POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM WITHIN THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY OF WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY-LA CROSSE FROM 1966 TO 1970

LOCAL EXPRESSION OF A NATIONAL MOVEMENT

by

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PREFACE

As events and the people affecting them fade into the past, images often become blurred, ideas and emotions lose currency and depth. It is History's role to somehow capture the essences of a moment and preserve them as faithfully and objectively as possible. So often the happenings of our world are relegated to the "dustbins of history" before each variant facet is explored and recorded. Spans of hundreds or even thousands of years are constricted within terms such as "epoch", "era" or "period", and thus important data become forgotten -- or worse, only cursorily examined. In many vital ways, local history corrects the error, fills the gap and clarifies the ambiguity. This paper is an attempt at local history.

Over the past two decades, the media, academic scholarship, music and popular folklore have contributed to the rich documentation and analysis of events of the 1960s and 1970s. Traditionally, however, larger and more familiar urban centers such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Washington and San Francisco have been the primary focus of this attention. Exceptions to this have been those somewhat smaller communities in which events on college or university campuses resulted in noteriety and national interest. On 20 November 1967, for example, the news service of the New York Times

declared the University of Wisconsin in Madison to be "...one of the angriest campuses in the United States," -- this at a time when the city's population was less than 172,000.[1] Clearly, examples of campus activism were not restricted to America's largest metropolitan areas. Students at even the smallest of colleges and universities were often embroiled in social and political issues. This essay seeks to examine the characteristics of this activism as witnessed on the campus of Wisconsin State University-La Crosse.

The period between 1966 and 1970 has been chosen because of the nature of events specific to Wisconsin State University-La Crosse(WSU-L), as it is during this time that student activism was most evident here. The introduction to this paper will examine in some detail the origins of the so-called Counter Culture in order to place the subject in greater perspective. For the purposes of this essay, "Counter Culture" will be used to describe individual and group resistence to the societal and political norms in America during the 1960s. Although there were multifarious facets of the Counter Culture -- from the artistic and intellectual, to the militant and destructive -- this paper will address primarily the anti-war and civil rights movements. This is done not to imply lesser or greater degrees of importance, but rather as a response to the limitations of space.

The material used in the construction of this essay consists mainly of first-hand accounts by a few of those La Crosse community members who were either participants in or observers of events as they occurred at WSU-L. Supplementary materials used were various articles, editorials, student theses and books that illustrated the socio-political environment of La Crosse during the years under discussion. While reference is occasionally made to specific circumstances and incidents in other cities, this is done only in order to place the material in context.

As the study of American life during the turbulent years of the Sixties gains increased interest, and as the current decade has come to represent a reaction of sorts to earlier social and governmental initiatives, this paper will attempt to clearly present some of the historical elements of La Crosse, Wisconsin during what was an often confusing period. The subject of this work is one that carries with it certain lingering and oftentimes emotive images of a nation seemingly at war with itself. Every attempt has been made to preserve professional objectivity in the desire to present a legitimate essay on local history.

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INTRODUCTION

A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE COUNTER CULTURE

> The bright promise of 1962, that a peaceful sit-in, boycott, or picketing could change -- indeed already had affected -- deeply rooted institutions and prejudices, has turned into ugly disruptions...Student action was exhilarating in the spring of 1962. It is depressing in 1967.
>
> Nan Robertson
> Wisconsin State Journal

Between 1966 and 1970, the political and social fabric of the United States underwent critical and lasting changes, the scope of which the American people are only now beginning to fully grasp. Disaffection and anger of youth toward the nation's "establishment", increasingly militant black activists struggling for genuine equality, and an unpopular and undeclared war in Vietnam contributed to painful shockwaves that would eventually be felt at the very core of this country's institutions. These elements of society during the 1960s, when combined with the doctrine and agenda of the Counter Culture, engendered a movement charged with newfound meaning and heightened activity.

The Roots

The origins of the Counter Culture are not fixed within a segment of society or a period of time. Rather, they evolved out of the years following the Second World War as artists, musicians, scholars and poets strove to

break away from the perceived stagnation of a conformist society. Whether they labled themselves as hipsters, beatniks, communists or pacifists, these men and women were at the forefront of a completely new "scene" -- they were not reformists, but rather pioneers of a movement for change.

The developing Counter Culture of the 1950s saw an avalanche of strange words, sights and sounds. Musicians such as Charlie Parker, Thelonius Monk and Dave Brubeck; writers and poets such as Aldoux Huxley, Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg; scholars and public figures such as Martin Luther King, Michael Harrington and C. Wright Mills gave substance and form to a fresh, often defiant view of the human condition. Conventional practices were generally repudiated as failures. Men and women throughout America set out to discover or create a world based upon the complete liberation of humanity's social and artistic genius. Allen Ginsberg's poem "Howl" probably best personifies the elements of this often self-destructive journey, and has been called one of the most popular serious poems of the century:

> I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed
> by madness, starving hysterical naked,
> dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn
> looking for an angry fix,
> angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly
> connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery
> of night
> who poverty and tatters and hollow-eyed and high
> sat up smoking in the supernatural darkness
> of cold water flats floating across the tops of
> cities contemplating jazz...3

By the 1960s, the messages these pioneers were sending throughout the country was influencing America's youth as nothing ever had before.

The Issues

The Other America, written in 1961 by socialist scholar Michael Harrington, illustrated for a largely complacent nation the true nature of prosperity in the United States. Despite tremendous economic and industrial vigor following World War II and the Korean War, there were over thirty eight million persons in America living at or below the poverty level.[4] Popular magazines, newspapers and television focused increased attention on the plight of the homeless and poverty-stricken. Many in this country considered it unconscionable that a nation so glutted with technology and mass-marketed consumer goods, could allow millions of families to go without adequate housing, nutritional and medical care, and meaningful employment. It appeared that the much-heralded American Standard of Living had somehow forgotten a huge portion of people.

As the Sixties progressed, more and more young men and women began to express frustration with their society. In general, they were better educated than previous generations, and they enjoyed much greater comforts and liesure time. Far from becoming apathetic, however, toward the suffering of others, many young people became involved in

local community organizations set up to alleviate society's ills. Others accepted the challenge of President Kennedy and volunteered their skills and services to the needy of the world as Peace Corps workers. Much of America's "younger generation" felt a sense of obligation to stamp out injustice wherever it occurred -- be it in the rural areas of the Deep South, or in the ghettos of large cities.

Civil rights for blacks was an issue that went hand-in-hand with increased concern for the poor and otherwise disadvantaged in the United States. The growing discontent of blacks in this country pointed to the glaring hypocrisy of a democratic system of government incapable of ridding itself of racial bigotry and segregation. The media, particularly television, played a key role in America's gradually heightened awareness. Images of peaceful marches and demonstrations by civil rights advocates, as well as those of legally-sanctioned brutality on the part of police and state officials, were played out in living rooms across the country.

The new immediacy of the civil rights movement during the 1960s gave the cause the power to appeal directly to millions of people each day. This could not have occurred during the previous decade when fewer households had televisions. Well-meaning legislators at the state and national levels could no longer engage in self-congratulations over piecemeal laws that, while heavy with reformist rhetoric,

lacked the teeth of enforcement. Efforts to continually forestall discussion of thorny civil rights issues had failed. Black leaders were powerless to prevent the "militization" of the movement. By the mid-Sixties, pleas for patience and calm fell mostly on deaf ears. City after city exploded in rioting and bloodshed, and what had begun as an endeavor toward peaceful coexistence between whites and blacks, ended in fraction and the emergence of an often violent and alienating Black Power struggle to subvert whites' control of authority in America. Youths everywhere, both black and white, added to the force of this activism, and helped to give rise to the civil rights movement on college and university campuses throughout the country.

Perhaps no other event during the 1960s had as great an effect on the Counter Culture than the war in Vietnam. Over a period of a relatively few years, the people of the United States became deeply entrenched in this costly and emotionally devastating conflict. By 1975, over fifty-two thousand Americans and over two million Vietnamese were killed in a dismal struggle to stem the communist tide in Southeast Asia. Included in the number of Vietnamese dead were civilian women and children.

The horrors of the war touched the lives of young men and women in ways they could not have imagined only a few years earlier, before the 1965 escalation of U.S.

involvement in Vietnam. Suddenly, everyone knew of a friend or loved-one who had perished in the war. Martin Zanger, a professor of History at WSU-L during Vietnam, recalled the frightened desperation some of his students felt at the prospect of being sent overseas if one's grades were such that the student was no longer eligible for draft deferment.[5] It would be difficult to fully appreciate, as well, the anguish suffered by those instructors throughout America who were placed in the position of determining who would be allowed to continue his college education, and who would be required to fight in a foreign war.

As the killing continued year after year, as ever more young men fought in a military struggle few truly understood, the policies formulated by the country's leaders came under increased attack from all sectors of society. Assemblyman John Medinger, a graduate of WSU-L, recalled how persons from all walks of life participated in local demonstrations against the war in Vietnam during the late 1960s. Children, mothers, Catholic nuns and priests, teachers and doctors took part in marches in La Crosse. Even Medinger's father, a proud veteran and unquestionably loyal patriot, walked alongside angry students.[6]

Television again played an essential part in drawing the general populace into the scrutiny of and subsequent

opposition to the war. Nightly newscasts brought the carnage, often in "living color", home for all to see. Technological advances in the gathering and presentation of news gave the Vietnam War a strong sense of immediacy and prevented, in many ways, the "cleaning up" of what the public saw. If the nation's young people required sufficient proof that their world had gone mad, Vietnam as covered by television provided that proof.

Increased Activism

By the middle and late 1960s, Americans began to respond to the confusion and frustration of the period in increasingly aggressive ways. Many former followers of Martin Luther King abandoned the non-violent civil disobedience he advocated, and took up instead the rallying calls of militancy and revolution. Race riots from Atlanta and Washington to Chicago and Los Angeles erupted out of an unbridaled rage. The civil rights movement, many blacks argued, had been virtually ineffective in attaining full economic and social equality for minorities. By the middle of the decade, the Black Power movement forced peaceful activism into the background. Said H. Rap Brown, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee(SNCC) in August of 1965 after one of the worst race riots in America's history:

> ...the blacks of Watts picked up their guns to fight for their freedom. That was our Declaration of Independence, and we signed it with Molotov cocktails and rifles.7

By the time King was buried, after being gunned down in Memphis on 4 April 1968, hundreds more would die in the subsequent nation-wide violence.

The halls of America's colleges and universities were no more immune to the tension and bloodshed than the streets of Watts or Detroit. Student activists in large and small communities began to face off with school administrators and local officials, challenging the precepts of the "older generation's" establishment. Their protests demanded everything from dormitory visitation priviledges to a full troop withdrawal from Vietnam. The methods students used to voice their displeasure with the status quo were borrowed from as divergent sources as David Henry Thoreau and Malcolm X. As with the civil rights movement, the "student movement" repudiated earlier attempts at gaining a voice in decisions that affected the lives of young people. Teach-ins, forums and picketings gave way to new and often destructive strategies.

Demonstrations and riots became almost commonplace occurrences on the larger campuses. One of the worst was the Dow Riot on 18 October 1967 at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. David Zieman, then a student of English at UW, witnessed the event as students protested the recruitment of students on campus by Dow Chemical Corporation, the principal manufacturer of the lethal napalm used by U.S. forces in Vietnam. Zieman noted that by the time Wisconsin

National Guardsmen were called in, the number of protesters had swelled to over five thousand. City police and the militia proceeded to round up all students and instructors in an attempt to clear the entire UW campus. Over sixty persons were injured and the university was effectively shut down for days until officials could assess the scope of the damage, both physical and emotional. Said Zieman of the riot's aftermath: "I had the feeling that there was a strong possibility, from then on, that our society might crumble. A feeling that would grow stronger over the next year or two".[8] The Wisconsin State Assembly, in session at the outbreak of the rioting, voted ninety-four to six condemning the student protesters -- some law makers even proposed that rioting students be shot on sight.

Events similar to the Dow Riot would continue throughout the decade and into the next. On 4 May 1970, four students were shot dead and nine more injured as National Guard forces opened fire into a crowd of demonstrators at Kent State University in Ohio. Reaction to the incident was swift as campus after campus exploded in anger. At four o'clock on the morning of 9 August the same year, a bomb went off at the UW Army Math Research Center. Student Robert Fassnacht was killed, unable to escape the blast during the two minutes that elapsed between the warning telephone call and the time of the explosion.[9] For the American people, like David Zieman, it did indeed seem that

society was approaching its collapse.

"Peace, love and happiness" had been but one of many hopeful slogans of the Counter Culture during the 1960s. The movement developed out of a genuine desire to somehow reform or re-create a world that had "gone wrong". By the time the smoke cleared, however, the nation was reeling, dazed by events that had occurred all too quickly and destroyed all too needlessly. Student activism, the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War succeeded in overturning vast elements of society. As Allen J. Matusow states in his book The Unraveling of America:

> In the long run, though it proved ephemeral, the... movement was profoundly significant, portending as it did the erosion of the liberal values that had sustained bourgeois society, the character type that had been its foundation, and the ethic that had undergirded efforts to accomplish its reform.10

CHAPTER TWO

LETHARGY AND AWARENESS AT WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY-LA CROSSE

During the 1960s, La Crosse, Wisconsin resembled in many ways most small cities throughout the American Midwest. Politically and socially, La Crosse's citizens were generally conservative, relying on strong religious beliefs, traditional family values and hard work to guide them through both prosperous and lean times. Each academic year saw an influx of new students at WSU-L, eager to pursue a college education and build a rewarding future. Kenneth Teachout, City Editor of the La Crosse Tribune during the Sixties, recalled that many of these young men and women were what he termed "first generation" students from rural or lower income families. These were young people who, according to Teachout, felt fortunate in being able to study at the university, and they were generally less inclined to engage in political or social activism.

Manufacturing and agriculture had combined to make La Crosse one of the state's most productive and vibrant communities. The rural regions of western Wisconsin depended upon La Crosse for the consumption and marketing of farm production. Extensive railroad, highway and river communication facilitated the distribution of both agricultural

manufactured goods. With this distribution came strong links with larger urban centers throughout the Midwest and the dissemination of information and ideas. Despite a desire, during the Sixties, to preserve La Crosse's reputation as a quiet community suitable for raising a family, city and university officials would eventually face many elements of the Counter Culture already thrusted upon cities around the country.

1966

1966 began quietly enough for Wisconsin State University-La Crosse. While protests and other demonstrations of student activism had already erupted in other parts of the country, La Crosse remained peaceful. As Kenneth Teachout recalled: "I think as far as the student movement was concerned, it was considerably later in arriving here...and it never did arrive with the full vehemence...(as) in Madison, or in Chicago".[12] The La Crosse Tribune, furthered, was "less than aggressive" in reporting on issues such as the civil rights movement or the war in Southeast Asia. In this way, said the former city editor, the Tribune provided La Crosse "...with a mirror image of itself".[13]

With so few blacks in La Crosse in the Sixties, the people of this community had difficulty understanding the frustration and anger behind the recent outbreak of rioting in Harlem, Atlanta, Watts and Detroit. As Teachout explained: "When you've got such a small, small non-white population...(civil rights) becomes almost a non-issue".[14]

One WSU-L student, Prentiss Byrd of Maywood, Illinois, described the nature of this dilemma in an "Open Forum" article he wrote in November 1966 for the Racquet, the university's newspaper. Said Byrd: "...(N)orthern Caucasian liberals frequently regard race as a 'peculiarly' southern problem that would be solved by desegregating southern businesses, schools, jobs and the like".[15] For Byrd, as well as others who were familiar with racism and "de facto" segregation in northern towns and cities, the struggle for equality was not restricted to southern blacks alone. Byrd maintained that until all Americans realized that bigotry was a distinctly national issue, and until white men and women made concerted efforts to truly understand the civil rights movement, race riots, lynchings and cultural hatred would continue to plague the nation.

On 13 October 1966, the Racquet printed part one of a two-part article by William Vettes, WSU-L professor of History, that presented a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the war in Vietnam. Vettes's paper, entitled "The Vietnam Question", represented the newspaper's first balanced account of the conflict from both the South and North Vietnamese perspectives. The professor's article called into question the integrity of U.S. policy statements regarding the North Vietnamese people and their leader Ho Chi Minh. The Racquet editor, Nick Moran, had expected several responses to the controversial Vettes article, but

he was soon disappointed. No students responded. In the 20 November issue of the Racquet, after both parts of Vettes's article were printed, Moran referred to "campus lethargy" in his editorial comments. Said Moran:

> ...the "Open Forum"...was designed to stimulate thought and opinion. The writer(Vettes) was well versed on his subject and presented some very thought-provoking points of view on Viet Nam. However, it seems to the Racquet that no one person had any thoughts on the article. We consider this not only an insult to the author but to the paper as well...16

Despite President Lyndon Johnson's escalation of U.S. military involvement in Vietnam the previous year, it appeared that the students at WSU-L were not generally aware of the consequences this action would have. One anonymous student, however, spoke out angrily against the war through the words of a poem printed in the Racquet on 1 December 1966:

> The air nothing but bullets, firing back blindly
> Into allies, men burned with the napalm, yellow
> With lydite.
> Lurching with head tilted as if in a dream,
> Vomiting blood on comrades...
>
> The lust to kill in turn, bestial cruelty, this is war
> A tradition of man and we justify
> The carnage with words about ideals,
> Some hell of a tradition.17

CHAPTER THREE

PRESIDENT GATES'S VETO OF CHARTER FOR STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

> That faculty and administration of Wisconsin State University-La Crosse believe that it is the task of the University to make people safe for ideas, not make ideas safe for people. Beyond formal class lectures and discussion the University should provide opportunity for the presentation of diverse views in order to stimulate thought and discussion...
>
> WSU-L Catalog, 1965-1966 Edition[18]

In the spring of 1966, Rexford Mitchell retired as president of Wisconsin State University-La Crosse after serving for nearly thirty years. Mitchell's leaving, in several ways, marked the closing of an era as WSU-L, like most universities during the Sixties, entered into a period of confusion and animosity. Mitchell's successor, Samuel Gates, came to the campus with an agenda for addressing the rising tide of student activism. One of his first acts as president became his most controversial and would subsequently bedevil the balance of his administration.

On 5 December 1966, President Gates denied the controversial organization Students for a Democratic Society(SDS) a petition to charter a local chapter on the WSU-L campus. In explaining the motivation for his denial, Gates made reference to certain alleged actions taken by the national SDS chapter that were illegal, violent or both. Said Gates:

> It is most difficult for me to conceive of this University giving its official approval and encouragement to an organization which nationally has made a mockery of law and of orderly change. We here at Wisconsin State University-La Crosse are commited to freedom!19

President Gates's veto of the Organizational Board recommendation for recognition of SDS caused a flurry of letters and editorials in the Racquet. Despite the apparent approval of his decision throughout the community, as indicated by the La Crosse Tribune's editorial section, reaction on the WSU-L campus was generally opposed to the veto of the SDS charter. Addressing the veto by President Gates, the Racquet editorial on 8 December stated:

> Whatever his reasons are, fear of student unrest, fear of a "communist" oriented organization ("far right" point of view) on campus, or whatever other reasons he has come up with, he has forgotten a very important principle in his action. The SDS has just as much right on this campus as the Young Americans for Freedom. Therefore, he has, in effect, discriminated.20

Geri Ruehl, a member of the Organizations Board, denounced President Gates's decision in a letter to the Racquet. Ruehl urged the Campus Controls Council, WSU-L's student government at the time, to "...abhor and protest this veto vehemently..."[21] She continued:

> This action...is alarming to those of us who feel that one of the essentials of an academic community is freedom of thought and expression; moreover, it is a rebuttal to the essence of our committee structure and thereby threatens to mute our communicative channels.22

On 15 December, President James Smart of the Campus Controls Council argued that the veto of the SDS charter:

> ...denies the very intent of Controversial Speakers Committee Resolution of the spring of 1966...(and) implies that our student body is incapable of reaching adult, mature decisions and thus needs to be protected...23

Dennis O'Keefe, the leading proponent of a La Crosse chapter of Students for a Democratic Society, outlined the organization's national aims in the Racquet. Although SDS generally opposed school administrators "...acting as independent sovereigns and using students and faculty in only advisory positions...", O'Keefe emphasized that each chapter of the organization was afforded "complete local autonomy" and decentralized authority in decision making.[24]

The controversy surrounding SDS would continue toward the end of the 1960s as local advocates pursued the issue through the WSU-L Faculty Senate, the Board of Regents, and finally the Wisconsin Supreme Court where President Gates's initial veto decision was upheld. While various organizations and individuals took up the question of students' right of association at the university, other concerns arose throughout the Sixties that contributed to activism on the WSU-L campus. The following chapter will briefly outline some of the important events that took place at WSU-L, from which this essay will attempt to draw a conclusion regarding student social and political activism in La Crosse.

CHAPTER FOUR

STUDENT ACTIVISM AT WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY-LA CROSSE

On 17 February 1967, President James Smart of the Campus Controls Council again addressed the issue of student apathy in his weekly report in the Racquet. Smart decried the students' apparent disinterest in how administrative policies affected their daily lives, and he urged them to take a more active role in the decision-making process on campus. Said he:

> One who blindly accepts the academic institution deters its growth as well as his own. A primary aim of education is to promote critical thought and careful evaluation. A constant questioning is a wholesome sign of a healthy mind. To conform to standards which are administratively imposed in deference to tradition, is to manifest a malformed education.25

Smart's words eloquently reflected many essential elements of the unwritten doctrine of the Counter Culture, and were repeated on college campuses all over the United States. Despite, however, the continued admonitions from student activists and faculty members, the men and women attending WSU-L in 1967 generally avoided overt political or social activism. One event, on 23 May, very nearly represented, however, a gradual shift regarding student participation in their community. Whether or not the so-called food riot and subsequent downtown demonstration

were genuine expressions of student activism is still problematical after twenty years. What is certain, however, is that 1967 was a "buffer" year for La Crosse. It drew the demarcation line between the city's complacent past and its entry into a period of heightened activity. The early 1960s at Wisconsin State University-La Crosse seemed more closely linked with the days of Eisenhower than with those of Martin Luther King. In reality, the 1960s, as a time when American society underwent immeasurable change, began for La Crosse in 1968.

John Medinger was a student at WSU-L in 1968, and he understood the potential for good in American society, provided young men and women took responsibility as future leaders and participated in social and political endeavors. Recalling his own experiences as a political activist on campus, Medinger recalled: "I was fascinated by the ability of college students to exercise political power. There's power there if they want to use it".[26] Many students, such as Bill Gresens, took time off from classes in order to work full-time for a political or social cause. Gresens made arrangements with his instructors in 1968, in order that he could dedicate his energies for Presidential candidate Eugene McCarthy, senator from Minnesota.[27]

Other students from WSU-L worked hard hours establishing new organizations on campus, such as the Humanists, Confrontation, the Free Organizations Movement, Concerned

Students for Campus Reform and the Biafran Relief Movement. The Student Youth Volunteers established a reputation for caring for the needy in La Crosse through its voluntary relief programs during 1968 and 1969.[28] And most telling of all that America's youth, when activated, are able to literally make the world a better place, the Biafran Relief Movement collected over five thousand dollars for the famine victims of Biafra.[29]

In 1969, thousands of students and local community members turned out together to march or demonstrate their opposition to the killing in Vietnam. In addition, several faculty members at WSU-L initiated forums and special lectures, as well as informative newsletters and pamphlets addressing issues such as women's liberation, civil rights and militarism. The topics for discussion would always change from night to night, but the overall message was the same: "Get Involved".

By 1970, the gradual withdrawal of troops from Vietnam had begun. The war was far from over, but society in America nonetheless began to assess the events of the previous years and felt pride mixed with shame. Pride in the achievements and advances that had been realized. Shame in counting the dead, not only from the battle fields abroad, but from the battlefields of the inner cities and small towns.

La Crosse also experienced a slowing down, a calming in the whirlwind of events and people. As many of WSU-L's

student activists graduated and moved on, a large void began to open on campus. The university gradually returned to calmer times. It would never be completely as it was before, however, for the spirit and vibrance WSU-L experienced would leave lasting impressions upon generations of students to come

Conclusion

Far too often, America's smaller communities are compared with the larger and more cosmopolitan centers, and are disparaged for what they are or are not. To say that La Crosse, Wisconsin during the angry and ecstatic period of the 1960s was not a Berkeley, a New York, or even a Madison is simplistic. In many ways, La Crosse had not been given the chance to become even more than what it was. What it was, however, was an example of activism on a smaller scale, but no less important than the cities with streets aflame. As is true for each individual, each city, town and village has within it the potential to care when called upon. The tragic and joyfilled years of the 1960s called upon La Crosse to care, and it answered with all the emotion and hope it could garner. This was LaCrosse, its community, its university, its people.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Nan Robertson, "UW: One of the Angriest Campuses in U.S.," Wisconsin State Journal, 20 November 1967, sec.1, p. 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Allen J. Matusow, The Unraveling of America (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1984), p. 307.

[4]The American Almanac, 1970 ed., s.v. "Poor Persons -- Number and Incidence, by Family Status, Residence, and Color: 1959 to 1967."

[5]Martin Zanger, interview by author, La Crosse, Wisconsin, April, 1988.

[6]John Medinger, interview by author, La Crosse, Wisconsin, February, 1988.

[7]Matusow, Ibid., p. 327.

[8]David Zieman, interview by author, La Crosse, Wisconsin, February, 1988.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Matusow, Ibid., p. 307.

[11]Kenneth Teachout, interview by author, La Crosse, Wisconsin, February, 1988.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Prentiss Byrd, "America, a Land of Strangers!", Racquet, 17 November 1966.

[16]Nick Moran, "Lethargy Prevalent Campus Problem; Student Comment, Opinion -- None," editorial, Racquet, 1 December 1966.

[17]Anonymous, "A Matter of Tradition," poem, Racquet, 1 December 1966.

[18]Wisconsin State University-La Crosse Catalog, 1965-1966 edition, p. 43.

[19]"President Gates Vetoes SDS Petition Here; Overrides Organizations Committee," Racquet, 8 December 1966.

[20]"SDS 'Right to Organize' Vetoed by Gates -- Undemocratic," editorial, Racquet, 8 December 1966.

[21]Geri Ruehl, "SDS Charter Rejection Denial of Right to Assemble, Freedom of Speech, Policy," letter to editor, Racquet, 8 December 1966.

[22]Ibid.

[23]James Smart, "Gates'(sic) Denial Irritates CCC President; Purpose of Speakers Committee Denied; Feels Gates Should Define Students' Role," letter to editor, Racquet, 15 December 1966.

[24]Dennis O'Keefe, "Banned Group Explains National Aims," Racquet, 15 December 1966.

[25]James Smart, "Campus Controls Council Report," Racquet, 17 March 1967.

[26]Medinger interview, Ibid.

[27]William Gresens, interview by author, La Crosse, Wisconsin, February, 1988.

[28]Nancy Baranoski, "WSU-L Students Share Time, Assist People Less Fortunate," Racquet, 22 March 1968.

[29]"Total of $5000 Worth of Food Will go to Biafra," Racquet, 20 December 1968.