

## 2. Personal Memories & Reflections

### 2.1 Engagement and Personal Milestones

Some recalled meaningful personal events, including one participant who became engaged at the end of sophomore year and still had the same ring.

### 2.2 Academic Stress & Family Struggles

Several participants described sophomore year as academically overwhelming—heavy lab courses and pressure to stay afloat. Some also navigated major family issues such as divorce, creating emotional distance from campus events.

### 2.3 Missed Opportunities & Social Interactions

A number of participants mentioned they recognized, only in retrospect, missed opportunities for deeper relationships, particularly across racial lines (e.g., with Black roommates and Howard University exchange students).

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## 3. Racial Climate, Co-ops, and Early Diversity Experiences

### 3.1 Howard University Exchange Students

Participants described living in co-ops with women from Howard and having daily conversation but also wishing they had engaged more deeply.

### 3.2 The African Union & Black Student Organization Growth

Participants recalled that the African Union rose in connection with events surrounding the Straight Takeover.

### 3.3 Evolving Awareness of Racism & Gender Issues

Women discussed how, at the time, they did not yet feel empowered to challenge inequities and were often expected to feel “lucky to be there” as female students.

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## 4. The Straight Takeover (Major Focus of the Session)

The 1969 Willard Straight Hall Takeover emerged as the central memory. Participants offered multiple perspectives, from activism to confusion, to being indirectly affected.

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#### **4.1 Varied Levels of Involvement**

Some were fully engaged or physically present in Barton Hall; others were disconnected due to academic load, personal struggles, or commitments like performing in *Peter Pan* through Octagon.

#### **4.2 Key Memories & Iconography**

Participants referenced the famous New York Times photo of student Eric Bandelier wearing bandoliers across his chest—someone's lab partner.

#### **4.3 Rumors & Media Misinformation**

There were wild, inaccurate media claims: that armed students had taken over Barton Hall, or that police were preparing to "storm" the building. Evans & Novak published a false column that worried parents.

#### **4.4 Context from Later Documentaries**

Some participants had since learned from PBS and other sources that students were initially unarmed, and the arms appeared later in response to rumors of farmers coming to campus armed.

#### **4.5 WBRV Radio & Federal Implications**

Because the Straight's basement housed the student radio station (with an FCC license), the takeover had federal regulatory implications. The radio continued broadcasting remotely.

#### **4.6 Parent Reactions**

Parents were frightened by national news coverage; some students had to reassure their families. One student's sister was accepted to Cornell but their parents refused to let her enroll due to the unrest.

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## **5. Student Groups: Octagon Theater & Women's Chorus**

#### **5.1 Octagon Theater Productions**

Participants fondly remembered *Peter Pan*, *Pajama Game*, and other shows staged by Octagon—described as a joyful, creative community at Cornell.

#### **5.2 Women's Chorus Inequities**

Members recounted that at the time the women's chorus was treated as a second-class counterpart to the men's glee club. They lacked resources, travel opportunities, and institutional respect—conditions that improved only after leadership changed in the 1980s.

## 6. Concerts, Arts, and Campus Entertainment

### 6.1 Major Concerts Sophomore Year

Remembered performers included:

- **Smokey Robinson**
- **Richie Havens**
- **The Fugs**
- **Peter, Paul & Mary** (other years)
- **The Temptations** (freshman orientation)

Participants noted how affordable concerts were and how intimate venues like Barton Hall and Bailey Hall felt compared to today's massive arenas.

### 6.2 Theater & Film on Campus

Students watched Bergman and other foreign films at the Straight; sometimes pretended to understand them. They also attended ballet productions such as Nureyev and Fonteyn.

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## 7. Social Culture, Gender Expectations, and Safety

### 7.1 The "So You're a Cornell Coed" Handbook

A handbook given to freshman women laid out "appropriate" social life norms: study dates, blind dates, dress expectations, football weekend dates, etc. Participants reacted with humor and disbelief reading it today.

### 7.2 Safety Issues

Some women noted that "bad things happened" to women at Cornell, referring to a culture where misconduct was often minimized.

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## 8. Food, Restaurants, and Ithaca Landmarks

Participants reminisced about local haunts:

- **The Cosmopolitan ("Cosmo") Diner**
  - **Joe's Jip Joint**
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- **Turback's, The Spot, Johnny's, The Villa, State Diner, Buds, The Heights**  
These venues formed part of the social fabric—some described as “dives” but fondly remembered.
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## 9. Travel, Housing, and Parent Logistics

Families used to book hotels a year in advance due to limited accommodations around Ithaca. Housing arrangements and co-ops were recalled with nostalgia.