

Summary

1. Opening & Purpose of the Meeting

1. The host, Naomi Katz Mintz, welcomes attendees and explains the purpose of the History Project:
 - To document anthropological/sociological aspects of student life (not major world events).
 - To create a legacy for future Cornellians.
 - To focus this session on freshman-year memories.
 2. There was a mailing mix-up: correspondence intended for Class of '71 went to Class of '70, so both groups are included.
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2. Early Social Interaction & Reconnecting

1. Alumni greet each other, recognizing familiar faces and catching up.
 2. People log in from many places (NY, NJ, MA, Florida, Connecticut, etc.).
 3. Participants recall shared experiences and joke about technology, co-hosting duties, and background noise on Zoom.
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3. Freshman Dorm Life & Social Environment

Repeated themes include:

- **Dorms:** Donlon, Dickson, University Halls (U-Halls), Balch, and others.
 - **Move-in memories:** elevators, meeting RAs, seeing unusual things like a *live pig* in Donlon's elevator.
 - **Phone on the hallway wall:** Only one shared phone per corridor—major part of daily life.
 - **Social ratios:** Particularly in late 1960s Cornell, the male–female ratio was a major issue (e.g., “7 to 1”).
 - **Sorority rush and Greek life:** Provided community and made a large campus feel smaller.
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4. Academics & Intellectual Life

Alumni recall:

- Famous (and sometimes difficult) freshman courses: biology, chemistry, ILR, art history, etc.
 - The professor who read from his own biology textbook all semester.
 - Long Saturday-morning classes (e.g., 8 AM chemistry in Baker).
 - Academic shifts (changing majors, discovering new interests, retreating from or embracing various departments).
 - Use of typewriters, white-out, carbon paper, and early word-processing challenges.
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5. Daily Life, Culture & 1960s–70s Context

1. **Clothing & fashion changes:**
 - Starting college in “villager skirts,” knee socks, matching outfits.
 - Transitioning rapidly to jeans, bell bottoms, campus counterculture.
 - Clothing serving as a symbol of rapid cultural change.
 2. **Weather & campus geography:**
 - Ithaca’s cold climate as a defining memory for nearly everyone.
 - Items like *fur coats* purchased at thrift stores to survive winter.
 - “The hills” (especially from U-Halls) were a repeated challenge.
 3. **Campus traditions:**
 - Hearing the *chimes* and the Alma Mater (deeply emotional for many).
 - Attending athletic events, especially hockey.
 - The “CUA coupon book,” which gave students access to sports events.
 4. **Historical events:**
 - References to the student takeover of Willard Straight Hall in 1969 (guns on campus, national attention).
 - Cornell on the cover of *Time* magazine.
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6. What Each Person Would Put in the Freshman-Year Time Capsule

Here are the items mentioned, reflecting personal symbolism:

1. **Persian lamb coat** (to survive Ithaca winters).
 2. **Pig Book** (student directory of faces).
 3. **Biology textbook** with highlights.
 4. **Plastic slide rule** (pre-calculator engineering life).
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5. **CUA coupon book** (gateway to Cornell athletics).
 6. **Bell-bottom pants** (shift in culture/fashion).
 7. **Portable electric typewriter** (essential academic tool).
 8. **Sorority photo / Alpha Phi pledge class photo** (community identity).
 9. **Time magazine cover** featuring Cornell during the Straight Hall events.
 10. **Recording of the Cornell chimes** playing the Alma Mater.
 11. **Cornell ring** (personal identity).
 12. **Bottle of white-out** (symbol of a pre-digital academic era).
 13. **English paper that earned an unexpected "A."**
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7. Personal Life Paths After Cornell

Participants briefly note life trajectories:

- Careers in teaching, law, engineering, planning, marketing, art/graphic design, urban planning, healthcare consulting, etc.
- Many maintained deep Cornell ties through alumni volunteering, reunions, and summer programs.
- Several note how formative Cornell was and how close their friendships remain decades later.