

## Summary of Cornell '71 History Project Zoom Session

This Zoom session is part of the **Cornell '71 History Project**, focused on capturing memories from **freshman year**. It continues a series about first impressions of Cornell and invites participants to share stories they want preserved in the archives.

### Main themes and discussion points:

- **Purpose of the session**
  - Reflect on freshman-year experiences: dorm life, academics, campus culture, and personal stories.
  - Encourage anecdotes that capture daily life and social realities of the time.
  - Central icebreaker question: *If you had any money freshman year, what did you spend it on?*
- **Money and spending**
  - Most students had **very little disposable income**.
  - Common expenses included:
    - Laundry, food trucks (Johnny's/Louie's truck), movies, sports tickets
    - Clothing basics (parkas, sweaters), art supplies, books, records
    - Occasional splurges like a **record player** or Cornell sweatshirts
  - Many relied on:
    - Weekly cash from parents
    - Charge accounts at campus stores
    - Part-time jobs (dorm desks, dining halls, waitressing, modeling for art classes)
- **Food and dining**
  - Strong memories of dorm food—often unappealing or monotonous.
  - Cottage cheese was a recurring (and controversial) staple.
  - Meal plans involved **ticket books**, not unlimited dining.
  - The Hotel School dining room was remembered as a rare, special treat with better food and service.
- **Dorm life and campus culture**
  - Small rooms, shared facilities, limited appliances.
  - Transition periods like dorms going co-ed were memorable and sometimes shocking.
  - Strong sense of adjustment and culture shock, especially for students from urban or very different backgrounds.
- **Work, responsibility, and independence**
  - Many students worked year-round and during breaks.
  - Balancing academics, jobs, and extracurriculars was a defining part of the experience.
  - Several speakers emphasized how *truly having no money* shaped daily decisions.
- **Meaningful experiences and stories**
  - Volunteer work through campus programs (e.g., working with children with Down syndrome) left lasting impressions.
  - Dance, arts, modeling, and creative pursuits were important outlets.

## Session date: September 11, 2022

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- Small moments—blood drives, sports events, food trucks, quiet kindnesses—stood out as deeply human and memorable.

### **Overall tone**

- Warm, nostalgic, humorous, and candid.
- Highlights resilience, camaraderie, and how modest circumstances shaped lifelong perspectives.