

Summary: Cornell Class of '71 Reminiscences Meeting (Junior & Senior Years)

This recorded Zoom meeting is part of a Cornell Class of 1971 history project, chaired by Naomi Katz Mintz, to preserve alumni memories of junior and senior year life for the university archives .

Purpose & Context

- Participants are encouraged to share personal recollections of daily life at Cornell in the late 1960s–early 1970s.
- The focus is intentionally loose, blending junior and senior year memories.
- The recordings are intended for long-term archival use.

Key Themes

- **Housing & Rent:**
Alumni describe living in dorms, fraternities, sororities, rooming houses, co-ops, and off-campus apartments on streets like Eddy, Catherine, Stewart, Thurston, and College Ave. Rents were strikingly low by modern standards—often \$30–\$100 per month, sometimes including utilities and meals.
- **Gender & Social Norms:**
Several women recall discrimination by landlords who hesitated to rent to unmarried women or required parents to sign leases.
Co-ed housing was still experimental, with strict rules that gradually loosened.
- **Community Living:**
Many stories center on shared houses, group meals, pets, cooperative food budgets, and strong social bonds.
Living arrangements often fostered independence, creativity, and lifelong friendships.
- **Campus Culture & Politics:**
Participants recall the broader political climate—especially anti-war activism and radical politics.
One alumna recounts living in a lakeside cabin with student radicals, hosting political figures like Tom Hayden, and engaging deeply in protest culture.
- **Costs & Education:**
Tuition and scholarships are discussed with amazement in hindsight (e.g., \$250 scholarships, a few hundred dollars per semester).
Several reflect on how affordable Cornell made experimentation and exploration possible.
- **Life After Cornell:**
Alumni briefly share where they live now and their careers (law, psychology, social work, environmental advocacy, academia, librarianship, writing), often expressing gratitude for Cornell's influence.

Session date: January 23, 2024

Overall Tone

- Warm, reflective, humorous, and candid.
 - Strong sense of nostalgia and shared history.
 - Emphasis on how formative and unusual that era at Cornell was—socially, politically, and economically.
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