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## Garden of Eden: Gender Integration and Counterculture at Lindenwood

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### **Garden of Eden: Gender Integration and Counterculture at Lindenwood**

The 1960s brought a great time of social change among younger generations. A culture formed to challenge the status quo. Colleges became breeding grounds for this cultural revolution. Lindenwood Colleges would also face this cultural revolution, and would have it accelerated by the new male students who first arrived in 1968. In this paper, I will argue that gender integration at Lindenwood caused social and behavioral problems at the time because the new campus counterculture introduced anti-authoritarianism, drug usage, and the radicalization of traditional female behavioral norms.

Resistance to authority was a major factor in the counterculture that emerged in the 1960s. Younger generations questioned the status quo and opposed many aspects of that status quo. Historian Jeremi Suri refers to this phenomenon, “Young college students...rejected not just the policies of their elders, but the very assumptions upon which their elders had built their authority.”<sup>1</sup> One Lindenwood professor, John Nichols, witnessed this firsthand. In an interview, he reminisced how many male students admitted to Lindenwood were draft dodgers. He admits that much of The Vietnam War was a massive push towards anti-authoritarianism in 1960s

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremi Suri, “The Rise and Fall of an International Counterculture, 1960-1975,” *The American Historical Review* 114, n. 1 (Feb. 2009): 47 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30223643> (accessed April 1, 2024).

counterculture. Nichols describes these draft dodgers as the push towards anti-authority among Lindenwood students.<sup>2</sup>

Nichols was correct in that counterculture had to originate from somewhere. Historian Clark Kerr analyzes how college campuses played a massive role in spreading counterculture. When reflecting on the relationship between college and counterculture, Kerr says, “The counterculture did not originate on campus, but it was avidly embraced there and distributed from there in writings of faculty members and the actions of students and graduates.”<sup>3</sup> As Kerr states, counterculture was introduced to Lindenwood, not born there.

The rise of anti-authoritarianism at Lindenwood brought a system of disrespect. John Nichols, in his interview, recalls multiple incidents of disrespect caused by attitudes introduced by the new male students. Nichols remembers an incident where a student waltzed into President John Brown’s office uninvited with dirty bare feet and Brown went crazy. He was offended by the act and let the student have it.<sup>4</sup> The student had no respect for the established authority structure at Lindenwood. Another incident Nichols recalled was during a Common Course class. Common Course was a required course in which multiple professors taught. On one occasion, an economics professor spoke and ended with a statement that Capitalism is not perfect, but it is the best system available. The class hated this and verbally assaulted the professor. Nichols states that before the late 1960s, students would stand when a professor walked into the room. After males were admitted, students did not do that anymore and some even resisted and yelled at

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<sup>2</sup> John Nichols interviewed by Kris Runberg Smith and Paul Huffman, audio recording, *Historic Audio Archives* Lindenwood University, Missouri, May 12, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Clark Kerr, *The Great Transformation in Higher Education, 1960-1980* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 153.

<sup>4</sup> John Nichols interviewed by Kris Runberg Smith and Paul Huffman, audio recording, *Historic Audio Archives* Lindenwood University, Missouri, May 12, 2011.

professors like the previous incident. Students even had an issue with disrespect towards the local police force. As early as 1969, students had serious issues with St. Charles Police. The students claimed that the police force was discriminating against them, bombarding them with unwanted interrogations, threats, and even abuse. There was an incident where St. Charles Police arrested 45 students at a party. The studies cried out that they ignored their Miranda Rights.<sup>5</sup> The relations were so bad the new police chief, at the time, Marvin W. Grimmer, held a Lindenwood-Police Relations Committee in 1970.<sup>6</sup> Lindenwood had caught a disease of disrespect.

Drug usage became a major issue at Lindenwood after the entry of male students. Former Professor John Nichols recalls the prevalence of drugs at Lindenwood during the 1970s. Drugs like marijuana and psychedelics like LSD were frequented on campus. It even got to a point where hard drugs like heroin were discovered and confiscated. The drugs flowed and faculty members even took part along with the students.<sup>7</sup> Drugs became a serious issue. Despite all the drug use and rule-breaking, male students were made aware of the expectations of the college. In 1969-1970, male students finally received an official student handbook for Lindenwood II. On page 8 of the textbook, it states,

The possession or use of legally prohibited drugs on the campus will subject students to suspension or expulsion. The college does not accept responsibility for the search or seizure of drugs. Therefore, should the college find it necessary to

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<sup>5</sup> Lindenwood College, newspaper, *The Ibis*, October 13, 1969, *The Ibis* (1969-1973), Oversize B14, Mary E. Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University, Missouri.

<sup>6</sup> Lindenwood College, newspaper, *The Ibis*, March 2, 1970, *The Ibis* (1969-1973), Oversize B14, Mary E. Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University, Missouri.

<sup>7</sup> John Nichols interviewed by Kris Runberg Smith and Paul Huffman, audio recording, *Historic Audio Archives* Lindenwood University, Missouri, May 12, 2011.

search for illegal drugs, legal authorities will conduct the search in accordance with due process of the law.<sup>8</sup>

It is made clear that drugs were prohibited but the students ignored the authority and partook anyway. Lindenwood had a psychiatrist and specialist on drugs, Dr. Sidney Cohen, speak on campus. He stated that drugs are used to find comfort and that the college can reduce drug use by providing their students with new and clear goals to strive for.<sup>9</sup> Collegiate drug use was not just an isolated issue. Jessica Grogan discusses a similar issue at the Esalen Institute in California. Many on the campus specifically searched for stimulation of drugs like Marijuana and LSD. This excessive drug use caused many a misfortune for the institution. A well-loved Esalan graduate died using a psychedelic. It was traumatizing for many at Esalan and many directly blamed the college. This opinion challenge was further worsened by two notable student suicides which put more scrutiny on the college.<sup>10</sup> Drug usage plagued colleges around the nation. While Lindenwood got off relatively easy, they were not completely spared.

Female students started to embrace counterculture and started to reject traditional female roles with the entry of male students to Lindenwood. Lindenwood was a finishing school for women for 140 years. It was a prim and proper school. Male students are finally admitted to Lindenwood and issues with social behavior began. However, it was not the males alone. Female students also engaged in anger and hostility. Two pictures were displaying the protest of the male students. One is the simple vandalism of a Lindenwood Colleges sign to make it say, “for

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<sup>8</sup> Lindenwood College II Student Handbook [for Men], 1969-1970, Lindenwood University, St, Charles, MO, <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/student-hb/39>, 8.

<sup>9</sup> Lindenwood College, newspaper, *The Ibis*, October 13, 1969, *The Ibis* (1969-1973), Oversize B14, Mary E. Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University, Missouri.

<sup>10</sup> Jessica Grogan, *Encountering America: Humanistic Psychology, Sixties Culture, and the Shaping of the Modern Self* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2013), 212-213.

women".<sup>11</sup> It's not that big of an issue, but vandalism is still a crime. The other example is much more violent. The image shows a group of female students burning an effigy of a man.<sup>12</sup> Despite the act being nonviolent, it was extreme. When interviewed, the participants expressed concern about the quality of the students and anger towards President Brown for lack of communication on the integration decision. At the time there were only fifteen students, and they did not take the women seriously.<sup>13</sup> They saw it more as a childish fit than anything. The Board of Directors recognized the change in student behavior and mannerisms, male and female, were having a negative influence on the colleges. The transcript of the board meeting refers to activities like drugs, alcohol, abortion, and theft. It also refers to mannerisms like unkempt appearances and greater displays of affection.<sup>14</sup> Even students noticed the change in female behavior brought on by male students. One Lindenwood senior recalls female students trying to impress the male students the first year. However, in the second year, the female students fell off. They were less likely to feel self-conscious, they dressed more casually, and weren't shy to smoke freely around campus.<sup>15</sup> Instead of following the traditional female roles at Lindenwood like acting and appearing prim and proper or being quiet and reserved, the female students embraced the

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<sup>11</sup> Vandalized Lindenwood Colleges Sign, circa 1969, Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO, [https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/images\\_highlights/20/](https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/images_highlights/20/).

<sup>12</sup> Women Burning an Effigy of a Man in Protest, 1968, Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO, [https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/images\\_highlights/35/](https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/images_highlights/35/)

<sup>13</sup> *The Linden Bark*, October 25, 1968, Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO. [https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/linden\\_bark/5/](https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/linden_bark/5/)

<sup>14</sup> Attachments to the Minutes of Lindenwood College II - 6/15-70, 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Report of the Lindenwood College II Board of Trustees from the office of the Vice-President and Dean of the College, Lindenwood University, St. Charles, MO, <https://digitalcommons.lindenwood.edu/student-hb/39>, 24.

<sup>15</sup> Lindenwood College, newspaper, *The Ibis*, September 29, 1969, *The Ibis* (1969-1973), Oversize B14, Mary E. Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University, Missouri.

counterculture and wanted their voices heard. Lindenwood even had a presence in the Women's Liberation Movement. A leader of the movement, Joanne Cooke, spells out their beliefs in a Lindenwood student newspaper. The movement believes capitalism has been used to keep women subordinate. Women have been taught to be second-class citizens and their goal is to redefine the role of women in society.<sup>16</sup> In "The Politics of Knowledge in 1960s America", Andrew Jewett states, "Young radicals stressed the nonrational elements of genuine selfhood, presuming that authenticity demanded commitment rather than self-restraint, passion rather than poise." The counterculture caused young students of the time to focus on self-interest. They wished to please the wants and desires of the self. It did not matter what social construct or status quo they had to break. It was the individual above all.<sup>17</sup> The introduction of male students and the counterculture they carried with them changed the picture of female students at Lindenwood forever.

The social and behavioral issues at Lindenwood during the late 1960s and into the 1970s reflect that the newly arrived male students accelerated the counterculture at Lindenwood. Lindenwood has been a school since 1832. After all that time, there were never any massive social or behavioral issues among the students until this period. This also just so happens to be when male students first were admitted. Through the issues of anti-authority, drug use, and breaking down of female behavior norms, it's clear that the entry of male students is not a mere coincidence, that the males did not influence the struggles Lindenwood faced. The entry of the male students was the catalyst that increased the counterculture at Lindenwood. This decision

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<sup>16</sup> Lindenwood College, newspaper, *The Ibis*, March 2, 1970, *The Ibis* (1969-1973), Oversize B14, Mary E. Ambler Archives, Lindenwood University, Missouri.

<sup>17</sup> Andrew Jewett, "The Politics of Knowledge in 1960s America," *Social Science History* 36, n. 4 (2012): 573, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23361143> (accessed March 2, 2024)

changed Lindenwood forever. The modern era for Lindenwood began here. The campus and its institutions were reborn.





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