Years, 1825–1925* (Princeton, 1925); Theiss, 202–3; Babbidge, 111–18.

In the 1870s most were published by the literary societies and generally echoed the faculty viewpoint, opposing fraternities, encouraging scholarship, and attacking breaches of piety and discipline. When the Princetonian began in 1876, it had a different style, aggressively promoting a gentlemanly student image, supporting student organizations, and reporting about other campuses. By the mid-1880s, the student papers on all four campuses were also enthusiastically promoting the new student life-style. Heightened self-consciousness of a discrete student subculture and intercampus rivalries bred uniformity in student life. Students were seeking acceptance from peers, not challenging the prevailing faculty and trustee values; there was no debate on economic or political beliefs between students and the authorities. As in most periods, the generation gap opened up over style rather than substance.

Sole reliance on newspapers to understand student life can exaggerate the hegemony of the active college life because they were written by those most enthralled with the new style. Clearly, a minority of students were involved in more intellectual pursuits. The literary publications that sprung up in the 1880s give the impression of a more studious undergraduate life. The different styles coexisted, sometimes in the same student. A football fanatic like Woodrow Wilson also founded a debating club, wrote on political theory, and read voraciously. The literary magazines provide the only written evidence of a studious alternative to the life-style chronicled in the newspapers.

Newspapers also shed little light on the role of women at coeducational Bucknell and Swarthmore; their content differs little from publications at Princeton and at Franklin and Marshall, both all-male. Life on these campuses confirms Helen Horowitz's conclusion that...
“the female equivalent of the college man began to emerge only in the 1890s.”

A wide gulf opened between the self-concepts of the colleges’ supporters and authorities and those of the students. A generation gap is a constant in higher education, but the twenty-five years after the Civil War witnessed a particularly deep cultural divide. Each college’s supporters had a distinctive combination of denominational, ethnic, and life-style identities. Between 1865 and 1890 much of the money given to these institutions was intended to promote Scottish and Scotch-Irish Presbyterianism, German Calvinism, traditional Baptism, or Hicksite Quakerism, respectively. These traditions connoted life-style variations within the general canon of Protestant piety. Though money and students were sent to these colleges to promote one of these visions, the students soon fostered quite different and less distinctive ones. The theme of student life may be unintended results—at least, unintended by parents, supporters, and older faculty.

Ethnicity and denominational distinctiveness were subverted by students’ self-image as archetypal Americans. Students seldom differentiated among their WASP colleagues. The frequent protestations of college democracy were reasonably accurate among the overwhelming majority of students who were white Protestants. In place of piety and denominational distinctiveness, most students embraced “muscular Christianity” (in reality, Protestantism). Avoidance of display was replaced by stylishness. Especially at Bucknell and Princeton, an upbeat, exuberant gentility replaced subdued mid-Victorian mannerisms. Religiosity was expected, but it was now expressed in less self-deprecating ways, coexisting comfortably with athletics and affluence in the emerging student subculture.

The generational conflict on campuses mirrored broader cultural changes in eastern Protestant society. Many younger faculty and alumni shared the students’ views on life-style and athletics. As time passed


they became more influential in college life, and by the late 1880s, resistance to the new style was crumbling. Most younger faculty, alumni, and students applauded, while the older generation grudgingly admitted that student behavior had improved and settled for regulating student-run activities. George Peterson found a similar pattern at New England colleges, where student life on different campuses converged on a distinct collegiate subculture.36

The emergence of the student culture has been vividly described by historians, usually as a liberation from the repressive tradition of in loco parentis. This, however, somewhat confuses official college rules with the reality of most campuses.37 As David Allmendinger found in antebellum New England colleges, financial limitations made fully residential campuses rare. At these four postbellum Middle Atlantic campuses, the requisite facilities for acting in loco parentis were also only partially in place. While faculties sought to enforce moral codes, the lack of on-campus dining halls and residences meant that, except at Swarthmore, students had considerable de facto autonomy. These case studies bolster Allmendinger's hypothesis that romantic college campuses are less a venerable collegiate tradition than a twentieth-century creation.38

Focus by historians on the partly mythological liberation from in loco parentis has obscured the fact that the new student life-style, rather than being primarily a democratic liberation from authority, was more fundamentally a product of rising student wealth. Investing considerable time and money in activities was only feasible for affluent students. All four colleges issued ritual denunciations of luxury and paeans to hardworking, impecunious scholars, especially those training for the ministry. But the grain of student life ran in the opposite direction. This was most visible at Princeton, where President McCosh publicly agonized over the increasing proportion of Episcopalians, a barometer of student opulence. The appearance of servants and elegant eating clubs in the 1880s confirmed McCosh's

38. David Allmendinger pointed out that historians had drawn excessively on the experiences of Harvard and Yale, whose wealth made their antebellum campus life atypical.
fears. As David Hoeveler said, "Evangelical and democratic Princeton was dying even before he left, and he had had something to do with that fact." Signs of wealth, slightly less extreme, appeared on the other three campuses as well. The cultures promoted by the founders and traditional supporters of the colleges were being challenged by a new generation that had grown up in the homes of the incipient white-collar professional class. Its growing demand for college education would foment even more dramatic changes after 1890.