

tion was massive and the horror of pregnancy endemic. It's surprising what adolescents can live through. It was dreadful, actually.

These comments represent more than a few isolated, dissatisfied women—they illustrate an uneasiness with the artificiality and rigidity of the social experience reflected in other studies.⁴² The social contest was unequal, artificially out of balance, and an extremely powerful force in maintaining women in their traditional social role. Certainly, the emphasis on social life and the pressure it exerted on women is similar to that described in the studies of Matina Horner as depressive of the motive to achieve.⁴³ Cornell women learned to be quietly pleased by election to Phi Beta Kappa but noisily elated over pinning to a fraternity man or an engagement. The cultural message which the Cornell experience reinforced for both men and women, was that woman's proper role is as a social appendage to a man.

At the same time, there has been little specific research related to the effects of this social imbalance on men but there must have been male students who, aspiring to social as well as academic success, were placed at a severe disadvantage by the shortage of women. Many, particularly those who were personally insecure or who lacked the social advantages of fraternity life, were almost doomed to continual rebuffs from women and, one must assume, subsequent deflation of their sense of self-esteem. Men could complete their Cornell years having had only limited contacts with women and little social experience, either through lack of interest or, more likely, through the inability to meet successfully the rigorous tests of social competition.

The Cornell environment encouraged women to compete socially but it discouraged them from competing physically. In athletic activities, the women of Cornell did not compete seriously—they played. The health and physical development of women were major concerns at the time of their admission to Cornell. This concern however has not been expressed in reality. Despite the vigor with which Cornell

women played basketball and rowed on a crew in the 1890s, the twentieth century brought two changes on the national athletic scene and at Cornell which superseded the original focus on health. As large scale intercollegiate athletic competition developed rapidly for men, the idea that athletic competition was unwise and even unfeminine for women gained acceptance. Men's sports became more competitive, as women's sports were taken less seriously and focused primarily on intramural activities and annual "playdays." The dominance of male athletics and male athletes in the Cornell experience is reflected in the pages of the yearbook, *The Cornellian*. In 1935, seventy-two pages were devoted to male athletes, competitions, and athletic organizations whereas one page was devoted to similar activities for women. Likewise, in 1951, stories about male athletics consumed sixty pages whereas women's required only one.



Proud, determined oarswomen organized the Women's Boating Club in 1897. Emily Dunning Baringer '97 (seated, middle of second row) and Nan Gilbert Seymour '97 (top row, second from left in male attire) later became physicians. Varsity coach Charles E. Courtney (seated) and varsity coxswain Frederick Colson (standing, left) encouraged their spirited efforts. (Cornell University, DMUA.)