CHAPTER FOUR

PART IV: Student Life and the Roaring Twenties

ISNS was bustling in the early 1920s. After a period of falling enrollment, the students were back, with a vengeance. In the summer of 1922 they had the largest summer enrollment in any normal school in the Commonwealth. The dormitories were so full that they had to use Clark Hall, the men’s dormitory, for female students, who continued to far outnumber the male students. Even so, 100 female students had to rent rooms in town. In 1923, Clark Hall was made a woman’s dormitory for good and male students were moved to cottages purchased by the school.

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
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<td>113</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>1282</td>
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Space was a problem, not only in the dormitories, but across campus. Keith told the Trustees: “Indiana is like an overgrown boy who is bursting his clothes at every seam. It has outgrown its dormitory, dining hall, classroom, training school facilities.”

The student body was so large that they could no longer hold assemblies in the chapel because it was not large enough to accommodate the entire student body. The training school and the gymnasium were also becoming increasingly inadequate. Student curricular and recreational needs were also changing and the school’s physical plant had not changed to keep up with them. Students who wanted to swim had to go to the YMCA (now the Indiana Public Library and Jimmy Stewart Museum) on Philadelphia Street to swim and the Armory to play basketball. They needed more practice rooms for Music and a new location for Home Economics if they were to qualify for federal funds to support that program.

By the end of the decade, the school was able to build new buildings. A new gymnasium that could support the athletic program and also serve as a place for large gatherings was built and a new arts building to provide better classrooms for developing programs.

The construction of a gymnasium, Waller Hall, supported athletic programs and provided a place for the entire student body to assemble.
Changing Student Attitudes and Behaviors

Faculty from the period would likely have reported that the attitudes and behavior of theirs students were changing in ways that broke with tradition and students that rules and regulations of the schools were outdated. During this period, the student newspapers, the *Penn*, appears, and its contents shed light on the thoughts of both faculty and students.

The *Penn* was first published in 1922. Its first issues were produced on a typewriter and published only when there was enough material from composition classes to fill it. In 1923-25, DeWitt Ray of the *Indiana Gazette*, financed the paper and accepted for payment whatever he could get for it. By 1927, the Penn had 500 individual subscriptions and was going strong. Its stated objective was to provide students with “the opportunity to express themselves” and a way for students to find out “what is happening socially and academically.”

Articles from the Penn suggest tensions between the administration and the students:

“Have you heard the scandal about the youth of today? Do you know these young whippersnappers of the modern generation are taking us to the pups, hard and fast? Before long there will be no family home life, no high standards of ideals, no happy marriages, nothing but reckless extravagance and wild looseness that is undermining society and civilization. Do you believe it? If you do, I'll tell you a bigger one than that. Personally, I think it is a carload of applesauce.” January 28, 1927.

In a later article titled “To The Faculty,” a student author complains that while students were being criticized for neglect of school tradition, the students didn’t perceive any clear evidence of the existence of “any great tradition” and pointed out there was a difference between “tradition” and “autocratic social laws.” They
recommended “a gradual lifting of some of the restraining bonds” that student lived under and argued that that would lead to a “better spirit among students” and make the school a better place. (March 8, 1929)

One of the traditions that both female and male students resented were different rules for female and male students. In an article in the 1928 Oak titled “Vice Versa” Melvin Mitchell reported that female students often complained of unfairness in that “the boys can do anything they care to, but we are penned in like inmates.” In the clever essay, which draws into question the fairness of the rules that were imposed upon female students, the tables are turned and male students are the ones who have to follow the strict rules and female students have more freedom. http://www.archive.org/stream/oakyearb1928indi#page/293/mode/1up

The increasing popularity of automobiles was creating new problems for administrators. In the spring of 1919, a young woman was unable to graduate because she went for a ride in a car of fellow classmate “in violation of the regulations of the school.” Keith explained “we cannot permit such automobile riding by our students” so that “harsh measures” had to be taken to enforce such rules.

In the 1927 Instano the authors reject old ways, questioning the power and authority of instructors and administrators, suggesting that they would like to see more freedom in dancing, wearing skirts above the knees, dating in the library, swearing, wearing makeup, and not obeying other rules undesirable, and backward rules.

A student’s version of the Ten Commandments suggests dissatisfaction with rules governing student life.

Speakers were brought in to encourage students to turn away from modern trends which administrators saw as dangerous. The YWCA sponsored a discussion on “The Right of Women to Smoke,” but
may have been disappointed at the results. 50% of those attending believed women should be able to smoke, though they did suggest that that might not be something that teachers should let their students know about. (March 23, 1928)

Increasing openness in taking about female/male relationships is evident in the following entry in an autograph book from the summer of 1922.

“Love thy neighbor as thyself, and his son to-boot, Squeeze him tight till broad day light, then tell him it is time to scoot, “ Annabel Morrison, RD #1, Derry, PA and “ In the parlor there were three, a man, a parlor lamp and she. Two’s a couple, so there is no doubt. That’s why the parlor light went out.” Frances Lowman, Rochester Mills

They also illustrate frustration with school rules that continued to limit interaction between the sexes regardless of changing times:

“When the risen sun is setting, On his homeward road to go, Remember at ISNS, You could never have a beau,” Florence Jellison, West Newton

“Ashes to ashes, salt to salt, if we don’t get married, its Hope Stewart’s fault.” Florence E. Foltz, Somerset, Pa