

A Breach in the Wall
The Vanderbilt University Student Community and the 1960s

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On the basis of this thesis and of
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Introduction

On the West Coast in the fall of 1964, the free speech movement ignited the University of California at Berkeley and signaled the beginning of confrontational, sometimes violent student activism in America.¹ Three thousand miles away and four years later, two young professors at Columbia University wept as dawn lit the wreckage wrought by violent, often leaderless student protest.² Then in the final year of the decade, 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen slew four college students and wounded ten others at Kent State University. These three incidents served as salient examples of the student protest which descended on scores of universities and colleges throughout the Northeast, the Midwest, and the West. But what of the Southeast? How did the young men and women attending predominately white, southern institutions react to the actions of other students around the nation who marched, sat-in, threw bricks and fought the effects of tear gas by the thousands?

Any attempt to address this question encounters the inherent difficulty of speaking about a large collection of college men and women acting as a whole or a unit. At the University of Mississippi in 1962, for example, some students believed in peaceful integration despite the pressures of white supremacy,³ and at Duke, often named as the region's premier university, small elements of "extremism" on the right existed among the predominately "serious" and "civilized" undergraduates even in 1968.⁴ Thus, each

¹Max Heirich provides a good history of the events at Berkeley and the development of the radical Free Speech Movement in The Spiral of Conflict: Berkeley 1964 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971).

²Roger Kahn, The Battle for Morningside Heights: Why Students Rebel (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1970), 23.

³Russel H. Barrett, Integration at Ole Miss (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), 102.

⁴Douglas M. Knight, Street of Dreams: The Nature and Legacy of the 1960s (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 119,129.

university sheltered a wide array of student opinions, making it very difficult to generalize the actions of a specific student body into a broad analysis of southern student reaction.

The complexity of relationships within each university community further complicated the task of describing the southern student's involvement in the 1960s. Roger Geiger in his book Research and Relevant Knowledge explained that the university because of its "multiple internal constituencies and diffuse centers of power" was a "vastly more complicated world" than allowed by the commonly applied business metaphor.⁵ Understanding the uniqueness of each campus community, those who have written institutional histories about southern universities did not treat students in the Southeast as a coherent political group, nor did any authors create a continuum that explored the positions of different southern student bodies relative to each other on issues such as civil rights, the Vietnam War, and the multiversity. Instead, histories of southern institutions opened the discussion of the 1960s with a brief preamble describing the national atmosphere created by the Free Speech Movement at UC Berkeley, the militant black student protesters at Columbia University, and the killings at both Kent State and Jackson State. After constructing this framework, each author detailed how the constituencies of a particular university community reacted to the larger national context.⁶ Only William Snider in Light on the

⁵Roger Geiger, Research and Relevant Knowledge: American Research Universities since World War II (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 232.

⁶For this study, I selected Vanderbilt University, University of Virginia, the University of Georgia, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the University of Alabama, Duke University, and the University of Mississippi. I did so for two reasons. Informative histories existed for each, and, in the cases of Duke, Vanderbilt, Alabama, and UNC at Chapel Hill, I discovered more than one good source -- in the form of biographies, memoirs, and institutional monographs. I also selected these schools to provide a regional context for Vanderbilt because they provide a representative sample of southern institutions during the 1960s: Deep South and Tidewater, private and public, strong tradition of segregation and consistently liberal racial

Hill and William Link in William Friday discussed the relationship between two southern student bodies, those of Duke University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.⁷ For this reason, this study will follow the former pattern of historiography rather than the latter, charting the travels of a single student body at a single institution in the Southeast: Vanderbilt University.

The motivation for focusing on a this period of Vanderbilt's history sprang from the knowledge that the Vanderbilt student body experienced a reorientation during the 1960s. And it was this reorientation of their actions, rather than the actions themselves, which made the period significant. Never before had the student body switched its collective attention and support so quickly. Chancellor Emeritus Alexander Heard explained in his book Speaking of the University: Two Decades at Vanderbilt that controversy and student unrest had visited the university from the institution's earliest decades when "aggressive student pressures, including highly critical vocal demands and often explicit violations of regulations that had been proclaimed by faculty, trustees, and chancellor, brought change in the rules."⁸ These actions by the student body, however, rallied consistently around the goal of a more relaxed administration. Student demands regularly pertained to fraternities, dormitory regulations, and freedom in university publications. Such consistency quickly disappeared in the 1960s.

policies. It is my opinion that including other universities for whom histories exist, such as the College of William and Mary or Tulane University, would not add significantly to this thesis.
⁷William A. Link, William Friday: Power, Purpose, and American Higher Education (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995) and William D. Snider, Light on the Hill: A History of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

⁸Alexander Heard, Speaking of the University: Two Decades at Vanderbilt (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1995), 122. Note: Heard assisted V.O. Key, Jr. in researching his classic liberal study of southern politics and alone of all the researchers was included as a co-author in the final book, Southern Politics in State and Nation (1949).

When the decade began, the student body stood firm in its support of the campus status quo. Chapter One will discuss how a traditional brand of student activism developed in reaction to moves made by the Chancellor to relocate the off-campus fraternity houses within the campus and to the Board of Trustees' decision to integrate the undergraduate schools. It will also reveal the wall of tradition and integrity which insulated the student body from ideas and kept them from supporting liberal organizations like the United States National Student Alliance. The protests of the Greek community, which constituted nearly the entire student body at the time (76% of men and 79% of women), harkened back to earlier student unrest on campus.⁹ Resentment surrounding the decision to integrate also represented a traditional reaction from the university community. The words spoken to Harvie Branscomb when he arrived as chancellor in 1946 best expressed this latter facet of Vanderbilt's history: "No black man has ever been on campus in anything other than a menial capacity."¹⁰ Furthermore, no tradition existed for allowing controversial speakers on campus, as advocated by the USNSA, so together, the stands against fraternity dislocation, communists on campus, and undergraduate integration created a siege mentality among many students that would spur the student body to challenge actively administrative decisions on all three fronts.

After these three flares of controversy, however, the confrontational tone of campus events began to change. As Chapter Two details, Alexander Heard assumed the Chancellorship in 1963, and he departed from the centralized, sometimes "dictatorial" style of his predecessor, Harvie

⁹Harvie Branscomb, Purely Academic: An Autobiography (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1978), 145.

¹⁰Ibid., 154.

Branscomb.¹¹ Because Branscomb had tackled the two most rankling student concerns in his final years as chancellor, Heard's administration enjoyed several calm years. During this interim between controversies, the chancellor made it clear to the students that his administration weighed the students' opinion before issuing a decision that affected them. Two principle considerations motivated Heard's new attitude towards the student body: the desire to foster an open campus and a practical concern about restless undergraduates who had no outlet for their dissatisfaction.

National events certainly legitimated both of these concerns. In southern California during the fall semester 1964, for example, the restriction of free speech at UC Berkeley and the rigidity of the administrative structure had galvanized the student body, enabling Mario Savio to create the Free Speech Movement. That same semester, the first black students enrolled in Vanderbilt's undergraduate schools. Although the arrival of the first eight black students did not involve issues of free speech, Heard understood that the same historical event had precipitated violence at universities whose states bordered his own. During the 1962 riots at Ole Miss, two people died and the mobs littered the campus with bricks, broken glass, and charred automobile shells. Events at the University of Alabama unfolded in a similar manner, although no students died, and at the University of Georgia a mob of several hundred undergraduates surrounded the dormitory of a black female undergraduate after her first day of classes and threw bricks, shouted obscenities, and started fires outside her windows.¹² Heard could no more ignore the possibility of racial unrest at Vanderbilt than he could dismiss the

¹¹Paul Conkin, Gone with the Ivy: A Biography of Vanderbilt University (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 446.

¹²Thomas G. Dyer, The University of Georgia: A Bicentennial History 1785-1985 (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1985), 332.

riots at Berkeley. The world had come to Vanderbilt's borders, and the university community had to arrive at a decision.

Or did it? The student body had almost no reaction to the events of 1964, and the chancellor's open door seemed to let in only a draft. The campus newspaper, The Vanderbilt Hustler, commented on this apparent apathy in its editorials, but no amount of cajoling could draw the Vanderbilt student into the open forum. This calmness settled on other campuses in the Southeast during the years from 1964-67, but as the decade wore on, issues began to flare in historical flash points. At Vanderbilt, Heard had promoted "the expression of diverse political views" and encouraged the student body to consider "the country's social problems" since his opening address to the faculty in 1963.¹³ Because of this firm commitment to the concept of an "open forum," "patches of controversy" periodically visited the campus, often centering around the university's principle mechanism of free speech: the Impact Symposium.

Founded in 1964 by students, Impact prospered under the direction of Heard. Chapter Three will create an overview of the symposium's evolution, from its genesis in the chancellor's early speeches to the dramatic 1967 and 1968 symposiums, when more than a total of 30,000 attended the lectures given by such notables as Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Kennedy, and Stokely Carmichael. In an effort to show that national pressures and the presence of historical figures transformed the open forum from a rhetorical device of the chancellor into a rallying point for campus debate, this study will contrast the student involvement in the late 1960s with that of the early 1960s. This then will become the story of a student community that arrived in the decade rioting to save its fraternities and vowing never to attend

¹³Heard, 69.

school or live with a black man. Then, only five years later, this same community supported Heard in his battle for free speech and had thousands of its members pay to hear the words of two black men, one famous and the other infamous.

Chapter One "Reactivism"

The United Greek Organization and Chancellor Branscomb

During the 1950s, fraternities and sororities were a way of life at Vanderbilt. No one would have challenged this assertion. Not the Greeks. Not the small number of independents. And certainly not Chancellor Branscomb. The relative importance of maintaining off-campus, residential housing to this way of life, however, became an issue of great contention. Branscomb first raised the subject of fraternity housing privately with his deans in 1958, recognizing that the fifteen boarding houses located outside the campus suffered from fire hazards, poor security measures, and structural deficiencies.¹ When the matter moved onto board of trust deliberations the following year, Branscomb maintained strict silence in an effort to create a complete proposal before unrest derailed the process. He could then present the board of trust's final program to the fraternities and the alumni, limiting debate, controversy, and unsolicited advice.

This strategy of "exceptionally centralized" and "strong-willed" action characterized nearly all major policy decisions during Branscomb's tenure, and it fit neatly with Branscomb's southern Progressive background.² But the chancellor's philosophy of "gradual and reasonable change guided by an able elite" disconnected the student body from avenues of deliberation and from the source of power.³ Although this style of organization served the university well as Branscomb led Vanderbilt through a period of enormous growth in both endowment and enrollment, it created a tremendous rift when "prominent Nashville alumni"

¹Conkin, 531.

²Ibid., 446.

³Ibid., 451.

informed students that the administration planned to relocate the fraternities in “club houses” that lacked both residential accommodations and kitchens.⁴

Members of fraternities and sororities immediately formed the United Greeks Organization and demanded verification of the rumored proposal. Branscomb adhered to his policy of silence, however, arguing that it “would not be good administrative procedure nor in the best interests of the University to debate the proposals in public before their presentation to the responsible governing body, the board of trust.” This response failed to satisfy students who felt that the administration had excluded them from an issue of vital importance only “to minimize resistance.”⁵ They wanted to debate the proposals that threatened the life of their fraternity system, yet it seemed that the chancellor had little desire to discuss the issue. The timing of the final board decision at the semester’s end, for example, hinted that perhaps Branscomb had tried “to slip a quick pitch over the plate.”⁶ Regardless of the chancellor’s true intentions, because UGO leaders could draw no significant response from behind the “Ivy Curtain,” they drafted a letter that was mailed to over 12,000 alumni. The short letter described the administration’s silence and requested the support of alumni in defeating any plan which would curtail what the UGO viewed as the two most important elements of a Greek organization: communal living and meals.

The quick transformation of the chancellor into the students’ “devil” surprised many in the campus community and further convinced Branscomb that the situation demanded reform. It seemed to him that fraternities took precedence over the university itself in the minds of the students, and the experiences of other administrators supported this sentiment.⁷ K.C. Potter, for example, the current

⁴“Alumni Group Supports UGO’S Efforts to Publicize Greek Plan,” The Vanderbilt Hustler , 24 April 1959.

⁵Ibid.

⁶“Ivy Curtain is a Source of Irritation to Students,” The Vanderbilt Hustler , 1 May 1959.

⁷Conkin, 531.

Dean of Residential and Judicial Affairs, was a residential advisor in the freshman dorms from 1961-64, and he recognized that even several years after the housing reform controversy, "everything was controlled in student life by fraternities." This included all aspects of student government, social life, housing, dining, intramural athletics, and student publications.⁸ Greek life exerted such influence on the campus that even independent students felt compelled by the "extraordinarily high" percentage of students participating in fraternities during the early 1960s to form an independent men's association.⁹ Thus, fraternity men and sorority women realized that Branscomb's reforms threatened a way of life that included shared meals, communal living, *and* a great deal of campus power.

This power finally produced some results for the UGO after two full weeks of "flurried activity."¹⁰ Branscomb met with five Intrafraternity Council members to discuss the upcoming May 15-16 board of trust decision. After this meeting, the chancellor announced that any proposal to the board would not prohibit meals and that he would recommend to the board that any decision "not be mandatory until viewed in light of the student criticism."¹¹ This accommodation of student demands led to a cessation of UGO activities and a general diffusion of tension. Students, however, committed one last act of protest, playing a prerecorded, ghostly criticism of the new Greek system through the bell tower carillon the night before the bell was to be dedicated at a formal ceremony. As the message blared across the campus, over five hundred boys gathered in front of Kirkland Tower. The crowd then followed a pattern established in earlier years, moving to a women's dorm shouting, "Panty raid." The boys did not gain entrance that night, but two nights later a similar but "more determined crowd of 250" attempted to enter the girls'

⁸Potter 3/11/96 and Branscomb, 144.

⁹Potter, 3/11/96.

¹⁰"UGO Enters Period of 'Watchful Waiting,'" The Vanderbilt Hustler , 8 May 1959.

¹¹Ibid.

dorms, going so far as to scale walls.¹² Although the second mob also failed to gain entrance, these two “near riots”¹³ represented a dramatic conclusion to the three weeks of collective student action. As with riots that broke out at the University of Virginia two years later, however, the young men who took part revolted to conserve rather than change institutional policy. Nevertheless, the UGO protests, the Ghost of Kirkland Tower incident and the rowdy panty raids revealed an aggressive student body willing to confront the administration about issues that concerned student freedom.

The USNSA Debate

Matters of student concern began to expand into the realm of social issues when the class reconvened in the fall of 1959. Fraternity men still debated the housing issue, yet many agreed with one editorial that labeled the spring compromise as a “tactical defeat but a strategic victory,” meaning that Greek organizations had accepted the inevitable move onto campus but had won the struggle for meals and, most likely, limited accommodations (the final plan set the number at six residents per house).¹⁴ The calm soon gave way to a new issue of contention when the Student Senate raised the question of renewing membership in the United States National Student Association. This organization of university and college student bodies represented over 1.2 million undergraduates, and Vanderbilt had joined its ranks in the fall of 1957. Since that time, however, the USNSA had adopted policies that many Vanderbilt undergraduates described as too “liberal.” These included opposition to the ROTC loyalty oath, support of communist speakers on campus, and a call for rapid integration in higher

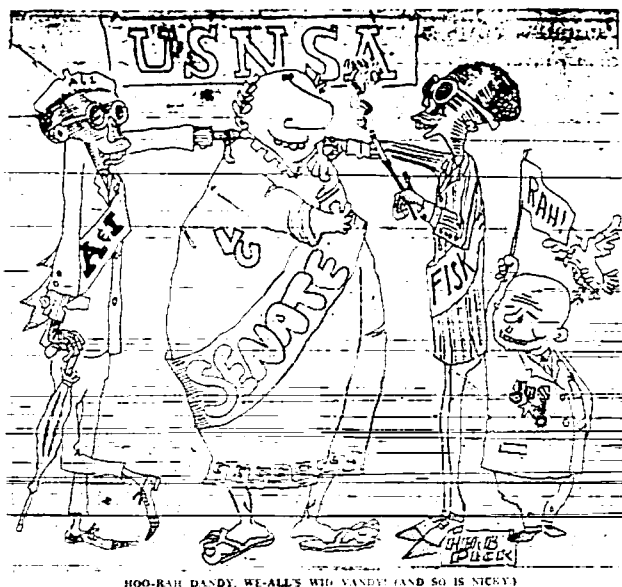
¹²Conkin, 532.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴“Tactical Defeat but Strategic Victory?” The Vanderbilt Hustler , 8 May 1959.

education.¹⁵ This final policy, in particular, rankled members of the student body and had led the Student Senate to attach a rider with the 1958 renewal which read, “Vanderbilt does not necessarily go along with the integration statement.”¹⁶ Yet despite the history of disapproval surrounding the USNSA issue, the Student Senate renewed the Vanderbilt student body’s membership by a vote of 16 to 6.¹⁷

This decision caused a backlash among the editors of The Hustler, who argued that the Senate failed to represent its conservative constituency during the USNSA debate. A cartoon published on the editorial page highlighted both this concern and the conservatism of the student newspaper. The depiction of students from Tennessee A&I and Fisk University, both of which are historically black universities in Nashville that belonged to the USNSA, paired with a slang caption dripped with racism. It also revealed a strong, anti-communist element of the campus’s only student newspaper.



The Senate responded to this attack by censoring The Hustler for publishing the “ignorant and prejudiced” cartoon.¹⁸ This action meant little to undergraduates,

¹⁵“Senate Votes ‘Yes’ on USNSA Renewal,” The Vanderbilt Hustler, 16 October 1959.

¹⁶“NSA Question Has Stormy History,” The Vanderbilt Hustler, 31 October 1961.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸The Vanderbilt Hustler, 23 October 1959.

however, because the Senate followed it with a resolution that made the upcoming spring student USNSA referendum non-binding.

With The Hustler set firmly against renewed membership without specific approval from the student body, the Senate struggled to justify its decision. The chancellor, as with the fraternity crisis, did little to encourage any of the principles outlined by the USNSA. When interviewed, Branscomb directly opposed Communist teachers in higher education, and his support led the reporter to conclude, "The USNSA is in favor of allowing communists to teach in American schools. The Chancellor is not. Whose advice should we take: that of an organization with an extremely dubious background and ideology, or that of one of the most distinguished educators in America?"¹⁹ The student body, like Branscomb, provided no reason to believe that the Senate had represented the wishes of the university community with its October decision. A petition signed by 537 students demanded a binding resolution and underscored this fact. Still, the Senate ignored the resolution and then banned visitors and the press from the ensuing discussion.²⁰ Thus, it appeared that the student body, as represented by the newspaper, those who signed the petition, and those who forced the Senate to close their doors, strongly disapproved of membership in an organization that advocated a radical interpretation of academic freedom and racial integration.

The issue cooled over the winter, but in March 1960 controversy surrounding the expulsion of a black divinity student, James Lawson, highlighted one reason for the student body's opposition to USNSA. The board of trust had voted to expel Lawson for his role in local lunch counter sit-ins, and, initially, the decision dealt only with the concurrence of the Vanderbilt name and civil disobedience.²¹ The racial element of the situation, however, quickly dominated the controversy, both

¹⁹"Branscomb Says 'No' to Communist Teachers," *Ibid.*, 23 October 1959.

²⁰"Senate Ousts Press, Visitors from USNSA Talk," *Ibid.*, 30 October 1959.

²¹"Divinity Student Ousted for Sitdown Role," *Ibid.*, 4 March 1960.

on and off campus. The Hustler editorial column, for example, emphasized Vanderbilt's "consistent, rather liberal (for the South) policy on integrated education."²² Later editorials in the spring attached their support to the issue of civil order, but these articles never strayed far from the principle that Vanderbilt was justified in the Lawson case because it led Southern private institutions with its liberal racial policy.²³ Not only was it false, however, that Vanderbilt "bent over backwards to make its facilities available to all races," the Lawson case, for the administration, did not involve integration or other racial issues. Branscomb wanted to distance the university from any connection with civil disobedience, and thus the administration considered public relations more than anything else.²⁴ Only the Student Senate, however, seemed to understand this position or agree with it. The Senate excluded any mention of integration from the unanimously approved resolution which supported Lawson's expulsion, but this exemption seemed to put the Senate once again in opposition to the student body.²⁵ Although no poll existed to gauge student opinion in March of 1960, the USNSA referendum only six weeks after the Lawson controversy provided the student body with an indirect way of expressing approval or disapproval for racial integration, which had been identified many times with the Lawson case. The final tally revealed that student favored withdrawal from the USNSA by a margin of 732 to 362.²⁶ Citing ignorance among the student body, however, the Senate ignored the referendum and its underlying statement about student conservatism on issues of both racial integration and communist speakers. Upon return in the fall, the Senate renewed membership by a vote of 13 to 7, thus resolving the specific USNSA controversy.²⁷

²²"The Lawson Case," Ibid., 4 March 1960.

²³"Unique Lawson Case Brings Hustler New Responsibilities," Ibid., 11 March 1960.

²⁴Conkin, 554.

²⁵"Senate Endorses Ousti of Lawson Unanimously," Ibid., 11 March 1960.

²⁶"NSA Question has Stormy VU History," Ibid., 13 October 1961.

²⁷"Senate Votes to Renew Membership," Ibid., 4 November 1960.

Facing Integration

The Student Senate, however, could not table the general issue of racial segregation. In the spring of 1961, debate rose again in the form of a sit-in resolution calling for the USNSA to rescind its support of the movement. The document condemned the sit-ins on legal grounds but recognized the “moral significance” of the movement. After three weeks of delays, deliberations, and one rejected version, the Senate finally passed the resolution by a unanimous vote, thus rejecting the methods employed by the sit-in demonstrators.²⁸ This in itself did not constitute a significant challenge to integration, but it set the stage for the inevitable proposal which appeared before the Senate in February of 1962. More than 150 students gathered to hear the debate surrounding a recommendation to the board of trust that the university admit qualified blacks to the undergraduate schools. At one point during the “torrid debate,” groups of students began to chant, “Two, four, six, eight, we don’t want to integrate,” and when the Senate voted down the resolution 14-13, the crowd applauded.²⁹

These conservative reactions found more formal expression the following week when the issue came before a student-wide referendum. No protests occurred outside the polling booths, and no incident marked the referendum as particularly significant.³⁰ Of the approximately 2,800 undergraduates, however, a record sixty-percent voted, and the referendum fell 862-661.³¹ Several students interviewed afterward by The Hustler compared the outcome to the USNSA referendum of 1960 and cited it as a second rejection of racial integration.³² The Hustler editorial staff,

²⁸“Senate Rejects Sit-In Resolution,” *Ibid.*, 24 February 1961.

²⁹“VU Senate Defeats Integration Move,” The Tennessean, 8 February 1962.

³⁰“Integration Vote ‘No,’” The Tennessean, 15 February 1962.

³¹Conkin, 577.

³²“Students Veto Integration Proposal in Record Referendum Participation,” The Vanderbilt Hustler, 16 February 1962.

however, looked towards the upcoming board of trust decision and urged the university's governing body to integrate the undergraduate schools "sooner, rather than later."³³

When the board of trust finally met in May, its decision satisfied the voices of progress rather than conservation. Angry students could be found in most dorms lambasting the board's decision to integrate and swearing never to live or go to school with a "n_____."³⁴ Administrators and more open-minded student had anticipated that many undergraduates and alumni would react in this way, so the board of trust had cushioned the blow by emphasizing the lack of black applicants for 1963. The Hustler, which had worked together with Branscomb since the early spring, assumed this stance and limited its response to a mild description of the resolution and a conciliatory headline that read, "Desegregation In, Unlikely in 1963." This calm front, however, could not hide that many students in 1962 bitterly disagreed with the board's decision to integrate. They had gone to the polls twice to prove this, and yet they had lost to forces of progress. They could no more keep black students out of the undergraduate schools than they could maintain their off-campus houses or prohibit membership in a student-organization that endorsed communist speakers on campus.

³³"Rather Sooner than Later," Ibid., 20 April 1962.

³⁴Potter, 3/11/96; Eager 2/28/96.

Chapter Two "The Heard Transition"

New Chancellor, New Ideas

When Alexander Heard arrived from position as the University of North Carolina's Dean of Graduate Schools in January of 1963, nearly all of the fraternities occupied new houses on Greek Row, and the undergraduate colleges operated according to an open admission policy. The centralized, sometimes secretive process that led to these progressive administrative moves, however, had discredited Branscomb and his administration among the student body, leaving the new chancellor with the task of mending relations. Moreover, the absence of "lively intellectual dialogue, the airing of diverse views, and an ongoing contribution by faculty and students to university policy making" at Vanderbilt "appalled" Heard.¹ Therefore, as soon as he assumed office, he began to develop an administrative structure that encouraged open communication among all elements of the university community, including the student body. Both the actions and the words of the chancellor's first year propelled campus affairs in this new direction. For example, Heard dedicated his first formal appointment to a discussion with several student leaders on February 1, 1963.² Just as significantly, during the first few weeks, his speeches to the assembled faculty, the student body, and the Nashville Rotary Club all revealed a strong commitment to academic freedom and a "university campus which is a lively place hospitable to debate and controversy."³ These moves seemed unfamiliar to the faculty, the board of trust, and especially the students, but all elements of the university community supported the Chancellor's efforts, including senior trustee James Stahlman.⁴

¹Conkin, 590.

²Heard, 94.

³Heard, 20.

⁴Alexander Heard, interview by author, tape recording, Chancellor's office, 15 April 1996.

Although Heard enjoyed the tentative approval of these constituencies, the university could not boast of any traditions or organizations that might have transformed Heard's desire for intellectual dialogue into reality. Branscomb had stated repeatedly that he disapproved of allowing communists to speak on campus, and the student body had expressed its disapproval of the USNSA, which encouraged diverse speakers on campus. Yet despite this historical trend, Heard continued to emphasize the university's dual role of inquiry and freedom throughout 1963, consistently returning to the need for an open forum. In a speech given at his October installation ceremony, Heard cited the compelling duty of the university community to consider important social issues:

By definition, a university must be a place where anybody's plea for a fuller freedom can be calmly heard, fairly debated, and conclusions about it stated freely. The more perplexing a public issue is, the more significant to society is this inherent responsibility of a university.⁵

Thus, Heard declared that members of the campus community, including the student body, must make an effort to engage the relevant social concerns of the era through dialogue. Entrenched stands about fraternity life and adherence to an outdated racial standard did not fulfill this obligation, and the "extremely low" level of student extracurricular activity failed to inspire great hope that the situation would change.

This lack of student initiative, however, failed to discourage Heard and his colleagues, specifically Dean of Men Sidney Boutwell and Dean of Women Nora Chafin, who worked throughout 1963 to foster extracurricular activity among the student body. One project, in particular, interested Heard. During the final years of Branscomb's administration, Boutwell had begun exploration of public discussion programs that brought speakers to campus. Heard learned of Boutwell's research,

⁵Heard, 35.

and, fully understanding that the programs often solicited controversial speakers, the chancellor “heartily encouraged” the process. The chancellor’s enthusiasm drew its energy from his years as an undergraduate at Chapel Hill when he chaired the Carolina Political Union, a student forum that hosted diverse and often radical speakers. Based on this experience, he concluded that a *student-run* speakers symposium at Vanderbilt would promote dialogue, interest, and perhaps even controversy among the traditionally conservative student body.⁶

While the Dean of Men assembled the necessary organizational structure for what would become the first Impact symposium, the administration promoted student initiative in other areas. These moves achieved only limited tangible results, such as slackened student visitation rules and polls of the faculty, but the continuing mission to draw the student body into a new, open campus environment held a significance that students and administrators could not appreciate in 1963.⁷ While the events at Berkeley loomed near on the horizon, Heard’s attempts to promote independent student activity and involvement had begun to draw the student and administrative agendas closer. Unlike the Branscomb era when any shared objectives between the administration and the student body had been accidental, the Heard transition marked a period when the chancellor pointed the students towards his vision: a great university dedicated to intellectual exploration and freedom. This is not to suggest that Branscomb lacked vision, but his dream of a building a prominent, national research university did not require an involved student body. He required multi-million dollar federal grants, new buildings, and a powerful benefactor to guide his board of trust, and during his administration, he garnered all three. Heard understood, however, that an involved and informed student body formed an integral element of a vibrant

⁶Conkin, 587.

⁷Heard, 4/15/96

university community. Thus, his effort to reconcile the chancellor's office with the student body preceded what soon became a growing wave of student activism across the country.⁸

Siege of the Student Attitude

During the first year of Heard's administration, many students viewed his initiatives with incredulous stares. Not only did many students not believe that a chancellor would assume such an open posture towards the student body, many did not agree with a gradual opening of the campus. After all, Vanderbilt had no existing tradition of controversial speakers, and a significant number of the students who voted against the USNSA membership and racial integration still attended the university. Furthermore, student apathy, always an underlying current at Vanderbilt, drew energy away from all but the most salient issues. Members of the university community, however, began to see change in the attitudes of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Bob Eager, an undergraduate (1963-67) who chaired the Impact '67 symposium, explained that he witnessed a "general liberalization" of student attitudes during the period.⁹ And K.C. Potter, having returned from a one-year legal clerkship to become Assistant Dean of Men in 1964, commented that "the composition of the school began to change rapidly."¹⁰

National events forced a certain degree of this change. In early 1965, Lyndon Johnson committed the first large troop deployment to Vietnam, signaling to the country that the conflict in Southeast Asia had become a war. During the same year, frustration infected the civil rights movement even as Congress passed the historic Voting Rights Act. The walls of Vanderbilt did not prevent students from witnessing this gradual transformation of the country. Their vision may have been

⁸Ibid.

⁹Eager, 2/28/96.

¹⁰Potter, 3/11/96.

filtered, but Vanderbilt undergraduates still watched as the proud morality of Mississippi Freedom Summer and the legislative triumph of the Civil Rights Act gave way to the confusion of 1965 and 1966. But perhaps the development of the Impact symposium, which brought these forces most vividly to the students' minds, best reflected the change which crept across campus in the years from 1964 to 1966.

When Heard committed his administration to promoting a more open university where "varied preferences or values competed for public acceptance," the student body did not initially understand his earnestness.¹¹ For example, the student organizers of Impact '64 requested Heard's approval before extending an invitation to Vanderbilt alumnus Ralph McGill. They understood that many people affiliated with the university considered McGill a "red, red radical" despite his national prominence as editor and publisher of the Atlanta Constitution.¹² What they did not understand, however, was that Heard would permit them to invite whomever they wished.¹³ Heard reinforced this sense of independent action when he advised the Board of Trust that his relationship with the newly formed Impact committee was "to help when invited to do so but otherwise to keep hands off."¹⁴ Even when Heard intervened personally, as he did in the case of James Kilpatrick and Impact '64, he always spoke on behalf of the student organizers. This autonomy served the chancellor in two ways. It fostered the growth of a lively campus dialogue, and it enabled the Impact committee to tailor each year's program for the most relevant issues and the most prominent speakers so as to serve as an outlet for student concerns. In addition, the chancellor's gesture of decentralization signaled a departure from the Branscomb administration and made it clear to the

¹¹Conkin, 589.

¹²Heard, 4/15/96.

¹³ibid.

¹⁴Heard, 94.

campus that Kirkland Hall had opened lines of communication with the student body.

The first year's program wasted no time in focusing on a topic which addressed one of the principle tenets of Vanderbilt's conservative past: segregation. Dan Brasfield and the other Vanderbilt undergraduates who made up the Impact '64 committee selected the theme, "The South in Transition." The speakers included two blacks, boxer Mohammed Ali and James Forman, the executive secretary of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee. James Kilpatrick, a Richmond-based journalist and an outspoken segregationist, opposed their position. The presence of Ralph McGill, however, created the largest amount of controversy, drawing criticism from many alumni who personally called on the chancellor to protest. As Heard explained, "The concept of letting just 'anybody' speak on campus was unfamiliar in Nashville, at Vanderbilt, and among students."¹⁵ For this reason, the symposium had been something of a gamble, but the risk paid off when the tension of the debate created an exciting weekend forum that was attended by more than one thousand students.

The importance of the weekend, however, should not be over exaggerated. The Impact committee had put a rhetorical concept into practice, and the experiment had proved beneficial to campus debate. Despite this success, Impact chairman Brasfield voiced concern that undergraduates had come to see, not hear, the speakers. As an article in the student newspaper, The Vanderbilt Hustler , two years after the first Impact explained, "Brasfield's real concern was the apathy under the surface. Brasfield's fear was that the students had come to see the big names, not to perceive their big ideas."¹⁶ The lack of public student response provided some support to this claim. Students neglected to write a single letter to The Hustler ,

¹⁵Heard, 4/15/96.

¹⁶"Apathy Finds Demise As Impact Grows," The Vanderbilt Hustler , 23 September 1966.

expressing satisfaction or disagreement with Impact. On the other hand, the topic of segregation was one of the two Impact themes specifically recalled by both Bob Eager and K.C. Potter, revealing that the 1964 program had left an impression on some who witnessed the symposium.¹⁷

The confusion surrounding the issue of student attitudes and reactions raises an important question about The Vanderbilt Hustler . How reliable was it? It is difficult at times to judge the reactions of Vanderbilt undergraduates from reports, or lack thereof, in the student newspaper. The issue of integration provided an excellent example of this fact. Impact '64 occurred three months before the first eight black students arrived at Vanderbilt, and the symposium's theme dealt directly with the issue of segregation. Still, no students submitted an opinion about integration to the paper, and the only mention of the impending integration appeared in a single eight paragraph story in the April 10 Hustler titled "New Negro Students Next Fall."¹⁸ Despite the apparent acquiescence of the student body, some undergraduates deeply resented the decision to integrate. As recounted earlier, both Eager and Potter have vivid memories of students who openly stated that they would never go to school with or live in the same dorm with a black student.¹⁹ Thus, deep felt emotions sometimes escaped the pages of The Hustler . Despite this shortcoming, the school's newspaper was the only consistent source for the entire period covered by this study, and, therefore, will be referred to often.

Regardless of the apparent confusion after Impact '64 concerning student reaction to the speakers, student leaders and the chancellor still perceived the open forum as the best opportunity to raise student interest and involvement. For this reason, Impact organizers committed themselves to developing another

¹⁷Eager, 2/28/96; Potter 3/11/96 - Potter was actually not at Vanderbilt during the Impact '64 symposium, but he listened to the broadcast of the speeches.

¹⁸The Vanderbilt Hustler , 10 April 1964.

¹⁹Eager, 2/28/96; Potter 3/11/96.

symposium, "The Democratic Responsibility." While this topic did not exclusively address civil rights issues, like Impact '64 it featured speakers who debated the issues surrounding integration. The committee invited Roy Wilkins, the executive secretary of the NAACP, and the segregationist governor of Alabama, George Wallace. These two speakers did not engage in a formal debate, nor did they deride each other's presence publicly. Rather, Impact maintained a mood of quiet and reasonable inquiry. Despite this peaceful tone, the tension surrounding diametrically opposed public personalities helped to "create within the student body an attitude of festive excitement through which intense intellectual activity is combined with the enthusiasm resulting from contact with men of national prominence."²⁰

Attendance at Impact '65 again verified the committee's assumption concerning student interest in issues of civil rights. As in 1964, however, no letters or editorials commented on the symposium or the issue of integration. It is difficult to explain this reticence. Students who attended the lectures undoubtedly did so to witness a political or academic figure of interest, but Impact did not inspire any of the students to submit a letter or article to The Hustler. In fact, no mention of black students appeared until November 1965, seven months after Impact '65. The short article announced the formation of the Vanderbilt Project Opportunity program designed to help black middle and high schoolers prepare for higher education.²¹ While this program later involved several dozen white students, it did not indicate a significant shift away from the pattern of student reticence. Instead, the first two years of the Impact symposium had disappointed the original goals of its founder, Brasfield. Neither sustained public interest nor controversy developed around the issues discussed during Impact, even those concerning integration, and

²⁰"A Statement of Purpose," Impact Magazine, 1965.

²¹"Student Group Urges Negroes Go To College," The Vanderbilt Hustler, 12 November 1965.

so it appeared that the student body had failed to engage the debates they witnessed. Yet the program satisfied, in part, Heard's desire for an open university. Although issues of race, in particular, still highlighted the conservatism of the student body, the presence of an intellectually intense annual dialogue symbolized a gradual shift towards a great university and away from panty raids and fraternity pranks.

Impact '66 reoriented the discussion towards the other principle concern of students around the nation: the Vietnam War. The official title of the program was "America's New Global Challenge," and the slate of speakers included a member of the North Vietnamese government and George McGovern. Attendance grew for the third year in a row, reaching three thousand students for the weekend. This total exceeded the student attendance of the first two symposiums combined. The consistent growth of student involvement in Impact seemed to reveal that the open forum was succeeding in its mission to promote a pluralistic and intellectually vibrant campus. One student looking back from the perspective of 1969, however, commented that Impact '66, while "impressive," did not capture the attention of the entire campus. At that time, the university still held Saturday classes which conflicted with the symposium, in this case the speech of former Soviet Prime Minister Kerensky. Despite the presence of an interesting political figure on campus, the freshman refrained from skipping his ten o'clock class -- which was full.²²

The managing editor for the 1966-67 academic year, Tom Lawrence, ignored students like Doug Bates, who skipped segments of the symposium, when he wrote the first editorial that assessed the value of Impact and evaluated the level of student interest. In the piece titled "Apathy Finds Demise as Impact Grows,"²³ he described the successes of the program and its growth under the continuing

²²"Impact," Impact Magazine, 1969.

²³"Apathy Finds Demise As Impact Grows," The Vanderbilt Hustler, 23 September 1966.

guidance of Brasfield. The evaluation then concluded with a statement that revealed a new optimistic voice in The Hustler : “Now there is but a corpse of apathy, and a new livelier student who no longer condones the lethargy which frustrated Dan Brasfield.”²⁴ This article did more, however, than create a new editorial voice; it labeled student silence as “apathy.” Not since the inception of Impact had this problem been publicly described.²⁵ Thus, speaking with a new optimism, the editorial staff issued a challenge and an encouragement to the student body.

Two individuals responded to Lawrence’s article, one in deed and the other in word, and both appreciated the importance of racial issues to a southern student body. The newly appointed Impact ‘67 chairman, Bob Eager, was the individual who acted on Lawrence’s challenge. He understood that the symposium was “not tied to a particular objective other than bringing interesting and even controversial speakers to the campus.”²⁶ Still, he recognized that many of the most prominent orators in America surrounded the civil rights movement. Thus, the topic selected, “The Individual in American Society,” provided an opportunity for the campus to return to the themes of 1964 and 1965. The growing presence of black students on campus also raised the possibility that civil rights speakers might spur student interest. More than twenty black students had enrolled by the fall of 1966, and this combined with the gradual opening of campus signaled that perhaps the Vanderbilt community should reexamine the role of a Vanderbilt white student.

The Hustler staff had expressed its concern and the Impact committee had acted on it, but the second response to the challenge issued by Lawrence hinted that some white students disapproved of the black power movement, and thus with speakers that Impact might invite to campus. Writing as the feature editor of The

²⁴The Vanderbilt Hustler , 23 September 1966.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Eager, 2/28/96.

Hustler, Lew Coddington discussed the black power movement, and he described the actions of CORE and SNCC as “stupid tactics” that “are getting in the way of any real Civil Rights advancement. They are prejudicing the American public against all Negro groups and goals.”²⁷ When Coddington later in the article attempted to define a method of achieving real Civil Rights advancement, he advocated “genuine cooperation between Negroes and whites.”²⁸ Before he proposed this somewhat vague solution, however, Coddington warned the advocates of black power to discontinue their disruptive actions against “the so-called ‘white power structure,’” or they “will soon discover what it’s really like to be smashed by organized power.”²⁹ This strong statement of disapproval reflected an intolerance for the black power movement which would have been expected from a conservative college student. More significantly, Coddington’s article assumed a “don’t bite the hand that feeds” tone which showed that the understanding and optimism of Lawrence did not represent the opinions of the entire Vanderbilt student body.

The depiction of the understanding, involved student was further undermined in the spring of 1967 when several writers analyzed the wall of silence which surrounded the lives of most white Vanderbilt students. Charlie Hewgley, a self-labeled “conservative” member of The Hustler editorial staff, lamented that the typical Vanderbilt student did not voice opposition to the “radical New-Left.”³⁰ The importance of this conservative call-to-arms comes from Hewgley’s assertion that students were “unafraid to voice strong dissenting opinions and quick to offer sound criticism when they are sure their tirades will travel no further than the

²⁷“Civil Rights: Rip?” The Vanderbilt Hustler , 30 September 1966.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰“Silent Campus Accepting Radical Brand,” The Vanderbilt Hustler , 10 February 1967.

immediate audience.”³¹ Thus, he believed that the large majority of students, who were neither extreme leftists nor ultraconservative, discussed issues in private, and they held moderate views that disagreed with leftist movements: “The remaining students are content with riding the middle road of silent conformity, while continuing to offer strong dissension to their ever present peer group.”³²

Tom Lawrence reevaluated his optimistic description of the Vanderbilt student and, in doing so, contributed to the criticisms leveled by Hewgley. He wrote an article titled “Vanderbilt’s Dead Issue” that covered the entire front-page of the February 28 edition of The Hustler . The first sentence opened with a simple complaint: “The problem with controversy on the Vanderbilt campus is that there isn’t any.”³³ Lawrence attempted to address this complaint by seeking out the leaders of the campus leftist and conservative student groups. Both leaders criticized “the student stereotype,” but the self-labeled Leftist Lee Frissel complained more than the conservative leader about the middle of the road conformity discussed in Hewgley’s article: “The students here are completely satiated with everything. They lack self-confidence when confronted with an issue.”³⁴ Frissel, like the conservative Hewgley, also believed that many students often disagreed with controversial new movements and practices: “The student is less tolerant of ideas which oppose the traditional ones he has already absorbed.”³⁵ This statement confirmed that adherents of both the Left and the Right believed that the majority of Vanderbilt students were moderate conservatives who often maintained public silence about their disapproval. This evaluation suggested that the student body had not fully engaged the ideas brought to campus by the first three Impact symposiums. It also signaled that, despite annual bombardment by speakers who

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³“Vanderbilt’s Dead Issue,” The Vanderbilt Hustler , 28 February 1967.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

discussed issues ranging from guerrilla insurgency in Vietnam to the civil rights movement, the student body maintained its wall of tradition. Thus, although the administration had transformed the governing policy concerning academic freedom and the students had listened to controversial speakers by the thousands, the campus had not yet breached the conservative silence that muffled campus debate.

Despite these criticisms of the student body, Heard continued to promote the goal of becoming a great university, heralding Impact as Vanderbilt's hallmark of free thought and open debate. He put such faith in Impact for two reasons. First, he recognized that "the college and university need to help the Vanderbilt undergraduate fashion an outlook adequate for himself and his times."³⁶ He also highlighted the importance of the symposium because no other campus events had inspired intellectual debate. The enrollment of the first black athlete in the SEC had not caused a public reaction on campus. Neither had the increasing number of black students. Only those involved commented that the local SDS chapter collapsed after only nine months,³⁷ and the dissolution of the Joint University Council on Human Relations was not mentioned in The Hustler until a year after it had occurred. It seemed then that only events occurring outside the borders of Vanderbilt could spark controversy. Therefore, student leaders and the chancellor continued to develop the Impact symposium as the conduit to the nation, which Heard optimistically labeled, "our campus."³⁸

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷"Activist vs. Vandy," The Vanderbilt Hustler , 28 February 1967.

³⁸Heard, 51.

Chapter Three "The Breach"

Prelude to a Radical

If the nation was not Vanderbilt's campus as Heard suggested, Vanderbilt's campus certainly became the nation during Impact '67. Chairman Bob Eager assembled a roster of speakers that included Martin Luther King, Jr., poet Allen Ginsberg, conservative Senator Strom Thurmond, the president of the University of Alabama Frank Rose, moderate columnist Rowland Evans, Jr., and editor-in-chief of Time, Inc. Hedley Donovan. The symposium marked the opening of a new period in Vanderbilt's history, which Heard recognized as time during which he "never relaxed once."¹ From the spring of 1967 until 1970, the world rushed upon the student body, and in doing so, it created a student attitude foreign to Vanderbilt's traditions and history. The controversy which consistently visited and surrounded "staid, old Vanderbilt" forced the student to engage or, at least, confront the issues of the 1960s.

Turmoil first descended when the Impact committee announced that Stokely Carmichael, the leader of SNCC, had accepted an invitation to speak at Impact '67. The announcement re-opened Vanderbilt's gates to racial controversy because the militant civil rights leader spoke a language of revolution, violence, and "black power." The possibility of Carmichael's presence on campus prompted board members from the Branscomb era to rally concerned alumni and community members in an effort to force the Impact committee to rescind its invitation. Heard recognized this as a challenge to academic freedom and his image of an open university, so he publicly declared that Vanderbilt would adhere to its tradition of an open forum, especially in the case of such a controversial speaker. For Heard to sacrifice Impact to conservative critics would have been a breach of trust with the

¹Heard, 103.

students that would have resulted in the loss of what he described as a “major antidote to student violence.”² Moreover, Heard did not want to concede that “a right so fundamental to American education as free expression of controversial thought could be seriously questioned”³ because such an environment impeded progress towards Heard’s vision.

Outside pressure grew in step with Heard’s resolve, however, as alarmed constituencies within the university and the Nashville community united to protect the “integrity” of Vanderbilt’s tradition. These critics failed to understand what Heard and student leaders described as an “atmosphere of quiet deliberation.”⁴ They saw only the invitation to a radical, black leader who often invoked the threat of violence and rebellion when he spoke publicly. This high drama unfolding in Kirkland Hall did not filter down to the general student body, which remained “oblivious” to much of the alumni outrage leveled at Heard.⁵ The swirling winds of controversy outside Students Vanderbilt’s administrative structure, however, made itself plainly seen to the students. Twelve American Legion posts throughout Nashville passed resolutions requesting Vanderbilt to rescind the invitation to Carmichael, and the Nashville Banner , owned by senior trustee James Stahlman, leveled virulent, front-page attacks at Carmichael and the Heard administration on a daily basis. The most serious threat to the open forum, however, came from the Tennessee State Senate which voted on April 7, 1967 to issue a resolution stating in part: “the 86th General Assembly wholly disapproves of the wisdom and judgment of the Impact planners in lending to this dangerous unprincipled demagogue the dignity of its platform.”⁶

²Conkin, 612.

³Heard, 71.

⁴The Tennessean, 6 April 1967.

⁵Potter, 3/11/96.

⁶The Tennessean, 7 April 1967.

Amidst the mounting pressure, Heard the Impact commitment did not stand alone in their support of the open forum. Nashville's other major daily newspaper, The Tennessean, committed its editorial column to upholding the principle of free speech on campus. Furthermore, it cited the "ignorance of those who will love the school only if they can remember it as it was in the past," not "the arrogance of Stokely Carmichael," as the real threat to Vanderbilt.⁷ Constituencies within the university also voiced their support. The Student Board of Presidents issued a unanimous resolution "heartily endorsing the Impact symposium," and student leaders organized a petition which responded to the Tennessee State Senate.⁸ In less than two hours, more than 1,200 students had signed the petition which read in part: "We, the undersigned students and faculty, deplore the Tennessee State Senate resolution and consider it an insult to the university's belief in the freedom of inquiry."⁹ The petition represented almost 40% of the student body and signaled that values of free speech and inquiry had begun to replace the attachment to tradition and the status quo. Students wanted to hear Carmichael, and they were willing to act upon this desire, albeit in the reasonable, constructive framework of a petition. Even such an action as mild as the reproach of the State Senate, however, appeared "vigorous" to administrators and critics alike.¹⁰ They sensed that a breach had begun to open in the wall of tradition and integrity which had surrounded the student body for so many years. It involved only the "sober consideration of the ideas of the Impact speakers," but it scared and angered those who loved Vanderbilt the way it was before.¹¹

Even before Carmichael spoke, the furor in the city had inspired three authors to engage the subject in the April 7 edition of The Hustler. The editor spoke

⁷Ibid., 27 March 1967.

⁸"Board Supports Impact," The Vanderbilt Hustler, 7 April 1967.

⁹The Tennessean, 8 April 1967.

¹⁰Heard, 4/15/96.

¹¹The Tennessean, 7 April 1967.

first, urging the students and non-students in attendance to remember that Carmichael spoke as a “guest” of the university. This meant that he had entered the open forum, so those in attendance should grant him the respect offered to any campus speaker.¹² The other articles straddled this opinion. One, written by a recent graduate, criticized the policies of Carmichael and warned against his violent “eye for an eye” doctrine. The author, however, had resubmitted the letter which had been written for The Huntsville Times nearly ten months before Impact ‘67, and, therefore, he did not mention Vanderbilt’s position. The final article approached the issue from the perspective of a black student responding to “several white students at Vanderbilt who were interested in the motives of the [Black Power] movement and how they would be achieved, and not in simply finding facts to blatantly attack the movement.”¹³ This thoughtful piece moved through Black Power’s history and concluded with a call for “drastic steps” before matters became worse. The presence of these three articles (three more than had preceded any other Impact) revealed that the public issues brought by Impact, particularly those of Stokely Carmichael, had impinged on the Vanderbilt student consciousness. This had occurred before when referendums brought issues like racial integration and communist speakers on campus to the forefront of debate, but never before had the student body responded positively with an inquisitive stare.

One Speech, Three Riots

When Carmichael finally made his speech Saturday, April 8th at 3:00 p.m., 4,000 students looked upon the stage of Memorial Gymnasium. Carmichael did not repeat his statements from the previous night at Fisk University, where he urged blacks to “organize and take over the city lock, stock, and barrel.”¹⁴ Rather, he read

¹²The Vanderbilt Hustler , 7 April 1967.

¹³Ibid., 7 April 1967.

¹⁴The Nashville Banner , 8 April 1967.

from an article submitted to the Massachusetts Review in 1966. He grounded his speech on the premise that blacks “are defined by two forces, their blackness and their powerlessness.”¹⁵ The universality of this condition for black communities, he continued, allowed the institutional racism of the white community to create a pattern of poverty and powerlessness best illustrated by the American ghettos. These emblems of black powerlessness looked as if “some malignant racist planning-unit had designed them from the same master blueprint.”¹⁶ Carmichael then attacked the “white community” and the “old civil rights leadership” for their role in perpetuating this plight of the Negro community. According to Carmichael, the old civil rights leadership “saw its role as a kind of liaison between the powerful white community and the dependent Negro one,” and the final result of this relationship could only be a “little machine” composed of “vote-getters.”¹⁷ Integration as a function of this relationship meant the entry of black *individuals* into the white community rather than the integration of *communities*. After remarking that society “integrates communities, but assimilates individuals,” Carmichael concluded that the maintenance of this formula spelled disaster for the nation because it transformed the ghettos into armed “concentration camps.”¹⁸

Compared with Carmichael’s speeches on the predominately black Fisk and Tennessee A&I campuses, the presentation at Vanderbilt surprised some with its moderation. One individual who recalled the speech even labeled it “dull and unimportant.”¹⁹ Later that night, however, riots erupted in North Nashville after Carmichael’s speeches and continued for the following three nights. The first night, conflict flared between black students and four hundred Metro officers on the Fisk University campus. The following two evenings, disorder erupted in the area

¹⁵Stokely Carmichael, “Toward Black Liberation,” in Massachusetts Review v. 7 (1966): 642.

¹⁶Ibid., 644.

¹⁷Ibid., 646, 649.

¹⁸Ibid., 651.

¹⁹Doug Bates, “Impact,” Impact Magazine, 1969, 24.

surrounding Tennessee A&I State University. The violence never approached Vanderbilt, and Carmichael had left Nashville hours before the first riot Saturday, April 8. Yet the connection was tempting: Vanderbilt students with the approval of Heard invited Carmichael to speak, Carmichael supported revolutionary violence (although not in his speech given at Vanderbilt), violence had indeed developed in Nashville, and two of Carmichael's personal aides, including the second-in-command of SNCC George Ware, had been arrested for inciting to riot.²⁰ James Stahlman certainly attempted to make the connection when he covered the front-page of The Banner with an editorial that claimed, "The Pandora's box of violent contents was opened by academic hands, so in the final analysis, the ultimate responsibility for what occurred lies at the door of the Chancellor."²¹

These attacks did not find a receptive audience among Vanderbilt undergraduates. The response on the editorial page indicated that, rather than close their eyes, the student body chose to peer through the breach created by the Carmichael controversy. Only a single author wrote a letter to the editor which criticized Carmichael, asserting that his "aides and bodyguards" were seen in North Nashville organizing the riot.²² The other eight letters in the April 14 and April 21 issues of The Hustler either sympathized with Carmichael's views or supported the administration's decision to allow his speech. One black student, Bryn Heatherwick, responded to the Huntsville Times editorial of April 7 which had criticized Carmichael and black power. Heatherwick believed that black power could benefit America and the Negro because "fear can be directed to constructive action."²³ His militancy, however, was uncharacteristic of the other articles. David Truly and Jim Love, two white undergraduates, best represented the prevalent editorial attitude

²⁰The Tennessean, 10 April 1967.

²¹The Nashville Banner, 10 April 1967.

²²"Who is Responsible," The Vanderbilt Hustler, 14 April 1967.

²³"Encourage Black Power," The Vanderbilt Hustler, 14 April 1967.

with a joint letter. Their short column expressed a curiosity about Stokely Carmichael: "There is a question burning in my mind and in the minds of many of the students I have talked with: Is what we have heard about Mr. Carmichael wholly true or it merely the words of a scared white populous?" Love and Truly suggested that they believed the latter when they offered to defend Carmichael "if he advocates what he presented in his Impact speech."²⁴ These words suggested that Carmichael and the issues he raised provoked interest and even empathy among many Vanderbilt students.

Life Invades Analysis

This energy surrounding public issues spilled into the following year, widening the breach which had opened at Impact '67. During the turmoil of April many students had internalized the open forum's values, and now they looked with expectation at Impact '68. The selection committee did not disappoint. Presidential-hopeful Robert Kennedy addressed "The Destiny of Dissent" in a campaign speech that preceded the full Impact symposium by two weeks. More than 12,000 packed Memorial Gymnasium to hear him discuss the usefulness of dissent in the American political process. Citing such historical dissenters as Abraham Lincoln, Upton Sinclair, and Sophocles, Kennedy urged dissent "not because it is comforting but because it is not -- because it sharply reminds us of our basic ideals and true purposes."²⁵

With this message in mind, the student body prepared to hear a well-balanced debate between Julian Bond, a black member of the Georgia House of Representatives, and William Buckley, editor of the right-wing National Review . External events, however, again injected turmoil into the Impact weekend when an

²⁴"Banner a Scandal Sheet," The Vanderbilt Hustler , 14 April 1967.

²⁵"Kennedy - I Dissent and I Know You Do Too," The Vanderbilt Hustler , 22 March 1968.

assassin shot Dr. Martin Luther King on April 4, 1968. Two speakers withdrew their acceptances, Mayor John Lindsay of New York and Newsweek's Atlanta bureau chief Joe Cummings. More importantly, national guard troops descended on Nashville and transformed Centennial Park, adjacent to the campus, into a center of operations.²⁶ The symposium continued as planned, but the curfew mandated that the Impact committee cancel the much heralded panel discussion between Bond and Buckley. This fact symbolized the meaning of Impact '68, which went far beyond intellectual debate. The world had truly rushed through the breach with the death of Martin Luther King. The moral significance of the moment combined with powerful image of armed troops inevitably brought the world into the open forum. As one observer wrote:

I remember standing near Centennial Park and watching armed personnel carriers full of soldiers moving into position. A lump came to my throat and I found myself praying for America while the intellectuals inside analyzed her. The symposium complemented itself perfectly. No one could help but be involved with the enterprise and ethos of Impact.²⁷

²⁶The Vanderbilt Hustler , 9 April 1968.

²⁷Bates, Impact Magazine , 1969, 25.

Chapter Four

“Eddies of Conflict”

After the symbolic successes of Impact '67 and '68, the student body began to diverge in its pursuit of intellectual freedom. One result of this was a gradual decline in coherent student opinion. Without an adversary like The Banner or a tragedy like Martin Luther King's assassination, student activity diverged. Different groups began to use the open forum as a means of pursuing independent agendas, which Heard highly encouraged, but the days when the forum served as an issue unto itself slowly faded. Most notably, these groups diverged along race lines: white protesters raised the Vietnam issue while black students worked towards *de facto* integration.

Vietnam and Vanderbilt

Students had passed petitions and set up tables at the center of campus since the spring of 1967, but no significant Vietnam protest had ever occurred at Vanderbilt. At least not until October 15, 1969. That date corresponded with the national call for a moratorium, and approximately seven hundred students and faculty participated in events that ranged from speak-outs on Rand Terrace to sermons from Reverend Bev Asbury.¹ After the weekend of protests, the more leftist Hustler waged an editorial battle with the newly formed, self-labeled “conservative” student newspaper Versus. Later that same year, a reinstated SDS organized a flag washing ceremony. When the protesting students attempted to dip the flag in the tub of soap and water, however, Vanderbilt ROTC members physically prevented the symbolic washing. Assistant Dean of Men Potter diffused the situation before it devolved into a violent conflict by “making a Baptist out of

¹Conkin, 626.

the flag instead of Methodist.”² Once again, the two student newspapers exchanged editorials for several weeks, debating the merits of the ROTC program, specifically its required loyalty oath.

A compromise like the sprinkling of the flag could not be reached when the Kent State killings inspired the largest anti-war demonstrations to hit the campus. Hundreds of students gathered outside Kirkland Hall for an all-day protest that became a candlelight vigil. According to most sources, the atmosphere was somber and intense.³ Heard identified with the students and even made a speech which sympathized with their position. He made no effort, however, to force dispersal or interfere with student planning and organization. Instead, he allowed the student body to use the open forum as an outlet for their energies because, although this display of protest did not compare to that which occurred at Berkeley or Columbia, Heard remembers that “it didn’t seem so small at the time.”⁴

Two Views, One Issue

The current of controversy running through campus during and after Impact ‘67 and ‘68 involved the issue of *de facto* integration. The first evidence of this issue appeared in the wake of Impact ‘67 when several black students contacted Heard. These students, like all black Vanderbilt undergraduates, lived off campus and lacked even a faculty advisor to ease their transition into Vanderbilt. Reverend Beverly Asbury, the University Chaplain, served as their only consistent contact with a university official. During informal meetings in the lounge of his office or at his home, Asbury discussed the concerns and successes of the small number of black students who attended each session. One evening at his home, the students “had finished unpacking all of their experiences,” and Asbury asked if they wanted “to

²Potter, 3/11/96.

³Potter, 3/11/96; Conkin, 629.

⁴Heard, 4/15/96.

tell all of this to the chancellor.”⁵ When they responded positively, Asbury called Heard and requested a meeting. The chancellor reacted promptly and organized an open forum in the Memorial room of Alumni Hall. Going into the meeting, the black students, led by varsity athletes Perry Wallace and Godfrey Dillard, declared their top priority to be stamping out the “under-the-surface discrimination” at Vanderbilt. Asbury described how the black students expressed their disapproval and frustration, “pointing fingers at certain people saying, ‘Your policies are the ones that have done this to me. Your office treats us this way.’”⁶ Asbury believed that “Alex Heard didn’t know that there were people in this university who were treating people that way.”⁷ Once Heard discovered the uncomfortable situation black Vanderbilt undergraduates faced on a daily basis, however, he recommitted himself to establishing their equality and well-being in the university community.

Black students understood that Heard sympathized with their plight, but as Walter Murray, the recognized leader of black undergraduates, explained to a white reporter for The Hustler, “We have confronted the administration with our problems, and we have had favorable responses. But we don’t live with the administration. We live with the student body.”⁸ The more tolerable and inquisitive attitude that had grown among the white undergraduates did not allow Murray’s comment to go unheeded. The Hustler conducted a lengthy interview with the leader of the campus SNCC chapter in its November 10, 1967 edition, and white authors explored the subject of black power in several editorials.⁹ The first two discussed Black Power as it related to the Civil Rights Movement, moving through the political dynamics of Rap Brown, Dr. King, and Stokely Carmichael. The other author wrote about a personal experience

⁵Rev. Beverly Asbury, interview by author, Tape recording, University Chaplain’s office, 7 December 1995.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸The Vanderbilt Hustler, 13 October 1967.

⁹Ibid., 10 November 1967; 28 November 1967; 20 February 1968.

with black power in Nashville. The tone of each author exhibited a touch of curiosity combined with empathy. They seemed to view the subject of black power as an intellectual exercise in objectivity.

The black students writing about the same subject did not share their calm detachment. One author urged his readers to believe that black power is for real: "Black Power, folks. It's here, live, and on the inside." And the other black writers communicated the same message -- we are for real. Thus, in the spring of 1968 black students began to separate themselves from the body of white students who concerned themselves with racial issues. The president of the newly formed African-American Association, Bob Moore, expressed this sentiment in a public statement made at an Impact-Vucept sponsored discussion about contemporary issues. He said that black students "detest and disdain condescending liberals and conservatives." He did not give examples of any "condescending" sources, but he stressed that black students should move towards "self-defined" goals. Moore's call for an independent black agenda excluded more than the white student body. His distrust extended to the administration: "To be quite frank, the only administrator we trust is Chancellor Heard."¹⁰

Despite this dismissal by the AAA, white students continued to contribute letters to the newspaper discussing the issues of black students and black power. The assassination of Martin Luther King four days before the opening address of Impact '68, in particular, provided a focus for their debate. One white student saw King's death as a sign that time was running out for complacent whites. Fear could be seen in his words when he wrote, "The time of complacency is over, the militant ranks are swelling too fast."¹¹ A brief flash of conservative response developed as well. Two articles followed King's death that questioned his work, the most notable of which claimed that King

¹⁰Ibid., 12 March 1968.

¹¹Ibid., 12 April 1968.

“played fast and loose with democracy.”¹² These articles from the right, however, prompted many replies that pointed to such conservative thought as the problem plaguing Vanderbilt, and America in general. The voice of cautioned reason once again spoke loudest among the white students.

Black students did not share in the post-tragedy editorializing that followed King’s death and Impact ‘68. Two articles appeared explaining the black reaction to recent developments, but both were borrowed editorials, one from the Fisk Forum and the other from a journalist in Atlanta. On May 7, however, the black student body represented by the African-American Association presented requests for black professors and a black studies program. This was the first action in nearly a month, but the action which continued until the end of May suggested that the black students had used their month of silence to reorganize around a more radical base. Two articles appeared in the May 7 edition of The Hustler which explored the new black power and black pride movements occurring at Fisk and Tennessee A&I. More significantly, the new president of the African-American Association, Godfrey Dillard, implied that the student organization planned to confront the problems facing black undergraduates. “Next year our organization will be much more forceful,” he told an interviewer. “We know what we’ve got to do now, and we are going to do it.”¹³ Immediate action, however, did not have to wait until following school year. The association produced an all-black magazine the following week titled “Rap from the Eleventh Floor.” When the eight hundred copy edition sold out, it was decided that the magazine should be a quarterly. Despite these successes, the association could not claim that all black Vanderbilt students listed among its members. Looking at this fact, it could then be argued that the new radical voice represented only a few undergraduates. The administration, however, recognized the African-American Association as the black

¹²ibid.

¹³ibid., 7 May 1968.

student voice. Heard met often with the organization's officers, and IFC granted the association "house status" for the next year's rush.¹⁴ Therefore, it seems likely that the association's radicalism represented the feelings of many, if not most, black Vanderbilt students.

The year that followed did not display any radical changes in the racial debate despite the new attitude among black students. Articles appeared sporadically, but the issue of racial awareness simmered. Impact '69, always a signal of the trends in student attitude, reflected this ambiguity. Only one black speaker was hired, the director of black studies at San Francisco State College, Nathan Hare. No controversial white speaker opposed Hare's position, and the forum's theme "The Emerging Generation" did not focus on the conflicts between blacks and whites. When students returned in the fall of 1969, however, a vigor returned to the debate surrounding blacks at Vanderbilt. White students and the administration saw increasing radicalism among blacks and understood that plans for further integration had to be developed. A year long flurry of debate and action resulted, but this unfortunately proved to be a climatic effort rather than another step in a long process.

Beginning with the September 19, 1969 issue of The Hustler white students began to criticize the "institutional racism" and "tokenism" that characterized the situation at Vanderbilt. Declining enrollment of black students, the lack of black professors, and *de facto* segregation in the Greek system all became the subject of articles authored by white students.¹⁵ It seemed that whites were picking up the issues first raised by the African-American Association, and throughout the fall, this trend continued. White students, for example, questioned the athletic department's black recruiting policies and criticized the federal government's scholarship cut.¹⁶ These issues had been around for five years, but it was only after a tragic April and a year of deliberation that the white

¹⁴Ibid., 17 May 1968.

¹⁵Ibid., 19 September 1969; 23 September 1969.

¹⁶Ibid., 14 October 1969; 21 October 1969.

student body publicly demanded further integration. The high mark of this white support can be seen in the February 25, 1970 issue of "Wednesday" (a special monthly edition of The Hustler). The edition's editors dedicated twelve pages of coverage to the problems facing blacks at Vanderbilt, but the final paragraphs on page twelve summarized the tragedy inherent in this publishing triumph. The creation of an issue devoted exclusively to race problems indicated that racial awareness had become a priority on campus. The final editorial, however, discovered how difficult meaningful change and integration would be:

All discriminatory barriers must be destroyed, so that blacks can mix with white groups if and when they wish. Problems like these are harder to solve than the old civil rights issues were. To become a friend to a black man is much harder than to declare him legally equal.¹⁷

This difficulty gradually undermined white support and enthusiasm. The frustration of black separatism and the inherent difficulties of bridging the race barrier proved too much for Vanderbilt's white student body. Once the issue faded in 1970, little prevented students from reverting to the traditions of the past. Impact '70, for example, lost money for the first time and flopped miserably with a new format based on the theme, "Struggling to Communicate." In addition, the limited anti-war movement began to sputter after the successful Kent State protest, and "the level of student activity completely subsided."¹⁸ Thus, after an unprecedented opening of campus to controversy, tragedy, and ideas, an era came to an end, justifying the words of Madison Sarratt who jokingly said, "It will all blow over. It always does."¹⁹

¹⁷Ibid., 25 February 1970.

¹⁸Heard, 4/15/1996.

¹⁹Asbury, 12/7/1996.

Conclusion

Less than a decade separated the UGO's minor rebellion and the presence of armed troops around Vanderbilt's campus. Less than five years separated the integration of Vanderbilt's undergraduate schools and the appearance of Stokely Carmichael at Impact '67. Yet this brief period marked a pace of student transition unseen before in Vanderbilt's history. Students entered this era viewing controversial public issues and their chancellor with suspicion. The Vanderbilt way of life -- tradition, integrity, the status quo -- informed their decisions and limited their understanding of public issues. With guidance from a determined new chancellor and a wary Impact committee, however, the student body began to confront the concept of an open forum. Ideas became intriguing, even when not accepted, and the Impact '67 symposium cemented the student body's allegiance to Heard and his vision of an open forum. Moreover, the force of the controversy surrounding Impact '67 breached the wall of tradition that had balmed the minds of the student body. After the symposium in 1968 further opened the campus to discussion, the student body assumed the initiative so long held by the Impact committee and Heard. Black students raced the banner of *de facto* equality while white students protested the Vietnam war. These independent eddies of controversy, however, slowly lost vigor without the drama of Impact and the simple, moral power of the open forum. Despite this slackening of activity, the student body and Chancellor Heard had weathered the 1960s within a constructive framework, while, at the same time, together they had reoriented the student attitude towards public issues. Change was no longer to be feared, but to be explored.

The university of Branscomb and Heard did not travel these years alone. When compared with institutions outside the Southeast, Vanderbilt's involvement in the 1960s barely scratched the historical record. This should not undermine the importance of Vanderbilt's constructive reorientation of student attitudes.

Vanderbilt's students avoided the extremes of the nation, be it racial violence or anti-war rioting, yet partook in the cornucopia of ideas that defined the 1960s. The foundations for this successful course of development were laid before student activism had appeared. Heard's efforts to encourage student extra curricular activity quickly became the open forum, and this provided an outlet for most forms of student concern. If this framework for useful debate broke down, the chancellor maintained an open door to deal with unusual circumstances.

No other school in the Southeast placed such a heavy emphasis on an open forum. All shared a degree of academic freedom ranging from complete, as at Duke University, to limited, as at the University of Georgia. Students may not have slain any dragons with their protest, as at UNC, but they enjoyed a unique sense of pride in ideas and in Impact. Whether debating the plight of black students in The Hustler or attending their symposium by the thousands, students understood that the open forum allowed them to become involved in the contemporary issues without committing great time and energy. In other words, reasonable and objective interest substituted for the violent action and massive protest which occurred in Madison or at Berkeley. When the student body did organize a protest around a specific issue, like at the University of Virginia, students remained considerate and orderly. To do otherwise would have betrayed their trusting relationship with Chancellor Heard. Few students believed that radicalism opened doors or fulfilled idealistic dreams. Both the regionalism and the practicality of the typical Vanderbilt undergraduate hindered the development of such an opinion. The intellectual capability and, most importantly, the open forum, however, also obviated the silence and strict commitment to the status quo which dominated the universities of the Deep South. Thus, Vanderbilt escaped the best and the worst expressions of southern student activism, and in the process forged its own version around the principles and determination of its chancellor. The resulting mixture of

excitement, reasonable debate, and “revolutionary” levels of student political involvement brought an era of political turmoil that has yet to be envisioned again at staid, old Vanderbilt University.

Annotated Bibliography

My research concerning Vanderbilt University depended on the primary sources a great deal when this project began. In an effort to contextualize the situation at Vanderbilt, however, the focus of research shifted to the secondary sources, particularly institutional histories of southeastern universities. Once that source had been exhausted, I returned to the subject of Vanderbilt with a vigorous intent to further develop the primary sources, especially because only three secondary sources focus on Vanderbilt students in the 1960s.

PRIMARY SOURCES

Manuscripts:

This thesis has not made use of any manuscripts.

Printed Sources:

Several Nashville publications laid the foundation for my research. The Vanderbilt Hustler, first among others, provides the only primary source which reports on nearly every campus event of significance. It suffers, however, from many of the deficiencies that limit student newspapers. For example, the editorial board changes annually, and the reporting often lacks precision. More importantly, it is often difficult to determine which elements of the student body The Hustler represents. Because of the shortcomings in The Hustler, the thesis refers to the two local newspapers whenever possible, The Nashville Banner and The Nashville Tennessean. These two papers, however, only cover the campus during major events. The Banner also often suffers in objectivity because its editor and publisher, James Stahlman, served as the senior trustee at Vanderbilt during much of the period in question. He

used the newspaper to wield his opinion against administrators and policies with which he disagreed. The Tennessean exhibits the most detailed and objective reporting of the three, and is, therefore, the source most often referred to when conflicting reports arise.

Interviews formed the other significant portion of my primary research. I first interviewed Reverend Beverly Asbury. At the time, my thesis still spread across three decades, so Asbury discussed many interesting subjects that later became unusable. He did, however, recommend me to the chairman of Impact '67, Bob Eager. I spoke on the phone with Mr. Eager three separate times, and he provided significant direction to the project. Only after talking with him did I understand that Impact had been more of a new state of mind than a significant exhibition of activism. K.C. Potter provided me with insight into the dormitory life of undergraduates during the period. This furthered the research in a unique way because only Potter came into contact with a large numbers of students who held neither leadership positions nor belonged to significant political groups. Finally, Alexander Heard put the finishing touches on my project with a wonderful discussion of Impact and the open forum. He corrected my understanding of Impact's origins, and the authority of his opinion allowed me to substantiate several key points, most obviously the quick cessation of student activity after the cessation of Vietnam protests.

Stokely Carmichael's April 8, 1967 speech, "Toward Black Liberation," as published in the Massachusetts Review served as the final primary source of importance. After comparing the text with blurbs quoted in The Tennessean and The Banner, the atmosphere of the afternoon became more apparent. In addition, I learned something about the editorial treatment of the subject and could, therefore, better gauge The Banner's biased discussion

of all matters relating to Carmichael and Impact. The text in hand also allowed me to provide a richer contextual image of how the white, Vanderbilt student in attendance must have reacted.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Before broaching the issue of student unrest at Vanderbilt or even in the Southeast, I explored the literature surrounding the national student movement. Initially, I knew little about the subject, but Student Protest 1960-1970 directed the research towards UC Berkeley and Columbia. From the vast assortment of sources which discussed Berkeley, this study relied on a historical work that is prefaced by a brief sociological introduction, Max Heirich's The Spiral of Conflict. The development of the radical student movement occupied the primary attention of Heirich as he detailed the university environment and the political structures that bred Berkeley's leftist student community. For a discussion of Columbia University during this period, I referred to Roger Kahn's The Battle for Morningside Heights. Written from the perspective of newspaper reporter soon after the violence had ended, his book communicated the confusion, unrest, and even horror that accompanied the militant protests. Peppered with anecdotes and interviews, Kahn's book facilitated a basic understanding of the principal actors and the underlying causes of student protest at Columbia. This understanding, combined with Heirich's history of Berkeley, grounded this thesis in the national student movement.

After surveying the national scene, I narrowed the research to the Southeast. Although studies of integration in Deep South public universities provided little relevance later in the research, initially they provided an excellent reference marker for racism at Vanderbilt. The books which

satisfied this aspect of the research included Russ Barnett's Integration at Ole Miss, James's Meredith's memoir Three Years in Mississippi, Thomas Dyer's The University of Georgia, and E. Culpepper Clark's The Schoolhouse Door. Those universities which were more relevant to the Vanderbilt experience, Duke University, North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and the University of Virginia, were the next focus of the research process. My efforts found a good deal of information about the University North Carolina because the University Press had published two well-written histories in the last five years. The first of these, William Snider's Light on the Hill, detailed the development of the University of North Carolina since its founding in 1795. Although Snider only devoted two chapters to the years between 1954 and 1970, his pithy descriptions of the Speaker Ban controversy, the North Carolina student, and the relationship between the university's administrators and the state's political machine gave a good general picture of the era. William Link delved deeper into the period than Snider in his biography of UNC's president William Friday, simply titled William Friday. This extremely good book, like Snider's, spent considerable time on a subject not directly relevant to the topic of southern universities, Friday's early years. The second part of the book, however, included five chapters that detailed the events broadly painted by Snider. Link's analysis of the Speaker Ban controversy, in particular, revealed the skill of the author and the intensity of the student mood. The other quality history of a North Carolina, Street of Dreams by Douglas Knight, discussed the national students protests in general and the events at Duke in particular.

Examples of poor secondary literature, unfortunately, sit side by side with works like those of Link, Knight, and Snider. In one case the lack of other sources forced this thesis to rely on such a book: Mr. Jefferson's

University by Virginius Dabney. The anecdotes and general observations about student life at the University of Virginia appeared sound, but often Dabney left the reader feeling as if the subject has been glazed over with respectful consideration. For this reason, I always referred to the University of Virginia with caution.

The first, middle, and last part of my research involved the sources that dealt with Vanderbilt, particularly Paul Conkin's massive study of the university, Gone with the Ivy. Like Snider, Conkin covered the entire history of an institution, but Conkin dedicated more print to the 1960s than did Snider despite the fact that a greater amount of controversy descended upon the University of North Carolina campus. Perhaps more important than the sheer weight of his research, the focus of Conkin's discussion included a more detailed analysis of the undergraduate student body. In the chapters titled "The Bottom" and "The Chancellor, the Kids, and Some Old Men," he provided an unparalleled analysis of a southern student body. Only Douglas Knight in Street of Dreams approximated the effort with his description of the Duke student body.

The discussion of the Vanderbilt community, specifically the student body, has also benefited from two books written by former chancellors. Harvie Branscomb (1946-63) wrote his book Purely Academic primarily as an autobiographical reference for his grandchildren, and thus it did not dwell on painful controversy. It related to the thesis only on the topic of fraternity protests at the turn of the decade, and even this discussion lacked a truly critical vigor for the aforementioned reasons. Alexander Heard approached the subject of Vanderbilt's history with a much different literary construction than did Branscomb. In doing so, he provided a secondary and a primary source at the same time. His book Speaking of the University drew the

majority of its material from selected speeches Heard made while chancellor. From these excerpts, Heard led the discussion towards the most burning issues of the day and then drew conclusions. More than half of the book pertained to the period of the 1960s and 1970s, so, for this reason, Heard's effort at autobiography assumed a greater relevance to this thesis than did Branscomb's. Heard's more intimate relationship with the student body also contributed to the strength of his work relative to Branscomb's.

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