



# COLLEGE REPORT

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Parents, professors, and politicians who are troubled by today's student unrest and activism can take heart from the knowledge that collegians have always been thus. Full of vitality not yet harnessed to the work of the world, students have often rebelled against authority and sometimes they become violent. In fact, violence has been fairly frequent during the relatively short historical span of American higher education.

In the colonial colleges, students frequently protested against the food served in commons and against the paternalism of their clerical professors. You must understand, these colonial educators' religious convictions charged them, not only with the responsibility of educating their students intellectually, but also with the compulsion to try to save their souls. Let me tell you that this led to considerable snooping into the personal lives of students. In most colonial colleges, the professors and the administration spent more time spying on students than they did teaching them.

The extra-curricular religious activities included three major ingredients: First, 16 compulsory chapel exercises every week, that would be two daily—one at six in the morning or earlier and another at five in the afternoon — this plus four services on Sunday. Second, four voluntary noon prayer meetings weekly, never exceeding 40 minutes each in length. And third, frequent revival meetings, leading to prolonged periods of prayer and anguished soul searching.

IN THE TIME left between these events of high religious ecstasy, professors did their personal best to keep students in line, religiously and morally. They accomplished this on the one hand by holding them to strict observance of elaborate printed laws and regulations which exacted money fines for such innocent pastimes as throwing a ball or playing backgammon, and on the other by calling unexpectedly upon students in their rooms to see if perchance any of them might be fattening a goose for a midnight feast or harboring other less innocent contraband.

At Dartmouth, for example, this espionage went to such lengths that every professor had a number of dormitory rooms assigned to him for policing. And the faculty would frequently assemble to hear what they had separately discovered in walking their beats. For this purpose, they had a most thorough and effective technique — you might be interested. They called it "reading the catalog." The president would call the name of a student at the top of the alphabetical list, and he would then look around the table to see whether any colleague knew anything bad about him. After any necessary discussion and determination of penalties, he would read the next name until the entire list of stu-

students reacted to this kind of life. Most of the time they would submit to the spiritual hypochondria and the blue laws of their professors, but every once in a while, like clockwork, they went on unheard of rampages of protest and even rebellion.

For instance, three times before the Civil War, the students of Princeton dynamited Nassau Hall. In fact, I recently asked the Princeton University archivist for copies of some records of this period because it's fascinating, and he wrote back, "I can't send them to you because Nassau Hall's been burned down twice by the students."

TO GO ON, every spring during the 1850s, the students of Yale lit the college coal pile and threw burning embers into the windows of their unpopular professors; and at Dartmouth, the institution of horning went on for decades. Horning is a fascinating thing. It consisted of students standing under the windows of hated professors and blowing tin horns — day and night in relays — until the professor packed up and left town. In this way did students then respond to the old time paternalism of the old time college and to the bad instruction and the boredom to which they were subjected.

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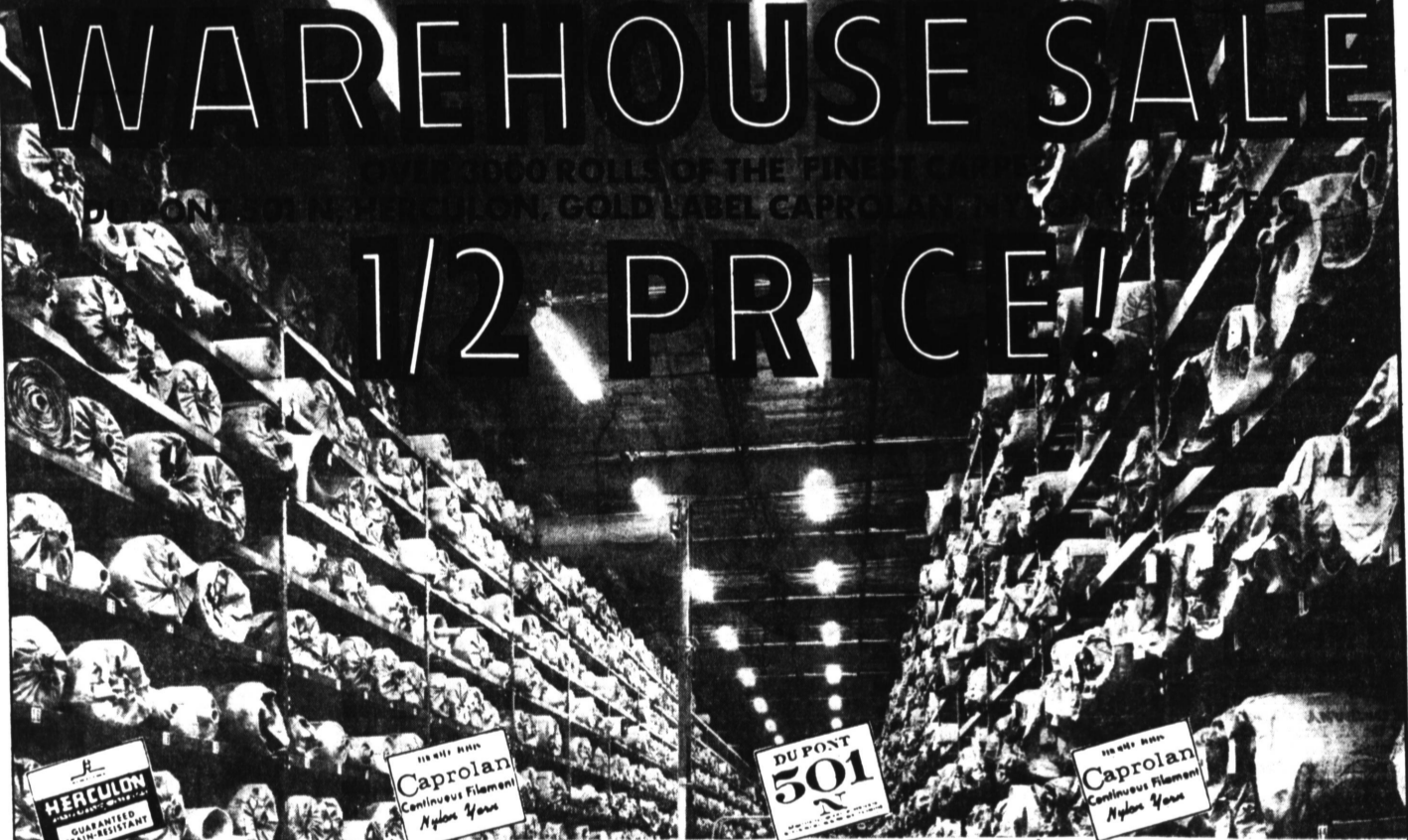
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