

REFINING A WOMAN'S COLLEGE:
TOWARD A HISTORY OF BRENAU UNIVERSITY, 1878 – 2008

by

CHARLES HOOPER WILSON III

(Under the Direction of Ronald E. Butchart)

ABSTRACT

Brenau University is a private, selective, non-denominational, comprehensive university of about 2000 students. Its main campus sits on 57 acres located in Gainesville, Georgia, approximately fifty miles northeast of Atlanta. At the heart of Brenau is its liberal arts Women's College, which was founded in 1878 as the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary and became Brenau College in 1900. This dissertation examines the history of Brenau's academics, policies toward integration, disciplinary rules and regulations, physical culture and athletics, and Greek life and student organizations. These topics are considered within a thematic framework that contemplates college as a "negotiated space" in which the overall experience of any college is refined over time in an on-going, often unspoken, give-and-take process of negotiation between two key groups, the college's students and its faculty and administration, a dynamic that is lost in many institutional biographies. Throughout the institution's history, Brenau's students and faculty each jockeyed to refine "their Brenau," their ideal version of what the Brenau College experience should be. Often, Brenau's faculty and administration gained the upper hand in negotiations with students. This was particularly evident in fashioning the college curriculum

and in setting institutional policies about such things as integration. However, in many instances, this was not the case. At times, Brenau's students won the negotiations and exhibited a remarkable degree of autonomy in conducting affairs in some arenas. Brenau women had a prominent voice in effecting college rules and discipline, in bringing athletics to campus, and in running student organizations.

INDEX WORDS: Brenau University, College History, History of Higher Education, Women's Higher Education, Women's Colleges

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DEDICATION

To Ana and Celia, with all my love.

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INTRODUCTION

“A university should be a place of light, of liberty, and of learning.”

*Benjamin Disraeli
Speech given 8 March 1873
British House of Commons*

College histories tend to be celebratory works that trumpet an institution’s triumphs and gloss over its tragedies. No doubt this is because the authors of these institutional biographies, who are often teachers at or graduates of the place being written about, frequently have close ties to the college itself. How likely would a faculty member writing about his employer be to air dirty laundry, even if it needed airing? How likely would an alumnus of an institution be to depict an *alma mater*, the place where he or she invested much time, effort, and money, as anything but a fine place to earn a degree? Such personal connections increase the chance that history might be intentionally misrepresented. However, even where this does not occur, authors with close ties to an institution might subconsciously paint a rosier picture of the college or university without even realizing it.

While no author can claim true historical objectivity, I believe my slight ties to Brenau University make this a relatively unburdened institutional history. Other than having taught two history courses there as an adjunct faculty member, attending an occasional music recital or theatrical performance, and rarely making use of its library, I have no ties to Brenau. Yet, even as I am perhaps able to avoid writing a celebratory account of Brenau’s history, I found that there

are, in fact, things to celebrate about the institution. In many ways, Brenau is something of the university Disraeli contemplates.

The name “Brenau” is derived from German (*brennan*, which means “to burn”) and Latin (*aurum*, which means “gold”) and means “gold as refined by fire.” The motto reflects Brenau’s desire to forge its students into remarkable beings. The main campus of the university is located about fifty miles northeast of Atlanta, Georgia, in the city of Gainesville, near the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains. Over two-dozen buildings, some of which are on the National Register of Historic Places, occupy this verdant fifty acre site. Brenau is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and is a self-described private, selective, non-denominational, comprehensive university with four divisions: the Women’s College, the Evening and Weekend College, the Academy, and the Online College. In 2007, Brenau had a combined enrollment in these divisions of around 2,200 students. Commuting students take classes in Gainesville or at one of Brenau’s satellite campuses elsewhere in Georgia in Atlanta, Augusta, Waleska, or at the King’s Bay Naval Base on the Georgia coast. Several hundred students reside on the main campus in several dormitories and sorority houses. Student diversity is noteworthy. In 2007, Brenau enrolled students from twenty states and fourteen countries. Around one-fourth of Brenau’s students were members of minority groups and many were over twenty-five years of age.¹

At the heart of Brenau University is its Women’s College, which has been educating young women for over 125 years. This small liberal arts college was founded in 1878 as the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary and became Brenau College in 1900. From very modest beginnings, Brenau has matured greatly. It redefined itself as a university in 1992 to reflect its

¹ Brenau University, “Discover Brenau: Facts and Figures”; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/about/facts.htm>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2008.

offerings of over thirty undergraduate majors and of graduate degrees in teacher education, business administration, accounting, nursing, psychology, public administration, and interior design. Today, Brenau claims thousands of alumnae, an endowment of over fifty million dollars, an economic impact to its community of over \$65 million, and some prestige in regional and national college rankings.²

Like other American universities, Brenau can trace aspects of its present character back centuries to when colleges and universities first emerged in a somewhat haphazard fashion in western Europe during the Middle Ages. A.B. Cobban wrote a history of this emergence entitled *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization*. He indicated that before the fifteenth century, the term *universitas* referred “to [a] guild of masters or of students or of masters and students combined.”³ Until the 1400s when the term came to be employed much in the way that it is used today, “university” described only a body of academic personnel and not a place with a campus. Prior to this age, the term *studium generale* more accurately described the medieval equivalent of modern universities.⁴

Cobban indicated that most European universities are descended from one of two early *studia* models in which different academic personnel governed: Bologna, Italy, and Paris, France. According to Cobban, at Paris, a magisterial government of faculty members formed, attracted students, and then taught the students what they believed the students needed to learn, much as happens in modern colleges and universities. Things were different in Italy. Cobban described Bologna as a “student republic” in which students banded together, hired faculty

² Ibid.

³ Alan B. Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities: Oxford and Cambridge to c. 1500* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 2. See also Charles Homer Haskins, *The Rise of Universities* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1957) and Alan B. Cobban, *The Medieval Universities: Their Development and Organization* (London, UK: Methuen Press, 1975) for more about the origins of colleges and universities.

⁴ Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities*.

members, and, essentially, told the faculty what they wanted to learn, which the faculty would proceed to teach. Dissatisfied Bolognese students even staged strikes to get what they wanted from faculty.⁵

Mark Edel Boren, the author of *Student Resistance: A History of the Unruly Subject*, wrote that in 1220, striking Bolognese students “complained that their masters treated them unethically and agreed to return only if the university’s masters would abide by rules demanding that, among other things, masters would no longer be tardy to or skip lectures.”⁶ The teachers gave in. Boren wrote that, “Such straightforward student power may be hard to imagine in the modern developed world.”⁷ This is thanks to “the carefully orchestrated reorganization of power relations within universities by administrators and professors” that have occurred over the last millennium.⁸ Simply put, students come and go to colleges and universities while administrators and professors stick around. Staying lets the faculty members gradually gain power over the students. By the early-modern era, virtually all Western universities (the institutional ancestors of Brenau) were governed top-down.⁹

Among these universities were those in British North America, which constitute Brenau’s more immediate ancestors. Historian Frederick Rudolph observed that schooling had long been a priority in the New World. Experiences varied by place, but primary and secondary schools in the colonial era generally provided at least a rudimentary education (which focused on the famous three “R’s”) and typically enrolled both boys and girls. Scarcely three decades after securing a tenuous toe-hold on the wild North American continent, British colonists began

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Mark Edel Boren, *Student Resistance: A History of the Unruly Subject* (New York, NY: Routledge Press, 2001), 10.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

founding institutions of not just rudimentary studies but of higher learning. A handful of colonial colleges came into existence, mostly the institutions that today comprise the “Ivy League.”¹⁰ Jurgen Herbst, a scholar of American higher education, asserted that America’s first colonial colleges “were created as unincorporated provincial Latin grammar boarding schools governed by trustees.”¹¹ Like their counterparts in European universities, trustees saw to it that students at these Spartanly-equipped schools studied the “classical curriculum” (which consisted of Greek, Latin, philosophy, and rhetoric, among other things) generally in preparation for entering careers in the ministry or government. Migrating graduates of these institutions founded other colleges elsewhere across the country in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, importing the classical curriculum as they went.¹²

Almost invariably, the institutions of higher learning that formed in early America catered to men. Of course, women’s colleges like Brenau would eventually emerge. However, historians do not agree on all of the details of this process.

What seems to be widely accepted is that women’s colleges were eventual outgrowths of institutions called girls’ “academies,” which were themselves outgrowths of earlier educational institutions. In his well-respected, if somewhat dated, work on the history of women’s higher education in the United States, historian Thomas Woody examined girls’ academies. Woody related that academies catering to girls had actually existed for many years in America. Woody wrote that as far back as 1727, the convent of the Ursuline Sisters in New Orleans began teaching young women rudimentary subjects. Later, in British North America, Pennsylvania was

¹⁰ See Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962; reprint, Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1991) to learn more about early American colleges.

¹¹ Jurgen Herbst, “The First Three American Colleges: Schools of the Reformation,” *Perspectives in American History* 8 (1974): 7.

¹² *Ibid.*

home to the Bethlehem Female Academy and the Female Academy of Philadelphia, which came into being in 1742 and 1792, respectively.¹³

Besides having existed for some time, academies and seminaries were surprisingly numerous in early America given the nation's largely rural character. Many of these catered exclusively to girls, although many others also enrolled only boys or were co-educational. Historian Mary Kelly asserted that "Between 1790 and 1830, 182 academies and at least 14 seminaries were established exclusively for women in the North and South."¹⁴ At least 158 more schools would open by 1860.¹⁵ Henry Barnard, an eminent nineteenth-century historian of American education, posited the number of academies in America at "more than six thousand" that were "spread across the land, in every state and territory" by 1850.¹⁶ TheodoreSizer, author of *The Age of the Academies*, would deem even that figure to be conservative.¹⁷

Just as there is no historical consensus about the number of academies that existed in early America, views likewise differ somewhat on where, precisely, academies came from. In her book entitled *Women's Education in the United States 1780-1840*, historian Margaret A. Nash wrote that:

From 1780 to 1840, women's opportunities for advanced education burgeoned. In the 1780s, women who sought education beyond the rudiments found it primarily in temporary, short-lived schools . . . that were open for only a few weeks or months at a time.¹⁸

¹³ For more information about the development of academies, see Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*. 2Vols. (New York, NY: Science Press, 1929; Reprint, New York, NY: Octagon Books, 1966).

¹⁴ Mary Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America's Republic* (Chapel Hill, NC: Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 67.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Henry Barnard as cited in Diane Ravitch, "American Traditions of Education" in Terry M. Moe, ed., *A Primer on America's Schools* (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 2001), 6.

¹⁷ See Theodore R.Sizer, *The Age of the Academies* (New York, NY: Teachers College Press, 1964), 1-22.

¹⁸ Margaret A. Nash, *Women's Education in the United States 1780-1840* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillian, 2005), 5.

These were called “adventure” or “venture” schools and proprietor-owners often ran them out of private homes.¹⁹ Nash noted that while subject matter varied from school to school, most “taught the English branches, geography, and arithmetic” as well as “any other subject for which there might be a market,” like music or art.²⁰

Nash wrote that by the late eighteenth century, elite families moved away from the home tutoring of adventure schools and instead educated their children in more permanent “academies.” Nash pointed out that these were actually “variously called academies, seminaries, or institutes” and that they provided access to full-time teachers, scientific apparatuses, and possibilities for socialization that were not available in homes.²¹ In addition, according to historian Kim Tolley, “a school bearing the name ‘academy’ or ‘seminary’ differed from a venture school in having some form of financial support other than tuition, articles of incorporation, and the oversight of a board of trustees.”²² Occasionally, venture schools evolved into academies or seminaries as they acquired these things.²³

According to Nash, historians have generally believed that these early female academies and seminaries that replaced venture schools were, with few exceptions, vastly inferior to contemporary male institutions. She challenged this notion, contending that “both the curricula and the pedagogy were similar for men and women in most academies of the period.”²⁴ Nash’s findings exploded notions that girls’ academies and seminaries taught only “ornamental” subjects while boys’ academies taught “classics” like Greek and Latin. In fact, she found that academic curricula for both genders almost invariably consisted of “English, geography (broadly

¹⁹ Ibid., 36.

²⁰ Ibid., 5, 36.

²¹ Ibid., 5.

²² Kim Tolley, “The Rise of the Academies: Continuity or Change?” *History of Education Quarterly* 41 (summer, 2001): 233.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Nash, *Women’s Education*, 12.

conceived), arithmetic and mathematics, and ancient and modern languages.”²⁵ Academies and seminaries also offered some vocational subjects, “like navigation and surveying for men and needlework for women,” as well.²⁶ Pedagogically, most academies and seminaries shunned the rote memorization learning style that once dominated education and instead encouraged active learning and academic competition among students.²⁷

Christie Anne Farnham, the author of *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South*, described the evolutionary trace of seminaries somewhat differently from Nash, owing largely to regional differences. Farnham noted that, “Beginning in the late eighteenth century, wealthy southern families sometimes sent their daughters to ‘French schools.’”²⁸ Often, but not always, boarding schools, girls attending these institutions received instruction in French (hence the name), arithmetic, dancing, art, and embroidery—the so-called “ornamental” courses. Farnham indicated that these were not academically rigorous places designed to educate girls in the same curriculum that boys received at the time. Rather, French schools existed chiefly to facilitate social gain on the part of a girl’s family and to marginalize women by relegating them to particular social roles. Farnham wrote, “French schools, by refining the rough edges of behavior and language and by emphasizing taste and the arts, improved the position of students in the marriage market.”²⁹ Graduates of French schools were cultured and refined and, as such, were sought after by southern men from good families for marriage. Unsurprisingly, at French schools, developing intellect took a back seat to developing the social graces. Farnham asserted that French schools prepared women to become

²⁵ Ibid., 47.

²⁶ Ibid., 49.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Christie Anne Farnham, *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 1994), 43.

²⁹ Ibid.

ladies and little else. According to Farnham, young southern women who desired more serious schooling “had to await the spread of academies before secondary education became widely available.”³⁰ This spread occurred, in part, as some French schools morphed into more academically demanding institutions beginning around the 1820s.³¹

Prior to this transition, Farnham indicated that girls’ academies became much more widespread throughout the United States, including in the South. She held that the coming of academies to the South signaled a shift in educational focus for women as French schools became obsolete. Farnham wrote:

Herein lies a major difference between the French schools and the academies. Although the new academies initially offered few courses above the level of history, geography, and English grammar—which were to be found in many of the larger boarding schools—there is a shift in emphasis from a core curriculum consisting of French and the arts to one composed of academic subjects.³²

According to Farnham, academies were more academically and intellectually rigorous places than the more ornamental French schools they replaced.³³

Whether academies and seminaries evolved from venture schools in the North or from French schools in the South, they would be the institutions that would eventually give birth to women’s colleges. Prior to 1830, Nash observed that “virtually no institution called a college admitted women.”³⁴ Still, heads of girls’ academies and seminaries “frequently asserted that, even though their institutions did not take on the name ‘college,’ they offered college-level curricula for women.”³⁵ It was the adoption of this increased academic rigor on the part of some academies and seminaries that begot women’s colleges.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 49.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Nash, *Women’s Education*, 6.

³⁵ Ibid., 83.

There were multiple reasons why such a shift in educational focus to providing more and more rigorous schooling for girls occurred. Nash noted that after 1830, views about women and college changed as religious revival had swept through America in the Second Great Awakening. Where once colleges had existed to simply prepare men for the professions, colleges came to prepare young men and women “to participate in creating a Christian nation.”³⁶ At the same time, Enlightenment and women’s rights movement notions about how amenable women were to education argued powerfully that women were just as capable of being students as men were.³⁷

Another reason for increasing the rigor of women’s education lay in changing attitudes about women themselves. Colonial American women had virtually no access to higher education within their eighteenth century sphere. Rudolph wrote that, “The colonial view of woman was simply that she was intellectually inferior—incapable, merely by reason of being a woman, of great thoughts. Her faculties were not worth training. Her place was in the home, where man had assigned her a number of useful functions.”³⁸ This was perhaps even more the case in the South. Woody wrote that “the standard for a girl’s education in the southern colonies to the end of the eighteenth century” was “generally with reference to men and their own future sphere as home-makers.”³⁹ Regarding this standard, Woody observed that “Beyond the merest rudiments, the ornamental subjects were clearly emphasized, inasmuch as these made them agreeable embellishments of society and attractive ornaments of the home.”⁴⁰

After the American Revolution, educating women more wherever they lived seemed to make more sense to Americans. After all, the fledgling country burgeoned with opportunity. Indeed, so much opportunity existed that many Americans believed that men simply could not

³⁶ Ibid., 7.

³⁷ Nash, *Women’s Education*.

³⁸ Rudolph, *American College and University*, 307-8.

³⁹ Woody, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States*, vol. I, 273.

⁴⁰ Ibid. Note that some scholars, most notably Margaret Nash, disagree with this assertion of Woody’s.

take advantage of it all by themselves. They needed “the assistance of wives who knew how to help their husbands to make their fortunes” by assisting in the managing of finances, of correspondence, and of the increasingly complex American home.⁴¹ Also, just as men had the important job of running the new country, American women needed “to help prepare the manhood of tomorrow for responsible citizenship.”⁴² To become modern homemakers, “Republican Mothers,” and business assistants required a more robust, more general education. Academies and their more thorough curricula emerged to provide this. Of course, in so doing, academies did not generally provide women with the means to become much more than assistants and homemakers and, by this, relegated women toward these roles in society.

The only real exception to this was in the area of teaching. As one team of authors put it, with the societal perception of their nurturing, patient natures, “Women were increasingly regarded as better teachers than men.”⁴³ They would also work for less than men would. These factors, coupled with a growth in the numbers of schools in the country beginning in the early nineteenth century, created opportunity for educated women, which made more women want to be educated. In *A Century of Higher Education for American Women*, author Mabel Newcomer also contended that the advent of technological innovations like electric and gas lighting and washing and sewing machines helped the cause of women’s higher education. Women gained more leisure time thanks to these labor-saving devices and often spent that time doing more reading, which increased their desire for education.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Rudolph, *American College and University*, 309.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Irene Harwarth, Mindi Maline, and Elizabeth DeBra, “Women’s Colleges in the United States: History, Issues, and Challenges”; Report prepared for the National Institute on Postsecondary Education, Libraries, and Lifelong Learning of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the Department of Education; available from <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OERI/PLLI/webreprt.html>; Internet; accessed 16 December 2007.

⁴⁴ Mabel Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1959), 16. Not all historians would agree with this proposition. In her book *More Work For Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology From the Open Hearth to the Microwave*, Ruth Schwartz Cowan argued that the advent of

Among academies that catered to women in the nineteenth century, a hierarchy emerged as the expanded depth and breadth of the curricular offerings of some institutions came to set those schools apart from others. These relatively more academically rigorous academies, in turn, adopted names to set themselves apart from the pack. Farnham wrote that, “To distinguish their level of coursework from that of ordinary academies, the term female seminary came into use.”⁴⁵ While all seminary curricula still included at least some “ornamental” courses like art and music, Farnham revealed that at all serious seminaries, as at contemporary men’s colleges, “the study of the classics at some level was generally attempted.”⁴⁶

It was this attempt at classical study that truly set some seminaries apart from lesser academies and from the earlier French and venture schools. Many of these advanced seminaries would eventually evolve into women’s colleges beginning around the 1830s. This occurred as these institutions deemphasized ornamental and secondary or preparatory-level educational programs in favor of adopting more advanced classical curricula on a par with that of contemporary men’s colleges.

John R. Thelin, an historian of American higher education, noted that the “typical curriculum” of a men’s college around 1830 “emphasized the study of classical languages, science, and mathematics with the aim of building character and promoting distinctive habits of thought.”⁴⁷ Regarding nineteenth century women’s colleges that strove to emulate men’s colleges, Thelin asserted that the “‘female seminaries’ were usually comparable in academic

“labor-saving devices” actually led to women taking on more work and enjoying less leisure time. Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1983).

⁴⁵ Farnham, *Education of the Southern Belle*, 65.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 73.

⁴⁷ John R. Thelin, *A History of American Higher Education* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 64.

rigor to the colleges for men in the same area.”⁴⁸ Thelin noted further that “Some evidence suggests that the curriculum for women usually emphasized English and modern languages over classics—not unlike the parallel offerings at men’s colleges in the ‘bachelor of science’ track,” a view not shared by Nash.⁴⁹ Both scholars would, however, share the belief that the most advanced of these female seminaries and academies would eventually become early women’s colleges.

Exactly which institution became the first women’s college in America is somewhat difficult to discern. In writing a report on women’s colleges for the United States Department of Education, Irene Harwarth, Mindi Maline, and Elizabeth DeBra acknowledged several contenders. They pointed out that Macon, Georgia’s, Wesleyan College “was the first school chartered in the United States in 1836, to confer on girls ‘all such honors degrees and licenses as are usually conferred in colleges and universities.’”⁵⁰ However, they also point out that Woody identified Mary Sharp College, which was founded in Winchester, Tennessee, in 1851 and closed in 1896, as “the first U.S. women’s college to require both Latin and Greek in a four-year course, and give an A.B. degree comparable to those awarded by men’s colleges.”⁵¹ Harwarth et al. also observed that Elmira College in Elmira, New York, which was founded in 1855, and Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York (founded in 1865), are also claimants to the title of oldest true women’s college because they first developed academic standards “in a fair degree comparable with men’s colleges” and a healthy endowment, respectively.⁵²

⁴⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Harwarth et al., “Women’s Colleges in the United States: History, Issues, and Challenges.”

⁵¹ Woody, *A History of Women’s Education in the United States, vol. I*, 184 as cited in Harwarth et al., “Women’s Colleges in the United States: History, Issues, and Challenges.”

⁵² Ibid. Incidentally, both Vassar and Elmira became coeducational in 1969.

Over time, other women's colleges would be established after these pioneering institutions. All of the notable "Seven Sisters" institutions (which are Barnard and Vassar colleges in New York; Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania; and Mount Holyoke, Smith, Wellesley, and Radcliffe Colleges in Massachusetts) had been founded by 1875. Beginning around 1900, educators founded many Catholic women's colleges throughout the country.⁵³ Also around the turn of the century, a handful of public women's colleges opened. These institutions would eventually all admit men though they maintained a focus on women's education. The founding of these and other women's colleges throughout the country would swell women's college numbers into the hundreds. Recession would come, however. This would have been primarily due to the simple fact that, as time past, most American colleges became coeducational. Women thereby gained many more options for higher education and enrollment at women's colleges dropped. Precipitous enrollment drops closed many women's colleges. Overall, Harwarth noted that, "The actual number of women's colleges [had] dropped from approximately 300 in 1960 to about 80 in 1998."⁵⁴ Brenau is one of the survivors.

Brenau can make no claim to being the first women's college. However, its development mirrors that of the institutions that can. Brenau began life as an advanced seminary, named the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary, in 1878. Despite its being relatively old, the story of Brenau, with but one short exception, remains largely untold. Biographies of educational institutions exist for other colleges and universities, many much younger than Brenau. These institutional histories provide a wealth of information on the places they were written about. However, these works also help us learn about history in a much broader context as we see in the microcosm of a

⁵³ See Mary J. Oates, ed., *Higher Education for Catholic Women: An Historical Anthology* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1987) for more information about Catholic women's colleges.

⁵⁴ Irene Harwarth, "A Closer Look At Women's Colleges"; United States Department of Education (July 1999); available from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/WomensColleges/index.html>; Internet; accessed 16 December 2007.

single college or university a rendering of part of the larger world. Given its fairly long life and its relatively rare character as a predominantly single-gender institution, at the very least, shedding light on Brenau University's past would, at the same time, illuminate more about the history of education and the history of women. For these reasons, at least, Brenau is worth writing about.

To date, only one attempt has been made to reveal the history of Brenau. The "short exception" I mentioned is a brief (i.e., 100 double-spaced pages) work by Eleanor Rigney entitled *Brenau 1878-1978: Enriched by the Past, Challenged by the Future*.⁵⁵ Rigney, who taught at Brenau for several years and who wrote its history as her doctoral dissertation at Emory University, wrote *Brenau 1878-1978* upon the occasion of then Brenau College's one-hundredth anniversary. Rigney included chapters on the development of Brenau's music conservatory, its student organizations, town and gown relations, and campus life and traditions, to name a few. Published in 1978, Rigney's work was presumably held to somewhat less rigorous standards of scholarship than it would be today. Consequently, it is quite brief and, by today's standards, sparingly researched. Rigney used and analyzed relatively few primary sources and only one piece of secondary scholarship in her writing. Also, Rigney's work is decidedly celebratory. Her tone throughout the dissertation clearly indicated that she thought a great deal of her employer. Even so, what Rigney produced is a clearly written and interesting overview of Brenau's first hundred years. In particular, *Brenau 1878-1978* included a well-done study of the socio-economic status of several families who sent their daughters to Brenau in the early twentieth century. Still, this socio-economic study notwithstanding, Rigney's work left out

⁵⁵ Eleanor Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978: Enriched by the Past, Challenged by the Future* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1978).

more than it included about Brenau's early history and could not speak to Brenau's dynamic last three decades of existence at all. Consequently, Brenau remains largely unstudied.

Indeed, "unstudied" could describe the state of much of the field of higher education generally just as it describes Brenau's condition in particular. As evidence of this, it is notable that there are far fewer college and university histories in print than there are colleges and universities. Additionally, relatively few scholars have engaged individual topics within the history of higher education such as institutional discrimination and integration, the community college movement, "boosterism," and others. Perhaps most tellingly, only two works in this field could even approach being dubbed "synthetic"—and even these are often much criticized.

The default classic in the field of the history of higher education is Rudolph's 1962 book entitled *The American College and University: A History*. Using a bevy of primary and secondary sources, Rudolph chronicled the development in America of classically-oriented, colonial colleges inspired by English models. His book examined these institutions as they evolved and were joined in the mid-nineteenth century by universities, inspired by German models, which began to develop and thrive into the mid-twentieth century. He considered many aspects of colleges and universities in his account. Among other things, his topics included the curriculum, the "extracurriculum" (i.e., what Rudolph refers to as the "college way," which contemplates the residential nature of American colleges and college life and traditions more generally), the changing character of faculty, the development of land grant and state colleges, and the rise of football. Rudolph's account is often witty, generally well-written, and does a thorough, if not definitive, job of examining many aspects of a very difficult-to-examine field.⁵⁶

Thelin's *A History of American Higher Education*, which was published in 2004, built upon Rudolph's work in many respects. Like Rudolph, Thelin used multiple primary and

⁵⁶ Rudolph, *American College and University*.

secondary sources to examine institutions of higher education in the United States from the colonial era to the modern day. In particular, he focused upon the impact of economic, cultural, political, and social factors on the development of colleges and universities. His work is passable up until the 1960s but thereafter becomes fragmented.⁵⁷

Like Rudolph, Thelin contended that colonial colleges emerged to “identify and ratify a colonial elite” that would assume the leadership of colonial society. Thelin went on to say that antebellum colleges in America differed by region. Colleges in the North trained sons excluded from land ownership as a result of primogenitor for careers while southern colleges nurtured the development of southern gentlemen-landowners. According to Thelin, following the disruptive periods of the Civil War and Reconstruction, the Progressive Era saw the rise of universities, the expansion of co-education, greater emphasis placed on science in the curriculum, an increased professionalization of faculty, and the emergence of vibrant campus life and intercollegiate athletics. During the interwar period of the twentieth century, colleges struggled financially during the Great Depression and reached out to evermore diverse student clienteles to make ends meet. During the Cold War years, vocationally oriented colleges and graduate education expanded rapidly.⁵⁸

Beginning with the 1960s, Thelin’s history especially falters. He says little or nothing at all about the impact of the civil rights, feminist, or counterculture movements on college campuses, nor does he address the effect of things like the personal computer revolution on education. His omission of engaging discussions about race and gender is particularly aggrieving since several studies of these topics had been produced prior to 2004 and might have been consulted.

⁵⁷ Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

While the efforts of both Rudolph and Thelin are serviceable in several respects, their histories of higher education say frustratingly little about the higher education of women.⁵⁹ In fact, within the field of the history of higher education, there is relatively little scholarship in this area at all despite the fact that women have been regularly attending college since at least the 1830s. Perhaps the best evidence for this assertion about a lack of scholarship in this area is the fact that the benchmark work in the field is often still considered to be Woody's two-volume *A History of Women's Education in the United States*, despite the fact that it was published in 1929.⁶⁰ Woody's history engaged such topics as the origins of the women's education movement, opposition to women's education, the rise of co-education in colleges and universities, and, perhaps more sparingly, the development of women's colleges. Given when it was written, however, more than this it could not address.

What more recent scholarship there is on the higher education of women has often built upon Woody's work. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe's *Women and Higher Education in American History* is a collection of essays that deal with women's higher education. The essays examine a variety of topics such as single-sex colleges, pioneering women educators like Lucy Sprague Mitchell and Alice James, and the history of black women in higher education. The essays could serve as primers to many themes involving women's higher education.⁶¹

Several of these themes have been addressed by other authors as well. In her book *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America*, Barbara Miller Solomon discussed four such themes relating to women's higher education: women's

⁵⁹ Thelin, in particular, is criticized by historian Ronald Butchart for his omission of anything substantive about the educational experience of African American women. This fault is especially glaring since he wrote his synthesis after much fine scholarship on this subject had been published.

⁶⁰ Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States*.

⁶¹ John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe, *Women and Higher Education in American History* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988).

struggles for access to institutions of higher learning, the dimensions of the college experience for women, the connection between feminism and women's education, and the effects of higher education upon women's life choices. In particular, Solomon's book focused on differences in regional culture and their effects on the development of women's education and gave good coverage to the early history of women's higher education.⁶²

Two other works provide even better coverage of the early history of higher education for women. As previously mentioned, Nash is the author of *Women's Education in the United States 1780 – 1840*. In this book, she included chapters on education in the Early National period, on curriculum and pedagogy in schools in the New Republic, on female education and the emergence of the "Middling Classes," on intellectual and physical education, and on an examination of education and white middle-class womanhood. She made several good points. Nash argued that education prior to 1840 was not as gendered as many historians have claimed. In addition, she contended that "Enlightenment beliefs and the ethos of civic republicanism" encouraged the intellectual growth of women.⁶³ Her research also revealed that "both the curricula and the pedagogy were similar for men and women in most academies of the period."⁶⁴ Nash identified several reasons why women pursued education. Some sought learning to be better able to "Christianize the nation."⁶⁵ Others sought education to gain "some degree of economic self-sufficiency" by obtaining jobs as teachers.⁶⁶ Still others pursued education for the "sheer longing for learning."⁶⁷ Finally, Nash discussed how "education was key to the project of

⁶² Barbara Miller Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women: A History of Women and Higher Education in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

⁶³ Nash, *Women's Education*, 12.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

class formation” and how “class and race were more salient than gender in the construction of educational institutions.”⁶⁸

Like Nash’s work, Mary Kelley’s *Learning to Stand and Speak: Women, Education, and Public Life in America’s Republic* dealt with the history of early higher education for women. As the title suggests, Kelley made the claim that advanced women’s academies and seminaries taught students the skills necessary for not merely becoming republican mothers, but for entering public life themselves. These educated women yearned for more than merely motherhood and their domestic sphere. They contributed greatly to American public life as they became teachers, school founders, writers, lecturers, and community association leaders. Kelley painstakingly analyzed early women’s academy and seminary catalogs and discovered that their curricula essentially mirrored that of contemporary men’s colleges. She also discovered that both genders received higher education in relatively equal measure and that costs for male and female institutions were consonant. These facts suggested that Americans greatly valued education for daughters as well as sons. Still, all was not equal. Kelley illustrated that, besides teaching them content, women’s institutions took pains to inculcate modesty in students. This was done so young women would not “show off” their learning and reach beyond their feminine spheres—exactly what happened to many women who became not just active citizens but activists.⁶⁹

Lynn D. Gordon examined the higher education of women in a later period (from 1890 to 1920) in her book, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era*. Gordon chronicled how the second generation of American women to attend college challenged prevailing female stereotypes to take part in the intellectual and political life of the time. These women sought educations on par with those received by men and, unlike earlier generations of educated women,

⁶⁸ Ibid., back cover.

⁶⁹ See Kelley, *Learning to Stand and Speak*.

sought marriage in addition to careers. Gordon deftly used writings of female students that were published in literary magazines and the like to craft her narrative. She related that female students at the University of California were often resented and snubbed by their male counterparts while women at the University of Chicago integrated well, at least until administrators feared the “effeminization” of the university and began to exclude women from college life. Students at Vassar, Sophie Newcomb, and Agnes Scott women’s colleges enjoyed vibrant campus life, but owing to regional cultural differences negotiated pursuing marriage and career differently. Ultimately, perhaps what Gordon did best was to correct historical misconceptions about women students in this era as being frivolous and socially preoccupied. Their writings indicated that these students were very often thoughtful and serious and very focused on their educations.⁷⁰

Amy Thompson McCandless picked up about where Gordon left off and studied an academically neglected region of the country in her book entitled *The Past in the Present: Women’s Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South*. McCandless asserted that social, political, cultural, and economic forces operated in the South to create a distinctive educational climate for southern women. Around 1900, a poor economy and conservative attitudes about gender made for few educational opportunities for southern women compared with those of women elsewhere as southern states resisted co-education. The opportunities that did emerge were often at private colleges, which were expensive and emphasized manners and deportment over scholarship. McCandless noted, however, that these adverse circumstances actually united the female students who did manage to attend college at places like Agnes Scott

⁷⁰ Lynn Gordon, *Gender and Higher Education in the Progressive Era* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990).

or Wesleyan. A heightened spirit of sisterhood developed, which prepared women well to participate in many clubs and civic organizations later in life.⁷¹

Linda Eisenmann's book entitled *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945–1965* also dealt with the twentieth century. Her research eroded a prevalent notion that the postwar period was an educational doldrum for American women. Despite that facts that the numbers of women students and faculty at American colleges declined during this period and that the number of women who left education to have families increased, the period between 1945 and 1965 was significant. These decades would see built a “generational bridge from the energetic women of World War II to the activists of the late 1960s.”⁷² Women during this era worked more quietly than their later feminist counterparts to effect change, but they still managed to draw attention to women's needs as evidenced by the expansion of things like continuing education programs for women in American colleges and universities.⁷³

These few general histories of women's higher education in America typically focus a great deal on co-education. In fact, co-education was relatively rare until the twentieth century. Until this time, most women seeking higher education enrolled in women's colleges. Despite this, little has been written about women's colleges particularly. Owing to this dearth of scholarship, works like Louise Schutz Boas' *Woman's Education Begins: The Rise of the Women's Colleges*, which examined the early development of women's colleges, still receive attention today despite having been published in 1935.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Amy Thompson McCandless, *The Past in the Present: Women's Higher Education in the Twentieth-Century American South* (Tuscaloosa, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1999).

⁷² Linda Eisenmann, *Higher Education for Women in Postwar America, 1945–1965* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 233.

⁷³ Eisenmann, *Higher Education for Women*.

⁷⁴ Louise Schutz Boas, *Woman's Education Begins; the Rise of the Women's Colleges* (Norton, MA: Wheaton College Press, 1935).

When scholars do examine women's colleges, they tend to look at northern institutions. Each of the historic Seven Sisters colleges has its own institutional history and, generally speaking, books dealing with women's colleges almost invariably focus on these and other northern women's schools. A case in point is Helen Horowitz's *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth Century Beginnings to the 1930s*. This book discussed the history of women in American higher education by examining several selected colleges, specifically the Seven Sisters as well as Bennington College in Vermont and Sarah Lawrence College in New York—all northern schools.⁷⁵

Horowitz asserted that concern over social control and discipline determined how many women's colleges initially developed. As evidence of this, she cited how several institutions were contained entirely in one building to promote student supervision at all times. She also indicated that, early-on, most women's colleges tried to cultivate a sense of family among students, which was actually an extension of popular notions of domesticity. Later colleges like Smith and Bryn Mawr had architecture more resembling that of men's colleges, which demonstrated that these institutions wanted to produce scholars and not merely well-aculturated women. The other Sisters eventually followed suit in changing their designs. Horowitz indicated that women faculty at these colleges eschewed their roles as monitors of female students, preferring instead to become serious scholars. Horowitz also examined student culture at the colleges and determined, unsurprisingly, that some girls just wanted to have fun at college while others more seriously pursued education. She related that concerns over college-educated

⁷⁵ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater: Design and Experience in the Women's Colleges from Their Nineteenth-Century Beginnings to the 1930s* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984).

women not marrying and female homosexuality prompted women's colleges in the 1920s to try to steer women back to domesticity and to further ties with men's institutions.⁷⁶

Farnham's aforementioned *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South* stands virtually alone in its examination of early southern women's colleges. Farnham chronicled the development of educational institutions for women in the South prior to the Civil War. She asserted that, despite the South's backward reputation regarding education, many more institutions of higher learning were created for women in that region than in the North. Farnham contended that while some of these colleges were really little more than finishing schools, others were solidly academic institutions on a par with many men's colleges throughout the country. Interestingly, these women's colleges pioneered the study of modern foreign languages and the sciences in higher educational institutions while contemporary, predominantly men's colleges retained educational curricula focused on the classics, subjects thought to be too deep for women to grasp.⁷⁷

Farnham revealed that many upper-class southern women were, as a result of their experiences in women's colleges, very well educated compared to their northern sisters. However, she went on to indicate that few southern women would utilize their educations in a practical sense. Rather, education for a southern woman occurred to make her more refined, to make her more of an object of desire for potential mates, and to reify upper-crust Southern society's social power and influence. It was the northern women's schools that produced radicals and reformers; southern women's colleges did not.⁷⁸

Besides the works by Farnham and McCandless, only a pair of doctoral dissertations deal with southern women's colleges as a whole. In 1985, Florence Fleming Corley published

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ See Farnham, *Education of the Southern Belle*.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

“Higher Education for Southern Women: Four Church-related Women’s Colleges in Georgia, Agnes Scott, Shorter, Spelman, and Wesleyan, 1900-1920.”⁷⁹ Prior to this, only Elizabeth Barber Young’s 1932 dissertation entitled “A Study of the Curricula of Seven Selected Women’s Colleges of the Southern States” dealt with more than one southern woman’s college at a time.⁸⁰

In addition to there being but a few histories that deal with southern women’s colleges generally, the field of the history of higher education can not claim many works about particular institutions either. Besides these few general works, only a handful of institutional biographies of southern women’s colleges exist and most are quite old. For example, Lillian Adele Kibler wrote a history of South Carolina’s Converse College in 1973 while Edward Alvey wrote a history of Mary Washington College in Virginia in 1974.⁸¹ Two decades earlier, Roberta D. Cornelius wrote about Virginia’s Randolph-Macon Woman’s College in 1951 while Mary Lynch Johnson wrote about Meredith College in North Carolina in 1956.⁸² Mildred Morse McEwen produced a history of Queens College in North Carolina in 1980 while Walter Edward McNair wrote a history of Agnes Scott College in Georgia in 1983.⁸³ Frances J. Niederer wrote an illustrated history of Virginia’s Hollins College in 1973 and Florence Read wrote *The Story of Spelman College* in Atlanta in 1961 a few years after Martha Lou Lemmon Stohlman wrote *The*

⁷⁹ Florence Corley, “Higher Education for Southern Women: Four Church-Related Women’s Colleges in Georgia, Agnes Scott, Shorter, Spelman, and Wesleyan, 1900-1920” (PhD diss., Georgia State University, 1985).

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Barber Young, *A Study of the Curricula of Seven Selected Women’s Colleges of the Southern States* (New York, NY: Teachers Colleges, Columbia University, 1932).

⁸¹ See Lillian Adele Kibler, *The History of Converse College, 1889-1971* (Spartanburg, SC: Converse College, 1973) and Edward Alvey, *History of Mary Washington College, 1908-1972* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1974).

⁸² See Roberta D. Cornelius, *The History of Randolph-Macon Woman’s College* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1951) and Mary Lynch Johnson, *A History of Meredith College* (Raleigh, NC: Meredith College, 1956).

⁸³ See Mildred Morse McEwen, *Queens College: Yesterday and Today* (Charlotte, NC: Heritage Printers, Inc. for Queens College Alumni Association, 1980) and Walter Edward McNair, *Lest We Forget: An Account of Agnes Scott College* (Atlanta, GA: Tucker-Castleberry Printing, Inc., 1983).

Story of Sweet Briar College in Virginia in 1956.⁸⁴ Only Phinizy Spalding's 1994 history of the Lucy Cobb Institute in Athens, Georgia, Jeffrey R. Willis' 2001 history of Converse College, Frances Dew Hamilton and Elizabeth Crabtree Wells' 1989 history of Judson College, and Judith T. Bainbridge's 2001 history of the Woman's College of Furman University in Greenville, South Carolina, could be considered recent.⁸⁵ Many prominent southern women's colleges—some well over 100 years old—have never had their histories thoroughly written. These include Wesleyan College in Georgia, Midway College in Kentucky, Salem College in North Carolina, and Brenau University in Gainesville, Georgia.⁸⁶

What this collective historiography reveals is unsettling. It tells us that the history of higher education in America is relatively little-studied, that the history of women's higher education is less studied still, that the history of women's colleges in particular is ignored even further, and that the history of southern women's colleges in specific is almost nonexistent. This lack of scholarship is lamentable because these later institutions are, in fact, very significant. Colleges like Brenau were the only viable educational outlets for roughly half of the population of a large segment of the country for many years. Understanding more about such institutions

⁸⁴ See Frances J. Niederer, *Hollins College: An Illustrated History* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1973); Florence Read, *The Story of Spelman College* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961); and Martha Lou Lemmon Stohlman, *The Story of Sweet Briar College* (Sweet Briar, VA: Alumnae Association of Sweet Briar College, 1956).

⁸⁵ See Jeffrey R. Willis, *Converse College* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2001); Phinizy Spalding, *Higher Education for Women in the South: A History of Lucy Cobb Institute, 1858-1994* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1994); Frances Dew Hamilton and Elizabeth Crabtree Wells, *Daughters of the Dream: Judson College 1838 – 1988* (Marion, AL: Judson College, 1989); and Judith T. Bainbridge, *Academy and College: the History of the Woman's College of Furman University* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2001).

⁸⁶ Some brief works exist about a few of these colleges, but none attempt to relate the entire history of the institution examined. For examples, see Samuel Luttrell Akers, *The First Hundred Years of Wesleyan College, 1836-1936* (Savannah, GA: Beehive Press, 1976); F. N. Boney, "'The Pioneer College for Women': Wesleyan over a Century and a Half," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 72 (fall, 1988): 519-32; Richard W. Griffin, "Wesleyan College: Its Genesis, 1835-1840," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 50 (March, 1966): 54-73; Caryl L. Martin, "The Evolution of Intercollegiate Athletics at Wesleyan College: A Historical Perspective," *Journal of the Georgia Association of Historians* 19 (1998): 54-106.

would shed light on the experience of women themselves and contribute a great deal to the knowledge of women's history generally.

The purpose of this dissertation is to gain this understanding by telling the history of Brenau University. Several questions deserve examination. How and why was Brenau founded? What is the history of academic life at Brenau? What was the history of such things as physical culture and athletics at the college? What is revealed by examining the history of traditions and organizations (such as sororities and other secret societies) at Brenau? What challenges (such as integration) has Brenau faced in modern times and how did the institution cope?

I address these and other research questions by utilizing, in the main, the archives of Brenau University. These archives contain a modest holding of collections of materials dating back to the earliest years of the existence of the institution. For example, included in these collections are many yearbooks, a few literary journals, and some editions of Brenau's student newspaper, the *Alchemist*. Also included in the archives are several college bulletins and catalogs, the papers of several university presidents, and a myriad of photographs, just to name some items. In addition, I make use of two newspapers, the *Atlanta Constitution* and the *Gainesville Eagle*, which were both published in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Finally, I utilize several secondary sources, including many of the ones mentioned above, to place what these primary sources reveal into a larger historical context.

I frame this inquiry around the concept of college as being a "negotiated space." Ronald Butchart, an historian of education and my dissertation advisor, coined this idea. It suggests that the overall experience of any college is constructed in a process of negotiation between two key groups, the college's students and its faculty and administration. Of course, these negotiations might, at times, take the form of actual face-to-face meetings between these two parties.

However, far more often, the negotiating would occur over time and not at arm's length in something like an on-going, give-and-take process spanning the life of the institution. Each side might take years to do something that impacts the college experience or take years to respond to something promulgated by the other party. The end result, though, is that both sides—faculty and students—play a role in refining their institution. While this may seem somewhat intuitive, in fact, the idea of student agency is often lost in many institutional biographies. Rather, these works depict the histories of colleges from the top-down, focusing upon the actions of administrators and faculty members. These histories seldom acknowledge the fact that students often pushed back against faculty designs or even initiated their own campus policies and that they actually did so with some success to create their idealized version of what college should be.

The history of Brenau provides an excellent view of this process of negotiation. One will see how throughout the institution's history, Brenau's students and faculty jockeyed to create and refine what I call "their Brenau," their ideal version of what the Brenau College experience should be. Often, Brenau's faculty and administration gained the upper hand in negotiations with students. This was particularly evident in fashioning the college curriculum and in setting institutional policies about such things as integration. However, in many instances, this was not the case. At some times, Brenau's students essentially won the negotiations and exhibited a remarkable degree of initiative and autonomy in conducting affairs in some arenas. Brenau women had a prominent voice in effecting college rules and discipline, in influencing student organizations, and in bringing athletics to campus.

While no single institutional history could correct the significant historiographical problem that is the lack of scholarship on southern women's colleges, a history of Brenau

University provides some redress. Moreover, framing this history in the context of college as a negotiated space will illustrate how student agency plays a greater role in charting college destinies than most scholars have heretofore much acknowledged. Furthermore, posing and answering questions about who founded Brenau and why, how it grew and met challenges, and how it became the institution that it is today will shed light not just upon the life of a single university but on the experience of generations of women as well. An inquiry into Brenau's past, therefore, is actually an inquiry into a much larger and broader world.

CHAPTER ONE

PARTIES TO NEGOTIATION: BRENAU'S STUDENTS AND FACULTY

Brenau is a product of human relations. Everything the institution was, is, or will become is, in the main, most fundamentally the end result of a remarkable and long-lived negotiation between Brenau's students and Brenau's faculty and administration. In the arenas of such contested spaces as college athletics, college rules and regulations, college academics and so-forth, these negotiators sparred, more or less amicably, toward constructing what each side saw as "their Brenau," which was their ideal version of the college. Brenau, then, is also a product of compromise—oftentimes (but not always) of the willing variety between these contesting sides. This chapter examines Brenau's student body and faculty throughout the institution's history to inform an understanding of the roles they would play in negotiating for their Brenau.

From the outset, it should be clear that Brenau's students and faculty members have never worked entirely at cross-purposes. Since Brenau's founding, there was much common ground between the two camps about what the character of the institution should be. In particular, both sides of negotiators would have worked to cultivate what historian Frederick Rudolph termed the "collegiate way." Rudolph wrote that:

The collegiate way is the notion that a curriculum, a library, a faculty, and students are not enough to make a college. It is an adherence to the residential scheme of things. It is respectful of quiet rural settings, dependent on dormitories, committed to dining halls, permeated by paternalism. It is what every American college has had or consciously rejected or lost or sought to recapture.¹

¹ Rudolph, *American College and University*, 87. Scarcities of money, potential students, and housing may have induced colleges to adopt residential characters. See Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*, 10.

This was Brenau from inception, which both faculty and students (who came annually by the dozens and hundreds, respectively) embraced. What the two sides differed on, of course, were the details.

Two areas of friction likely predominated. On the one hand, students and faculty members contested the very vision of what it meant to be educated. Students tended to reject what they perceived as archaic subjects (such as a Latin-based curriculum) favoring instead more marketable, more practical learning. Conversely, the college faculty tended to reject the vocationalized mentalities that many students possessed, believing instead that learning for learning's sake had value. The other great divide contemplated the amount and degree of "paternalism" that would exist at the college. Many faculty members would have viewed their role as being *in loco parentis* while simultaneously acknowledging that students needed at least some independence, some room to grow. Most students would have seen themselves largely as adults entitled to independence, but would likewise have acknowledged that at least some boundaries made sense. What the two sides jockeyed for was the middle ground between their opposing views.

Of course, no college could function without its students. And, as at any college, it would be the students at Brenau that would play a large role in determining the character of the institution. Their backgrounds in terms of characteristics such as class and socio-economic status, place of origin, religion, age, and, of course, gender, would contribute much toward the nature of the collegiate way that would emerge at Brenau. Throughout its history, sources reveal that, compared to other women's colleges, the student body at Brenau has been remarkably diverse in many respects, just as it was remarkably homogenous in others.

Speaking of New England women's colleges, Helen Horowitz wrote that, "By the 1890s, the women's colleges attracted a new clientele—young, well-educated women of the wealthy strata who had no thought of a career after college."² These women were different from the kind of girls that college founders had hoped to attract, girls that were "serious, hardworking, daughter[s] of the middle class preparing to teach."³ These New Englanders were in some ways similar to and in some ways different from their southern sisters.

With very few exceptions, in the South, higher education for women had always been restricted to the daughters of elite families. As late as the mid-nineteenth century, higher education for women (where it occurred at all outside of New England and the Midwest) was largely a luxury item. Some affluent southern families sent their teen-aged daughters to what amounted to private, all-girls "finishing schools" to learn social graces and to study material deemed suitable for women, such as modern languages, botany, and arts and music. Young women in these institutions, wherever they were located, would likely have had much more in common than just age and gender, including Protestant beliefs, wealthy upbringings, and white, Anglican roots.⁴

This archetype predominated in southern women's higher education until the late nineteenth century. It was then, in the decades leading up to the Progressive Era, that things changed. Some of the finishing schools that had sprouted throughout the region to teach wealthy girls the social graces gradually became more academically rigorous and eventually evolved into all-women's colleges. This shift likely occurred at this time in response to the financial distress brought about by the Civil War and Reconstruction. Many families became unable to support the leisurely lifestyles promoted by earlier women's schools. Instead, they demanded better

² Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 147.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See Farnham, *Education of the Southern Belle*.

education for daughters to improve their prospects of making a living. Over time, women from more diverse backgrounds began attending these colleges in more significant numbers. The type of concerns for social justice that had catalyzed the development of women's colleges in the first place prompted educators of women to enroll non-elite girls in their institutions. These students brought with them to college very different worldviews from those of earlier women students and radically changed the face of higher education for women.⁵

Founders established the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary, the institution that would become Brenau College, in the late 1800s and embraced this desire to expand educational opportunities for women. The best evidence for this probably comes in the form of newspaper advertisements for the institution that appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The *Atlanta Constitution* published a plethora of ads for the seminary and, later, Brenau, during this period. Economy is a prevalent theme in many of these as Brenau's founders clearly sought to make the college inexpensive enough so that any girl could afford to attend. The seminary's catalog echoed this theme. In describing the aim of the institution, the catalog read, "The prime object is, by rigid economy, to bring the highest order of Collegiate instruction within the reach of the middle and poorer classes of society. This we can and will do by our Cottage System, by cheap board and low rates of tuition; and as soon as our collections shall reach \$25,000, tuition in our Literary Department will be virtually free."⁶

Tuition never became free, but it was modest for most of the college's history. In 1900, Brenau's catalog indicated that board for a single 18 week term ran from \$65.00 to \$80.00.⁷ Tuition in 1900 was \$22.50 per term for freshmen and sophomores and \$30.00 per term for

⁵ See McCandless, *Past in the Present*.

⁶ *Twenty-Second Annual Catalogue of Brenau College and Brenau Conservatory* (Atlanta, GA: The Foote & Davis Company, 1900), 14; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as "*Catalog* (1900)."

⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

juniors and seniors.⁸ The catalog listed separate tuition charges for conservatory subjects. Students taking art, voice, and elocution paid \$25.00 while students taking piano and organ paid up to \$40.00 and \$60.00, respectively. Roughly \$7.00 in other fees covered usage of the library, the science laboratories, and medical facilities.⁹ In 1910, Brenau's catalog published a paragraph dealing with "Minimum, Average, and Maximum Expense" for "a girl taking an average course."¹⁰ In this section, the college added together charges for the following expenses for a single term: board, room, literary tuition, music tuition, piano practice, books and music, and fees and incidentals. Brenau found the minimum expense to be \$149.00, the average expense to be \$201.00, and the maximum expense to be \$259.00 per term.¹¹ By 1930, Brenau estimated that the minimum annual expense for attending the college would be \$547 and the maximum expense would be \$647.¹² These estimates included \$150 for tuition and \$280 for board.¹³

Examining expenses at other collegiate institutions during these decades bears out that Brenau was competitively priced. This economy could well have served to attract a wider spectrum of young women to Gainesville. For example, Yale College charged \$155 per year for tuition in 1900 and 1910 and estimated that an average student would spend around \$545 for tuition, room, board, and other expenses during this period.¹⁴ This was just a bit more than the "Maximum Expense" a Brenau student could anticipate paying. By 1930, tuition at Yale was

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ *Thirty-second Annual Catalogue of Brenau College-Conservatory, 1910*, v. 1, n. 2 (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1910), 76; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as "*Catalog* (1910)."

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Brenau College Catalogue, 1929-1930*, v. XXII, n. 2 (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1929), 25; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as "*Catalog* (1929)."

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ George W. Pierson, *A Yale Book of Numbers: Historical Statistics of the College and University 1701 – 1976* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1983), 578; available from http://www.yale.edu/oir/book_numbers_original/f.pdf; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

\$450 per year and room rent averaged around \$250 per student per year—numbers again on a par with costs at Brenau.¹⁵ At the University of Georgia in 1899:

Students paid no tuition, which had been eliminated by the Legislature in 1881. The average student fee total was about \$200, which included a \$10 matriculation fee, a \$5 library fee, and a \$2 fee for initiation into one of the literary societies. Fees for laundry, board, furnishings, books, stationery and utilities varied depending upon usage (the catalog offered a range from “low” to “very liberal”). Every student also paid \$16 for his uniform for drill.¹⁶

The \$200.00 in fees (plus board) for Georgia students in 1899 seems comparable to the \$220 total cost of Brenau in 1900. By the nineteen thirties, tuition had made a comeback in Georgia’s public colleges. For example, in 1938, tuition at Georgia Tech was \$50 per semester.¹⁷

Coupling fees to this would have brought the educational expenses (sans room and board) of a Tech student close to matching the \$75 per term expenses paid by Brenau women in the same decade. Regarding expenses at Emory University in Atlanta, a former professor wrote that:

In 1919 tuition per quarter was \$25. This was increased to \$35 in 1920. Everyone paid a general fee of \$5.00 per quarter and laboratory courses had variable fees. The lab fee for general chemistry was \$2.00 in 1919 and \$5.00 in 1920. A breakage deposit was required and was refundable if no apparatus was broken.

Examples of living expenses were: Alabama Hall, \$54.00 per year for a double room with three occupants. A double room with two occupants in Winship and Dobbs was \$58.50 and a single room could be had for \$81.00 per year. Meals were \$25.00 per month in the Dining Hall.¹⁸

In all, at Emory in 1919, “total expenses for the year were estimated as \$450 to \$695, with \$500 being the average.”¹⁹ The average cost of Emory was roughly double what a Brenau student

¹⁵ Ibid., 590.

¹⁶ Michael F. Adams, “State of the University 2000,” State of the University Address, 12 January 2000; available from <http://www.uga.edu/news/2000state/2000text.html>; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

¹⁷ Georgia Institute of Technology, “Tech Timeline – 1885”; available from <http://gtalumni.org/Publications/timeline/>; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

¹⁸ R.A. Day quoting from Thomas H. English, *Emory University 1915-1965 - A Semicentennial History* (Atlanta, GA: Higgins-McArthur Co., 1966); available from http://www.chemistry.emory.edu/departments_info/history/chapter1.html; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

¹⁹ Ibid.

would have paid only a few years before. At all-women's Vassar College in 1905, the annual fee for tuition and residence was increased from \$400 to \$500.²⁰ By 1920, the fee was \$800.²¹ By 1931, Vassar charged \$1200 for tuition and residence.²² These figures prove that a Vassar education cost roughly twice that of a Brenau education during the early twentieth century.

Besides keeping tuition and fees low to make Brenau widely accessible even to girls of modest means, Brenau also discouraged spending lavishly on fashion extravagance and offered scholarships for study at the college. Several early newspaper advertisements and catalogs iterated what Brenau's 1910 catalog stated, which was that "expensive dressing is discouraged" and that "décolleté and elaborate or very expensive toilets are prohibited."²³ The college banned extravagant clothing—and made much of this ban—so that girls of modest means would not be discouraged from attending Brenau for fear of looking out of place. To further attract girls from middling socio-economic backgrounds, Brenau offered scholarships. The 1910 catalog indicated that, "Thirty scholarships of the value of \$60 are awarded yearly to students who have been distinguished in their high schools, and to others who may be found worthy of same."²⁴ Additionally, for a number of years, several editions of Brenau catalogs indicated that daughters of clergymen could attend Brenau at reduced rates.

In light of this information, an important question lingers: Did Brenau's low cost succeed in attracting a diverse student body to the college? Logic suggests this would have been the case, but records are too sparse from the days of the Baptist Female Seminary and from Brenau's first few decades of existence to bear this out. However, it may be telling that Brenau apparently

²⁰ Vassar College, "Chronology, 1905-1914"; available from http://historian.vassar.edu/chronology/1905_1914.html; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

²¹ Vassar College, "Chronology, 1915-1922"; available from http://historian.vassar.edu/chronology/1915_1922.html; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

²² Vassar College, "Chronology, 1930-1939"; available from http://historian.vassar.edu/chronology/1930_1939.html; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

²³ *Catalog* (1910), 76.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

achieved an exceptional geographic diversity among its students and had large enrollments during its earliest decades of existence.

It stands to reason that young women would not have come in great numbers from far and wide to study in Gainesville had Brenau been overpriced. Rather, Brenau's affordability attracted students from across the country, which was something the college proudly celebrated. Beginning in the early twentieth century, and lasting until mid-century, Brenau held an event it called its "State's Day" pageant. An edition of the "Brenau Notes" society column in the *Atlanta Constitution* from 1908 indicated that the pageant showcased floats from over 25 states and from England and Cuba.²⁵ Various later editions of the *Notes* indicated that, to celebrate stately and international diversity, the event came to consist of several performances, recitals, and other festivities.

Over time, state clubs formed at Brenau. Yearbook photographs from the 1920s and 1930s indicated that some clubs, mainly those from the southeastern states, had several dozen members. Clubs representing more distant states were either smaller or joined together with other neighboring states to form a regional club. Still, the fact that these clubs existed at all and that they frequently had several members proves that Brenau had students from across the continent, which not all colleges could boast of during this age. Over time, Brenau even attracted students from territories and foreign countries such as Hawai'i and Panama. In terms of geography, then, Brenau's student body has always been diverse. Furthermore, one would anticipate that a geographically diverse student body would be diverse in other ways as well.

Eleanor Rigney produced a socio-economic study of the college in the 1930s that spoke to this student heterogeneity. In the first half of this decade, Rigney determined that roughly a quarter of Brenau's 1,019 students that reported a place of origin to the college came from

²⁵ "'States Day' at Brenau Was Splendid Pageant," *Atlanta Constitution*, 30 April 1908, p. 7.

outside the Southeast. Twenty or more students came from each of four states: Ohio, Pennsylvania, Illinois, or West Virginia. Several Brenau women also called New York, Texas, and Kentucky home. Brenau students came from as far north as Vermont and Michigan and as far west as California, Oregon, and Washington.²⁶

Wherever they hailed from, Brenau women as often as not came from educated families. Rigney analyzed the level of educational achievement of the parents of Brenau students during the 1930s by dividing the decade in half. For the first half of the decade, Rigney gathered data from 1,031 fathers of Brenau students. This is not to say that in any given year there were 1,031 girls enrolled at Brenau. Rather, this many fathers completed surveys from 1930 to 1935. Rigney determined that just under half of these fathers of Brenau students who reported their educational achievement in the several years of the early 1930s had attended at least some college. The fathers of several Brenau girls worked white-collar jobs and served as physicians, attorneys, college professors, or in other professions. About twice as many fathers were businessmen, however, and another large contingent farmed. Rigney indicated that fathers who were businessmen reported a “great variety” of occupations and that there was “no obvious pattern to these occupations which would point to any particular degree of affluence.”²⁷

The story was essentially the same in the second half of the 1930s. Rigney reported that of the 668 fathers of Brenau students who reported on their education to the college during these five years, 318 (just under half) had attended at least some college. Rigney noted, however, that among the fathers who reported having attended college, more obtained advanced degrees in the period of 1935 – 1939 than had obtained advanced degrees in the previous half-decade. Despite this, the types of occupations maintained by the fathers of Brenau students remained constant

²⁶ See Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 48.

throughout the decade. Most fathers were businessmen, followed by professionals and farmers. The fathers in business worked at many different jobs though none appeared to be very high-level business executives. Additionally, no data indicated that any of the Brenau fathers were either skilled or unskilled laborers. Incidentally, throughout the 1930s, Rigney determined that just less than one-half of the mothers of Brenau students had attended at least some college. Several, in fact, had actually attended Brenau themselves.²⁸ Indeed, alumnae often thought enough of Brenau to encourage their daughters to attend as well. In 1906, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that, “Miss Marry Callie Reynolds of Sylvania, Ga., and Miss Emma Welchel, of Gainesville, Ga.” were “the first granddaughters of Brenau College. Miss Reynolds’ mother was Miss Lucy Wallace, of the class of 1884” while “Miss Welchel’s mother was Miss Emma J. Thompson, a member of the class of 1881.”²⁹

Whatever their backgrounds or places of origin, many students came to Brenau. Indeed, the college generally enjoyed fairly large enrollments from the turn of the century to the 1920s. In 1900, Brenau’s catalog indicated that the institution enrolled 213 students in all of its programs.³⁰ Brenau’s 1910 catalog indicated that the college enrolled 370 students that year in all of its programs combined.³¹ By 1920, enrollment had increased to 554 students.³² Until the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, this would be near the peak enrollment of the institution.

A memorandum prepared in 1950 by Ella D. Winfield, a former registrar at Brenau, gave a concise picture of enrollment at the college over the years between 1930 and 1950. In 1930,

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁹ Photo Standalone -- No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 May 1906, sec. D, p. 5.

³⁰ *Catalog* (1900), 20.

³¹ *Catalog* (1910), 92.

³² *Brenau College Catalogue, 1920-1921*, v. XI, n. 2 (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1920), 121; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Catalog* (1920).”

enrollment was at 483.³³ With the onset of the Great Depression, enrollment fell sharply at Brenau, bottoming out during that decade at 320 students in 1934.³⁴ A report prepared by Brenau officials and ominously entitled “Freshman Mortality 1929 – 1939” indicated that freshman attrition, in part, explained the decline in enrollment. On average, Brenau lost fully 50% of every year’s freshman class as half of the students did not return to Gainesville for their sophomore year.³⁵ Because of this factor and dynamism in recruiting, enrollment from 1935 to 1950 often fluctuated a great deal from year to year with the college literally gaining or losing over a hundred students from one year to the next.

Enrollment at Brenau apparently hit bottom in 1949 – 1950. In that academic year, Winfield’s memo indicated that only 228 students attended the college, less than half the number of young women that had studied at Brenau only three decades before. This was likely due to more young women foregoing college to get married earlier in post-World War II America. Over the next half-century, enrollment would gradually, though steadily, increase. By 2000, Brenau’s Women’s College had tripled in size from its low in 1950 and by 2007 just over 800 students were in attendance.³⁶

While Brenau has, over the years, doubtlessly succeeded in attracting a student body that cut across many socio-economic lines, some of its students were still drawn from that “wealthy strata” of society that Horowitz described. Brenau’s administration acknowledged as much. A portion of the 1910 catalog mentioned that Brenau was “fortunate in having a large patronage among the wealthier classes of the South, who demand for their daughters the conveniences of

³³ “Enrollment of Brenau College.” Memorandum prepared by Ella D. Winfield. Undated, but likely prepared in 1950, the last year of data provided in the memo. Available in Registrar Files, Box 1 of 1, Folder 6, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ “Freshman Mortality 1929 – 1939,” Registrar Files, Box 1 of 1, Folder 8, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

³⁶ Petersons.com, “College Overview: Brenau University”; available from <http://www.petersons.com/ugchannel/code/InstVC.asp?inunid=5425&sponsor=1>; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

life to which they have been accustomed at home.”³⁷ The 1940 catalog stated, “While some of the critics of Brenau have characterized it as a ‘society school,’ which is not true in the sense implied, it is true that the students have come from the best homes in more than thirty-five states. Both financial and social references are required of all applicants for admission. Good character and reputation are required.”³⁸

Wealthy families from outside the South sent their daughters to Brenau as well. One student from a prominent Japanese family practically achieved celebrity status at the college. In 1910, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported, “The old world will be represented in a few weeks in the person of Miss Aya Tokada, who sails from Japan during the present month. She will be educated for three years at Brenau under the auspices and at the expense of the Brenau Young Women’s Christian Association.”³⁹ Aya would make a very favorable impression on Brenau. One edition of the “Brenau Notes” reported that, “little Aya Tokada, aged 12, a winsome Japanese student at Brenau” failed to show up at roll call one day, which threw the institution into a tizzy.⁴⁰ She was found, “seated in the middle of her room half covered in scores of Japanese flags, made by herself, with the walls adorned by the same national emblem” in celebration of the birthday of the Japanese emperor.⁴¹ Touched by her patriotism, “Brenau pupils at once set about arranging a celebration in honor of the emperor’s birthday.”⁴² At the celebration, the girls sang the Japanese national anthem, which brought tears to Aya’s eyes.

³⁷ *Catalog* (1910), 76.

³⁸ *Brenau College Catalogue, 1939-1940*, v. XXXI, n.3 (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1939), 17; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Catalog* (1939).”

³⁹ “Brenau Has Opened,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 8 January 1910, p. 8.

⁴⁰ “Miss Aya Tokada At Brenau Loyal to Flag of Japan,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 4 November 1910, p. 10.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

Brenau must have impressed Aya as much as Aya impressed Brenau. Years after she studied in Gainesville, Aya arranged for her daughter to attend Brenau as well. President Josiah Crudup wrote the Brenau Trustees on the matter. He indicated that:

In 1910 Miss Aya Takeda [sic] came to Brenau College from Tokyo, Japan, and established herself with affection and high esteem by all who knew her while she was a student here in America. She was graduated from Brenau in 1914 and returned to Japan. She married Mr. G[eorge] Etsujiro Uyehara...who became one of the leading political figures of his country during the decades preceding World War II. Mr. Uyehara was a liberal democrat, a strong advocate of friendship with America, and opposed to the militarists of his country who were driving Japan to war with the United States. ...

Since World War II, Mr. Uyehara has returned to public life in Japan and is now a member of the Japanese Diet and holds the high esteem of American representatives there.”⁴³

Dr. Crudup indicated that, “The above account explains the desire of Brenau College to do something for Miss Kazuko Uyehara,” who was the daughter of Aya and George Uyehara and was in her second year attending Brenau.⁴⁴ Dr. Crudup went on to relate that, “Since [Kazuko] has been at Brenau College, I have received several letters from leaders of the Japanese people expressing appreciation. One of these letters came from Shigeru Yoshida, Prime Minister of Japan.”⁴⁵ All the correspondence expressed gratitude to Brenau for facilitating the enrollment of Kazuko in the States.

Aya and Kazuko would have been remarkable at Brenau for more than their loyalty and patriotism; they would have stood out as well for their race. While Brenau would enroll these Asian students and a handful of women from Latin America, for much of the twentieth century, the college severely lacked any racial diversity among its student body. The institution was homogenous and was overwhelmingly white. This would not change until the early 1970s when

⁴³ Letter of January 16, 1951, from Dr. Crudup to Mr. Thomas C. Law. Dr. Crudup files, Box 35 of 40, Folder 7, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Brenau finally began enrolling African American students. Black student enrollment would gradually increase until, by the twenty-first century, Brenau claimed very robust numbers of minority students. According to Brenau, in 2006, “Twenty-five percent [of students] are from minority groups (not including international students).”⁴⁶

In general and throughout its history, Brenau’s students have hailed from many places and economic backgrounds while also being mostly white, protestant, and, of course, female. Once at Brenau, students came together. The materials in the Brenau Archives (particularly some past editions of Brenau’s student newspaper) suggest that the student body often spoke with one voice in their negotiations with faculty. The college’s Student Government Administration typically did the talking. While it is doubtful that all students always agreed on everything, the tenor conveyed by Brenau’s artifacts is one of solidarity between students and their representatives. The impression is that students by and large presented a more-or-less united front in their dealings with Brenau’s professors and administrators.

But what of the faculty and the administration? Like the students, they would play key roles in Brenau’s lifelong negotiation. Yet, where students typically came and went, many of Brenau’s educators spent many years at the college. Their long tenures frequently gave them the upper hand in negotiations with students.

Several powerful presidents loom large in Brenau’s history. The first of these presidents was the Reverend William Clay Wilkes (see Figure 1.1). Wilkes is credited with founding the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary in Gainesville, Georgia, in 1878. Born in 1819, Wilkes graduated from Mercer University, then a Baptist college in Macon, Georgia, and became the pastor of the Baptist Church in Gainesville. Prior to this, Wilkes had “been a teacher of youth in

⁴⁶ Brenau University, “Discover Brenau: Facts and Figures”; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/about/facts.htm>; Internet; accessed 30 October 2007.

Georgia for about thirty-five years” whose “record in Eatonton, Forsyth, Spalding, Dalton and Gainesville” was “part of the educational history” of Georgia.⁴⁷ Besides taking credit for conceiving of the idea for the seminary, Wilkes ran the institution until his death in 1886. He also oversaw its founding amid much fanfare.

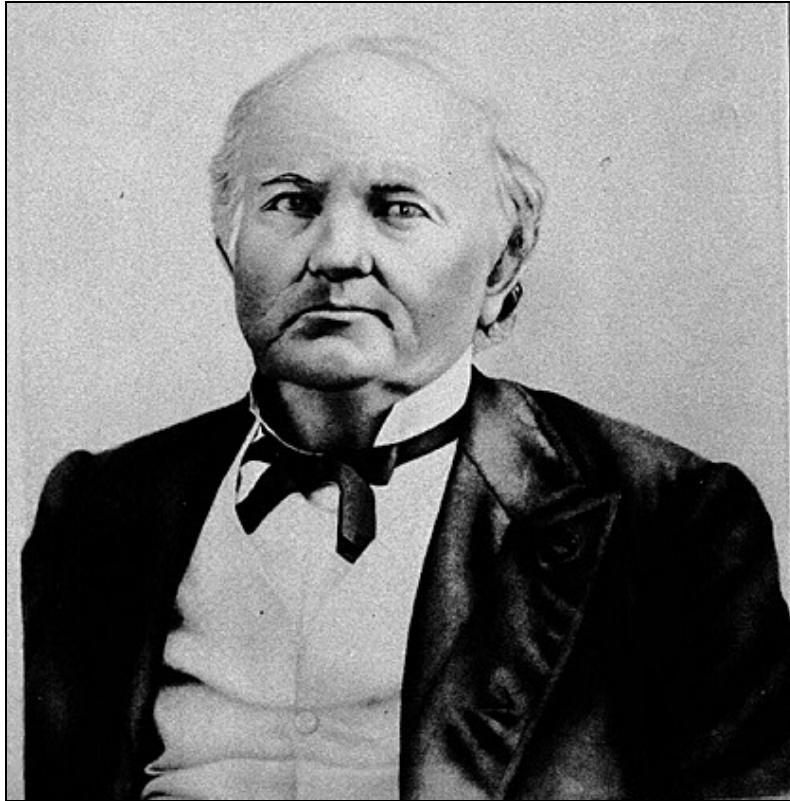


Figure 1.1: The Reverend W. C. Wilkes⁴⁸

The *Gainesville Eagle* proclaimed that, “On the 4th day of July [1878], the people of Gainesville—Ladies especially—and the citizens of Hall and adjacent counties” were invited to

⁴⁷ “State Baptist Female Seminary at Gainesville, Hall County, Ga.,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 16 December 1877, p. 4.

⁴⁸ Georgia Division of Archives and History, “Vanishing Georgia Collection: Photograph of Dr. William Clay Wilkes, Gainesville, Hall County, Georgia, ca. 1880”; available from <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi-bin/vanga.cgi?query=id%3Ahal138&cc=1>; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

witness “the interesting ceremonies of laying the Corner Stone of the First Edifice of the Georgia Seminary, by the Odd-Fellows and the Masons; and to hear able speeches by Hon. W. P. Price of Dahlonega, and by our worthy representative, just from Congress; the Hon. Hiram P. Bell, in the interest of our great enterprise.”⁴⁹ The *Eagle* reported that a procession consisting of a band; the student bodies, faculty, and trustees of other Gainesville-area schools; eminent speakers; and area pastors marched from the town square to the seminary lot for the auspicious ceremony. The *Eagle* related that, in addition to taking in the spectacle, attendees would be permitted “to make a small, suitable deposit of papers, coin, grains of corn, wheat, oats, rye, &c., and especially a list of the names of contributors” to deliver to Wilkes’ seminary as it was started from scratch.⁵⁰

Rev. Wilkes died in 1886 and leadership of the school passed to Dr. Azor Van Hoose (see Figure 1.2). Born in 1860, Van Hoose spent a lifetime working in the field of education. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported that:

For his work, Professor Van Hoose was well equipped. Graduating with distinction at the State university in 1882, he afterwards taught in Howard College, Alabama, and his *alma mater* in Athens. Feeling that the life of a professor was too circumscribed for him he resigned his position in the university in 1885, came to work in Gainesville and entered upon his life work. His friends endeavored to persuade him not to leave the university and Major Lamar Cobb, then secretary of the board of trustees, wrote him a letter requesting him not to send his resignation to the board. All this advice was of no avail, however, for he saw that Gainesville, of all southern cities, possessed superior advantages for a great female college.⁵¹

In fact, Van Hoose originally went to Gainesville to found a municipally-supported, co-educational college that would come to be called Gainesville College.⁵² This institution

⁴⁹ “The Georgia Seminary: Interesting Ceremonies by the Odd-Fellows and Masons,” *Gainesville Eagle*, 28 June 1878, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ “The Georgia Female Seminary and Conservatory of Music,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 August 1893, p. 18.

⁵² *Ibid.*

functioned for several years. However, the idea of taking control of and growing the female seminary apparently appealed to Van Hoose more than maintaining the municipal college.

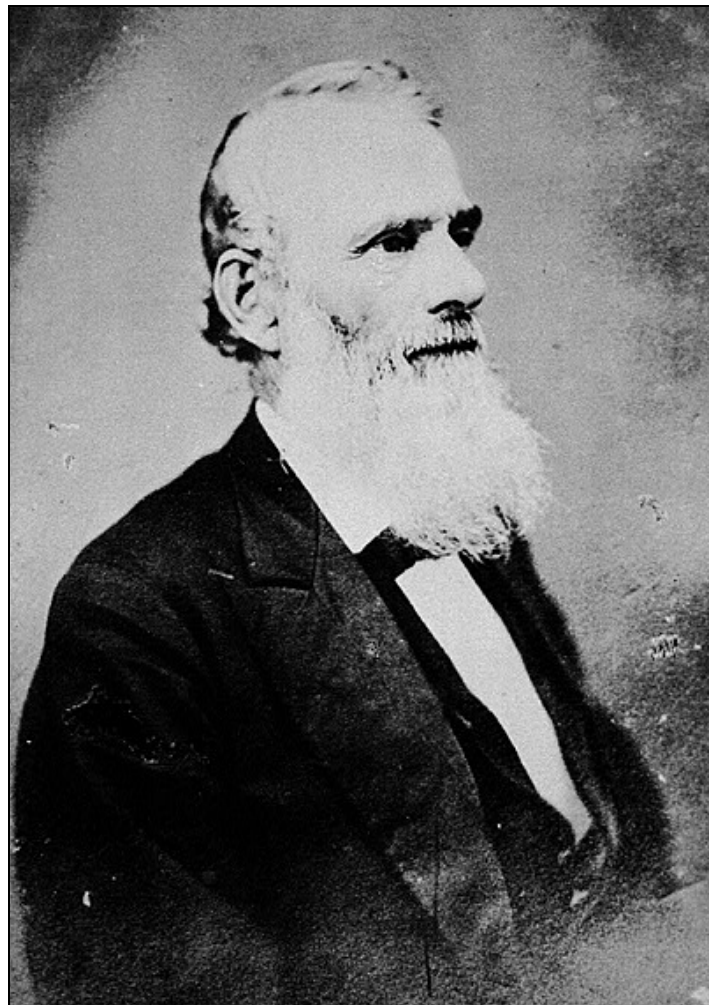


Figure 1.2: Dr. Azor Van Hoose⁵³

The *Constitution* reported that when Reverend Wilkes died, “Professor Van Hoose bought the building of the Baptist seminary and combined the two schools, changing their names to the Georgia Female Seminary.”⁵⁴ Van Hoose personally purchased the seminary and became its president in March, 1886, a position he would hold until 1910. The school retained an

⁵³ Georgia Division of Archives and History, “Vanishing Georgia: Photograph of Dr. Azor W. Van Hoose, Gainesville, Hall County, Georgia, ca. 1905”; available from <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/cgi-bin/vanga.cgi?query=id%3Ahal139&cc=1>; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

⁵⁴ Josiah Carter, “A Day at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C p. 4.

association with the Baptist denomination, but in name only. No financial support ever came to Brenau from large Baptist organizations. Perhaps as a result of this, the institution Van Hoose inherited from Wilkes was apparently struggling. An article in the July 8, 1897, edition of the *Atlanta Constitution* indicated that, “Professor Van Hoose secured the seminary property in 1886 after it had been closed for debt for eight months. At that time, a one-story brick house served the purpose of the institution, and without equipment of any kind Professor Van Hoose opened the school in September, 1886, with twenty-five pupils and two boarders.”⁵⁵

In 1893, Dr. Heywood Jefferson Pearce (see Figure 1.3) purchased half-interest in the seminary from Van Hoose and joined the faculty as a co-president of the institution. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, Pearce “had just begun a female college [in Columbus, Georgia]” when “he and Professor Van Hoose, becoming acquainted through an article in the *Constitution*, decided to unite their interests and combine or unite both institutions at Gainesville.”⁵⁶ Pearce set aside plans to build a \$25,000 college building in Columbus and joined Professor Van Hoose to create “the most thorough and best equipped school in the South.”⁵⁷

A remarkable school required a remarkable name. According to the Northeast Georgia History Center:

In 1900, the institution was officially named Brenau College, a linguistic blend formed from the German word *brennen*, meaning “to burn” and the Latin word *aurum*, meaning “gold.” Therefore, Brenau means burned or refined gold and is the genesis of the institution’s motto, “As gold refined by fire.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ “A Creditable Success,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 8 July 1897, p. 4.

⁵⁶ “The Georgia Female Seminary and Conservatory of Music,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 August 1893, p. 18.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Northeast Georgia History Center, “About the History Center: Brenau University”; available from <http://www.negahc.org/about/brenau.php>; Internet; accessed 3 March 2007.

According to Pearce and Van Hoose, the new name and motto were precisely “indicative of the aims and object of the [new] institution” and were thoughtfully arrived at.⁵⁹ The *Brenau College*

Catalogue of 1900-1901 indicated that:

A new name was wanted and many lexicons, cyclopedias, etc., were consulted in the search. Finally some one [sic] recalled that beautiful passage in Isaiah which says: “and I will make me a man finer than gold, yea, finer than the golden wedge of Ophir,” which expresses so fully the work of the true teacher, elevating the soul, refining the character, taking the young woman through the crucible of college life and turning her out “finer than the gold of Ophir.”⁶⁰

The *Catalogue* did not indicate why the name change was wanted, but, presumably, the change would have occurred to reflect a deepening rigor of the institution’s programs and a move away from emphasizing a preparatory, seminary education to a truer collegiate status.



Figure 1.3: Dr. Heywood Jefferson Pearce⁶¹

⁵⁹ *Catalog* (1900), 8.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Georgia Historical Photograph Collection in the Hall County Library System, “Photograph of Dr. H. J. Pearce, President of Brenau College, Hall County”; available from <http://elli.hall.public.lib.ga.us/uhtbin/hyperion-image.exe/0538>; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007. The caption for the image reads, “Photograph taken in 1940, showing Dr. H. J. Pearce, President of Brenau College, Gainesville, pointing to a letter on one of the ‘Dare Stones’ which purportedly was written by Eleanor Dare, one of the seven last survivors of the ‘Lost Roanoke Colony.’”

Around 1900, Pearce and Van Hoose formed a corporation called the “Brenau Association” to administer the institution, apparently in anticipation of Pearce’s impending absence. The small association (only two others joined Pearce and Van Hoose on its board) existed for only three years, during which time Pearce traveled to Chicago and Europe. Upon his return in 1903, Pearce and Van Hoose again assumed joint control of the seminary by purchasing the interest of the Association.⁶²

In 1909, Dr. Pearce purchased the interest in the college held by Dr. Van Hoose, who left Gainesville to become president of Shorter College in Rome, Georgia, a position he held until 1922.⁶³ By virtue of this purchase, Pearce became, in essence, the sole owner of a college, which was uncommon in the twentieth century. Pearce retained sole ownership of Brenau until 1917, except for the brief period between 1910 and 1913 when he invited the former president of Shorter, Dr. Thomas J. Simmons, and his wife to join him in Gainesville.⁶⁴ Although Dr. Pearce would remain Brenau’s president until his death in 1943, in 1917 he made arrangements to cede control of the institution to a board of trustees. In *Brenau 1878-1978*, Eleanor Rigney wrote:

Dr. Pearce proposed to donate the entire property to a Board of Trustees consisting of eighteen non-resident members, none of whom were to be nominated by the national alumnae organization of the College. The only condition to this donation was the raising of an endowment fund of \$200,000, subsequently increased by agreement to \$500,000.⁶⁵

In 1925, Mrs. Aurora Strong Hunt, a Baptist Female Seminary alumna of the class of 1882, donated the Dixie Hunt Hotel in downtown Gainesville, valued at \$250,000.00, to Brenau.⁶⁶

⁶² Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*, 3.

⁶³ Alice Taylor-Colbert, “Brief History and Traditions of Shorter College: The Shorter Heritage”; available from <http://shorter.edu/coming/documents/ParentsHandbookhistory.pdf>; Internet; accessed 11 March 2007.

⁶⁴ Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*, 3. Mrs. Simmons died in 1913, at which time Thomas Simmons sold his interest in Brenau to Dr. Pearce.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

This gift, coupled with other donations, brought the endowment to half-a-million dollars by 1928, and solidified the establishment of the Board of Trustees at Brenau.

Despite the establishment of the Board and its adoption of a governing role at the college, Pearce remained at Brenau—and remained very powerful. He would have thrown around much weight in any negotiation with students. Perhaps the best evidence for this is how Pearce dealt weightily with his own faculty. The faculty meeting minutes book entry for October 6, 1931, indicated that the faculty received a communication from Dr. Pearce. In it, he addressed the difficult financial times that Brenau and, indeed, much of America had fallen upon in the era of the Great Depression. He wrote, “I have decided that it is to the mutual interest of the institution and its faculty to pay only 75% of the salaries due during the nine month school session.”⁶⁷ With a stroke, and apparently without consulting the faculty at all, Pearce cut salaries.

The move would last for years. The minutes book entry of October 4, 1932, indicated that the college was still in financial difficulty owing to the Depression. Pearce wrote, “we have accumulated a diamond ring, several municipal bonds, [and] a mortgage on a house and lot” in payment for tuition from several families.⁶⁸ Because cash was tight, Pearce reiterated that paying full salaries would not be possible, at least not in the near future. On February 7, 1933, Pearce submitted a letter to the faculty saying that, thanks to some business wrangling, refinancing, etc., he hoped that “The actual total cut in salaries will amount to only 20%” as opposed to 25%. However, to this good news, he intimated that, while he would hate to do so, he reserved the right to recommend to the Board a cut in personnel or salaries.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Faculty Journal for Twenty-five Years*, entry dated 6 October 1931; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Faculty Journal (25 years)*.”

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, entry of 4 October 1932.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, entry of 7 February 1933.

By 1936, faculty sentiment over the move had apparently reached a boiling point. On January 28, 1936, Pearce wrote an extraordinary letter to the faculty. In this, he indicated that it had come to his attention that “there is some dissatisfaction on the part of some faculty members with the present salary scale...and possibly with other features of the College.”⁷⁰ Pearce went on to say that, “it is highly important that the faculty shall be united, sympathetic each with the other, loyal to the institution, both in conduct and speech” and that “indiscriminate destructive criticism must inevitably result in harm to the institution and to all those whose interests are thereby affected.”⁷¹ He then called for all faculty members to formally request in writing to be re-nominated for appointment in the coming academic year. His message was clear: Dissenters should “not apply for re-nomination.”⁷²

In the letter, Pearce went on to advocate for increased college fundraising through the establishment of an endowment that would raise \$50,000.00. He also personally pledged \$10,000.00 to the effort if other funds would be raised to match his gift. Possibly moved by this gesture, on March 3, 1936, most faculty members subscribed to the endowment and pledged to match Pearce’s contribution and also beseeched the Board of Trustees to enthusiastically support the endowment drive as well. A component of this, the Brenau Three Thousand Club, would be created in December of 1936 that would solicit donations from Brenau alumnae and acknowledge their gifts publicly. About a month later, Brenau’s employees again affirmed their support for Pearce. The faculty met on April 7, 1936, the day after a tornado struck Gainesville, and offered their support for President Pearce’s leadership during the difficult time of recovery.⁷³

⁷⁰ Ibid., entry of 28 January 1936.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

Pearce's move to cut salaries may have helped Brenau weather the depression, but it came with costs. As is suggested by his letter calling for faculty dissenters to ultimately leave the college, the move hurt his reputation with some of the faculty. While the logical result of a pay-cut might seem to be a disruption in employee morale, this was apparently not always the case. A former administrator and later president at Emory University in Atlanta, Goodrich C. White, recalled that, "The Great Depression hit the campus hard in other ways. To keep the University solvent, [former Emory President Harvey Warren] Cox was forced to cut expenditures by nearly 30 percent between 1931 and 1935."⁷⁴ White said that the Emory faculty greeted the move with understanding, not hostility, which touched Cox deeply. He indicated that:

The only time I ever saw him [Cox] give way to feeling was when he had to announce the imminent necessity of a salary cut, and the faculty had responded with a spontaneous expression of loyalty and confidence. He broke down then; and for some minutes he could not speak. The faculty whose interests were so deeply his had shown that they believed in and trusted him. That broke him, where difficulties and problems never could. In every crisis, great or small, his poise [was] unshaken, his courage undaunted his decision unflinching.⁷⁵

Pearce apparently did not enjoy a similar spontaneous outpouring of support, which might suggest that the Brenau faculty was more tepid toward their president.

Brenau's faculty members were not the only professors to view Pearce's conduct critically. Because of Pearce's administrative style, and perhaps because of his unilateral action on salaries, the American Association of University Professors investigated Brenau in 1934.⁷⁶ The investigation culminated in the censure of Brenau by the A.A.U.P. in 1943, presumably for

⁷⁴ Emory University, "Stability and Growth: Harvey Warren Cox's Presidency"; available from <http://emoryhistory.emory.edu/people/presidents/Cox.htm>; Internet; accessed 20 September 2007.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ American Association of University Professors, "List of Censured Administrations, 1930-2002"; available from <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/academe/2003/JF/FTR/cenlist.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 August 2007.

questionable treatment of its faculty.⁷⁷ At roughly the same time, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools withdrew its accreditation of Brenau likely owing to questions about the college's financial stability.⁷⁸

Powerful until the end even in the face of these difficulties, Pearce died in the same year that the A.A.U.P. censured Brenau. His widow led a small faculty committee that governed the college for just over a year. Then, in 1945, the Board of Trustees hired Dr. Josiah Crudup as president of the college. Dr. Crudup would be the first of six professional administrator-educators that would lead the institution over the next six decades. Under their leadership, Brenau became a more selective, nationally-recognized university that grew to occupy a fifty-acre campus with dozens of buildings; increased overall enrollment to over two-thousand students; expanded curricular offerings to include many undergraduate majors and several graduate degrees; regained accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; and amassed an endowment of over fifty million dollars.⁷⁹

Administrators have not been the only powerful personalities among Brenau's faculty. From time to time, but especially in its youth, the Baptist Female Seminary and Brenau College had several exceptional professors. Many of these stand-outs taught music. In the college's infancy, conservatory faculty members frequently gave public performances in addition to

⁷⁷ Strangely, the site goes on to relate that the A.A.U.P. report from the investigation was never published. Consequently, nothing exists to indicate *exactly* why the A.A.U.P. issued its censure. Even more striking is the fact that, according to the Web site, as of August, 2007, *the censure had not been removed*. Brenau has been under censure for six decades by the A.A.U.P., despite the fact that the Pearce administration is long gone. Grove City College in Pennsylvania, which has been under censure since 1963, comes in second to Brenau in a contest for the longest term of censure for any college or university.

⁷⁸ A report prepared by one of the institution's presidents indicated that Brenau lost its accreditation for a time. Josiah Crudup, "A Report to the Board of Trustees of Brenau College (Friday, May 31, 1957)," Dr. Crudup Files, Box 35 of 40, Folder 5, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia, p. 4. Dr. Crudup delivered several reports to the board over the years. Typewritten transcriptions of these reports are filed in chronological order in folders located in several boxes the "Dr. Crudup Files" collection of the Brenau University Archives. Hereafter, the full citations of each of these sources (such as that used in this note) will be abbreviated as follows: Crudup, "Report to the Board ([date])," [page number].

⁷⁹ Petersons.com, "College Overview: Brenau University"; available from <http://www.petersons.com/ugchannel/code/InstVC.asp?inunid=5425&sponsor=1>; Internet; accessed 5 October 2007.

teaching students. These educators were the pride of the institution, which even Brenau's earliest advertisements trumpeted. Speaking of the college, one ad read, "A special feature is its conservatory of music, which has thirty-five pianos and a magnificent pipe organ. It has a faculty of the highest standing."⁸⁰ Another advertisement bragged about an early professor. It read:

Chevalier Ferrata is a native Italian. He studied for ten years at the Royal Academy of Rome and during his stay there won fifteen medals for excellence in composition and technique. He also won three gold medals awarded by the Italian government for the excellence of his musical composition, and in 1897 won the second prize at the competition of the Music Teachers' National Association held in New York. Last January the University of the State of New York honored him with the doctor's degree after a critical examination of an opera upon which he is now at work.⁸¹

During the first few decades of the twentieth century, virtually all of the faculty members in Brenau's music and voice departments were trained in Europe. Besides Ferrata, who studied in Rome, several attended the Royal Conservatory in Leipzig and one attended the Royal Conservatory in Stuttgart.⁸² Many of Brenau's music teachers held advanced degrees in music, such as Ferrata and August Geiger who received a doctorate in music from the University of New York.⁸³

Even professors without such degrees were highly acclaimed. One article in the *Atlanta Constitution* bore this out by describing another professor of music. It read:

For the past ten or fifteen years the very highest and best musical advantages have been given young ladies attending Brenau Conservatory at Gainesville, GA. Professors Van Hoose and Pearce have a high ideal as to what constitutes a really great school of music and have never faltered in their determination to give to the girls of Georgia the highest musical advantages. They have secured for the next year the services of Mr. Otto Pfefferkorn as director of the Conservatory. Mr.

⁸⁰ "Educate Your Daughter," *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 July 1900, p. 9.

⁸¹ "A Noted Musician Comes to Georgia and Will Locate at Gainesville," *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 July 1900, p. 18.

⁸² Josiah Carter, "A Day at Brenau," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

⁸³ "High Degree for Geiger," *Atlanta Constitution*, 30 August 1908, sec. A, p. 5.

Pfefferkorn is one of the great musicians of the day. He recently gave two recitals in the auditorium of Brenau, where some of the greatest artists of the day have been heard, and it was the unanimous opinion of all who heard him that his equal had never been heard in Gainesville. It was after hearing him play that the management of the college decided that he must be added to Brenau's faculty.⁸⁴

Brenau's 1910 catalog devoted several pages to reprinting letters and articles from prominent people praising Otto Pfefferkorn's ability.⁸⁵ Even the less prominent members of the conservatory were apparently musicians of very high quality. For example, the *Alchemist* reported that in 1919, one "Miss Fritzlen," an assistant to music professor Otto Pfefferkorn and herself a graduate of Brenau's conservatory, played a delightful "Listzt Concerto."⁸⁶ The *Alchemist* of December 3, 1924 reported that two faculty members, professors McCormick and Turnipseed, played to a packed auditorium.⁸⁷ The October 23, 1945, edition of the *Alchemist* ran a story with the headline "Dr. Ben J. Potter Will Be Presented In Organ Recital."⁸⁸ Potter was a member of the college music faculty and was also an associate in the prestigious Royal College of Organists, London.⁸⁹

Early Brenau students frequently traveled to Atlanta to see their teachers perform in front of large audiences. On one occasion, several tickets went unsold for a musical performance in Atlanta at which Otto Pfefferkorn was performing. When the news reached the Brenau students, they held an "enthusiastic meeting" at which "100 of them signified their desire to attend the concert."⁹⁰ The "Brenau Notes" reported that the Southern Railroad, "always ready to assist Brenau in every way," sent up to coaches "decorated most beautifully with college colors,

⁸⁴ "The New Director at Brenau," *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 July 1902, p. 8.

⁸⁵ *Catalog* (1910), 100-102.

⁸⁶ "Miss Fritzler [sic.] Plays in Chapel," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. 7, no. 3, 8 November 1919, p. 3.

⁸⁷ "Mr. McCormick In Recital," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XII, no. 6 (3 December 1924), p. 1.

⁸⁸ "Dr. Ben J. Potter Will Be Presented In Organ Recital," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College) vol. XXXII, no. 3 (October 23, 1945), p. 1.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ "Brenau Notes," *Atlanta Constitution*, 17 January 1904, sec. B, p. 4.

streamers and flags” to take the girls to the concert.⁹¹ The “Notes” declared that the cars carried to Atlanta, “one of the jolliest, happiest and most enthusiastic crowds of college girls that ever went upon such a trip.”⁹²

In the early twentieth century, Brenau music faculty members grew their popularity and prestige by occasionally performing at benefits. The “Brenau Notes” reported in 1907 that faculty member Florence M. Overton, the head of the School of Oratory, gave a performance “for the benefit of the confederate monument that is being erected by the Longstreet chapter, Daughters of the Confederacy.”⁹³ Some faculty became so widely-known that they got endorsement deals.⁹⁴

Despite the celebrity of some of these early music instructors, most of Brenau’s faculty members over time chose to be dedicated educators instead of seeking the limelight. While other colleges and universities may have had famous or very popular professors on staff ranging from colorful authors to noted scientists, nothing in the Brenau Archives truly suggests that Brenau did. By the same token, none of Brenau’s student newspapers or other publications, letters to administrators, etc., suggest that students were especially dissatisfied with any of the faculty members either. Brenau’s archival materials suggest that its faculty members were generally capable educators.

Many of these capable educators had at least one significant quality in common with their students—they shared the same gender. Table 1.1 indicates the number of male and female faculty members at Brenau for several sampled years over an eight-decade period. The table reveals that, importantly for a women’s college, Brenau has employed several women throughout

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ “Society Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 14 April 1907, sec. A, p. 7.

⁹⁴ Display Advertisement --No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 April 1904, sec. B, p. 5.

its relatively long history. It should be acknowledged, however, that the number of women teaching subjects in Brenau's Collegiate Division was, until 1970 or so, relatively small. Brenau's female faculty members were generally not high-ranking professors, but, rather, were librarians, typewriting tutors, or instrument or vocal coaches in the conservatory division of the college. Still, from time to time, some women would stand out among the traditional collegiate faculty.

Table 1.1: Number of Males and Females on Brenau Faculty by Year

Year	Males	Females	Percentage of Faculty that was Female
1900	7	11	61%
1910	15	22	59%
1920	18	27	40%
1930	10	18	64%
1940	18	26	59%
1950	14	23	62%
1960	19	18	49%
1970	29	28	49%
1980	34	48	59%

In 1900, 1910, and 1920, Brenau had one, two, and four female Ph.D. holders on its faculty, respectively. In 1930, three women had doctorates (all from Ivy League schools) and taught in biology, German, and math and physics. By 1940, Brenau had eleven faculty members with terminal degrees but only one woman (an English professor) with a terminal degree. By 1950, three women held doctorates at Brenau and taught chemistry, psychology and philosophy, and modern languages. Beginning in 1960 when women were becoming more widespread in the academic workforce, Brenau still employed few women with Ph.D.s. Up until 1980, women with Ph.D.s never comprised more than 25% of the personnel holding doctorates that taught at the college.

All of this material about the Brenau faculty is very telling mainly because of what it suggests about college governance. Despite Brenau's having had very strong presidents over the years, the faculty, in fact, retained some agency in constructing "their Brenau." From the institution's inception, many Brenau faculty members achieved regional prominence in performing circles. And, also from inception, many Brenau faculty members (including women) came to the college with solid academic credentials. Simply put, these were not the kind of people who would have been easily cowed by even a very powerful administrator.

This is most evident from reading the minutes of the Brenau faculty meetings. Collectively, these minutes communicated that the faculty did vote on important measures pertaining to the institution. Members of the faculty cast votes to expel students, to modify the college disciplinary rules and curriculum, and to assent to bringing intercollegiate athletics to the campus, a very big deal for a women's college in the early twentieth century. Brenau's presidents were generally present at the meetings, however, and did carry much weight, especially in the case of President Pearce. Still, the faculty members were not reduced to simply rubber-stamping presidential designs and there is a sense that the faculty felt capable of questioning the administration. The faculty voice and that of Brenau's Board of Trustees (which, over time, became an important component of the institution) kept Brenau's top administrators from creating Brenau solely as they saw fit. The faculty and the trustees were helped in this effort by the fact that Brenau has traditionally not had an elaborate administrative network. While other colleges have had multiple deans and vice presidents serving in complex institutional bureaucracies, this never materialized at Brenau. Rather, a single dean and, at times, a dean of women, administered the college with the president or co-presidents.

Throughout its history, negotiations over what the Brenau experience would be between the faculty and administration and Brenau's students would have occurred—to some extent, at least—whenever faculty and students interacted, be it in the classroom, dining room, or other setting. However, the most significant negotiations between these two camps occurred in Brenau's faculty meetings. The faculty generally held its meetings at least monthly during the school year and occasionally had “called” faculty meetings if something important came up that needed more immediate attention. Upon occasion, the faculty at these meetings entertained, evaluated, and passed judgment on petitions submitted by Brenau students. These petitions dealt with multiple requests. Some examples include Brenau students requesting that certain campus regulations be modified or that dates of examinations be adjusted for one reason or another. Occasionally, the faculty permitted a few students to appear briefly at the faculty meetings to speak in support of their petitions. Most commonly, student petitions came to the faculty from the Executive Council of Brenau's Student Government Association. All Brenau students were members of the Association and the elected officers of the Association comprised the Executive Council. Additionally, each class elected officers who would occasionally present petitions to the faculty on behalf of their fellow classmen.

Of course, the fate of the student petitions varied depending upon a variety of factors. What is significant, however, is that over time the faculty did not decline all the student petitions; many were actually approved. This indicates that there was at least a modicum of give and take in the faculty-student negotiation. Still, this should not be overstated. The very fact that the students had to petition the faculty (and not the other way around) and that they did so in a venue completely controlled by the faculty significantly diminished student agency. Through these official channels, the students negotiated and lobbied for what they wanted. However, given the

great power of the faculty and the administration in so many areas, the students oftentimes came away empty-handed or had to settle for what they could get.

CHAPTER TWO

ACADEMICS AT BRENAU

There is certainly more to college than classes. However, little can rival academics for importance at any serious institution of higher learning. Histories of such places should, therefore, discuss academics. The trick is doing so without becoming tedious. Historically, the gist of academics at Brenau is fairly routine. As most other American colleges have done, Brenau at one time or another offered various degrees, which students earned by taking a few years' worth of various combinations of prescribed and elective coursework. Relating a chronological trace of the coming and going of these degrees at Brenau, their various credit-hour requirements, and so forth would be tiresome. However, within this routine scheme at the college appear some historically remarkable features that are worth examining.

Two such features deserve particular attention: how Brenau's curriculum has changed over time and the degree to which the development of the curriculum was a product of an ongoing negotiation between Brenau's students and Brenau's faculty and administration. This chapter will explore these themes and make two claims. The first is that, in its youth, Brenau was an academic innovator that coined several novel, forward thinking programs for young women in the belief that such programs would be popular and empowering. In particular, Brenau blazed trails in the South by supporting early-on a business division, a teacher-education division, a domestic science program, and very robust conservatory offerings. Over time, this innovative spirit waned. Brenau ceased trying to anticipate the changing ideals and status of

womanhood because its innovative programs never achieved great popularity with students and because of a need to restructure its curriculum to remain accredited. Innovation would revive around the 1980s when Brenau made its academic standards more rigorous and reinvented itself as a university.

The second claim is that Brenau's curriculum has historically developed largely from the top-down. The faculty and administration clearly dictated academic marching orders to students regarding their programs, despite the fact that Brenau's students were capable of contributing immensely to a discussion about their own studies. The only exception to this top-down style of development involved the termination of some of the college's innovative programs, which Brenau discontinued in response to student disinterest.

Prior to its emergence as an academic innovator, Brenau was not an atypical southern women's college. Examining the core curriculum of studies in Brenau's early years bears this out. Brenau was founded as the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary in 1878. According to Eleanor Rigney, seminary students studied the following subjects by class up until about 1900:

Freshman Class – Analytical Arithmetic; Caesar concluded (Caesar 1st book was begun the year previously in what was called Preparatory School); Algebra concluded (this was also begun the year previously); Analysis of English Grammar, Green; English Composition; Mythology and Roman History; Geometry commenced; French continued (like Caesar and Algebra, French was begun the previous year); Virgil commenced; Plain Bookkeeping; Penmanship.

Sophomore Class – Virgil concluded; French continued; Geometry completed; Algebra completed; Trigonometry; Surveying, Latin Prosody; Navigation; Botany, Wood; Composition and Elocution, Green; Introductory [sic.]; Natural Philosophy commenced.

Junior Class – Cicero's Orations, Greek Testament; Rhetoric; Greek Anabasis; Conic Sections; Analytical Geometry; Natural Philosophy completed; Astronomy; Physiology; Cutter's Natural History; Homer's Iliad; Horace, Chase and Stuart; Composition and Elocution; Chemistry commenced.

Senior Class – Philosophy concluded and illustrated with apparatus; Logic; Intellectual Philosophy, Upham; Latin, Livy, Chase and Stuart; Graham's

Synonyms; Moral Science; Paley's Theology; Geology; Greek: Memorabilia; Composition and Elocution; General review preparatory to graduation.¹

By examining the curriculum of a few neighboring collegiate institutions, Rigney concluded that, academically, Brenau's forerunner compared favorably to other southern colleges of the day (both women's and men's) in depth and rigor.²

John R. Thelin would acknowledge the likelihood of this. Regarding nineteenth century women's colleges that strove to emulate men's colleges, Thelin asserted that the "female seminaries' were usually comparable in academic rigor to the colleges for men in the same area."³ He noted that the "typical curriculum" of a men's college beginning around 1830 "emphasized the study of classical languages, science, and mathematics with the aim of building character and promoting distinctive habits of thought."⁴ Though once, as historian Margaret A. Nash put it, "some people vociferously objected to the idea of Latin and Greek for girls," this would change—especially in Dixie.⁵

In her book entitled *The Education of the Southern Belle*, Christie Anne Farnham noted that "Southern fathers were much more willing than their counterparts in the North to expose women to the classical curriculum."⁶ This trend continued into the late nineteenth-century. The Baptist Female Seminary embraced classical studies as indicated by the presence of Livy, Cicero, and others in its plan of study. Additionally, the core curriculum of the seminary focused on English, music, mathematics, sciences, and modern languages. Farnham pointed out that

¹ Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*, 24-25.

² Ibid.

³ Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*, 56.

⁴ Ibid., 64.

⁵ Nash, *Women's Education*, 46.

⁶ Farnham, *Education of the Southern Belle*, 6.

many southern women's colleges had long supported these subjects and, indeed, had been innovators in encouraging the collegiate study of the sciences and modern languages.⁷

The curriculum of the Baptist Female Seminary remained largely set until 1900. In that year, the seminary changed its name to Brenau College. According to an article published in a 1904 edition of the *Atlanta Constitution*, the charter of Brenau College provided for two distinct institutions. These were:

a college of high order, open only to girls and young women, furnishing full courses in literary and scientific schools and having the right to grant diplomas and to confer degrees upon all who finish its prescribed courses; [and] also a conservatory of music, art, oratory and kindred subjects with full power to grant diplomas and confer degrees upon all who complete satisfactorily the courses prescribed in its curriculum.⁸

While an institution's rechristening of itself might portend much curricular change, in fact, little immediately occurred at Brenau. This was because the reason for the change was apparently not to usher in new academic programs, but rather to acknowledge the strength of the programs that had already developed.

While the subjects at the heart of Brenau's degree programs would remain constant, the organization of the institution did change with the adoption of collegiate status. The 1900 *Catalogue* indicated that the college created four departments: a Conservatory, a Business Department, an "Intermediate or Subcollegiate Department, of two years," and a "Collegiate Department, of four years."⁹ Brenau subdivided the Collegiate Department into several schools, such as English, Ancient Languages, etc.¹⁰ Each school constituted "a complete course in the

⁷ Ibid., 25-26.

⁸ Josiah Carter, "A Day at Brenau," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

⁹ *Catalog* (1900), 21.

¹⁰ Ibid., 23. These were stated at one point as being the schools of English, Ancient Languages, Modern Languages, History and Political Science, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy and Geology, Moral Science, and the school of the Bible and Sacred Literature. The catalog went on to say that Brenau had organized the schools of chemistry, physics, geology, and astronomy into what could probably best be described as a sub-department (though

subject taught” and was “conducted by a Professor with such assistants as are necessary.”¹¹

Early catalogs listed the several courses available in each school and even indicated the textbooks that would be used in each individual course. Each school typically offered one or more courses as a component of the core curriculum. While nomenclature would change over time, Brenau’s basic scheme would not. Schools eventually became “departments” and “majors” replaced the notion of “a complete course.” The presence of core courses remained constant from 1900 on.

Some professors and assistants teaching these core courses garnered praise in an article in the July 31, 1904, edition of the *Atlanta Constitution*. Their credentials suggested that they were qualified to teach college-level material. Speaking of the school of moral science and philosophy, the article related that it was “under Professor Pearce,” Brenau’s co-president, and embraced “four departments—logic, psychology, aesthetics and history of philosophy.”¹² The article continued, saying:

The various subjects are presented by means of lectures and the parallel use of a text-book. The aim of the department is not only to lead the pupil to a thorough knowledge of the fundamental principles, but to familiarize her with some of the best literature of the several subjects, thus preparing the way for subsequent original investigation.¹³

The article focused particular emphasis on the study of psychology at Brenau and asserted, “It is doubtful if any institution in the south has a more thorough course in psychology than Brenau.”¹⁴

In Dr. Pearce, Brenau had a department head that was “recognized as one of the leading psychologists of the day.”¹⁵ The article pointed out that Dr. Pearce had “studied at the

the catalog confusingly referred to it as another “Department”), and added to this group the study of biology. Additionally, the catalog indicated that a school of pedagogy existed to prepare teachers.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Josiah Carter, “A Day at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

University of Chicago for two years, then spent a year at Wurzburg [sic], Germany, where he received his doctor's degree, and has but lately returned from a six months' stay in Paris, where he was intimately associated with some of the leading men of Europe."¹⁶

Other professors and departments also received praise. The *Constitution* reported:

Every department of Brenau college is upon a very high plane and the school is especially proud of its high literary curriculum. If there is one department in which the education of a young lady should be more thorough than in any other, it is that of English, and in this the work of Brenau is unusually high. No college or university in the south does more or better work in this department than does this splendid institution, within our own border. At its head is Mrs. Irene Tisinger, who has enjoyed the finest advantages for study, having studied at Columbia, The University of Chicago and Chautauqua.¹⁷

Despite the college's emphasis on the study of English, other subjects were not neglected. Lydia B. Essex, "an honor graduate of Wellesley college, who has had several years' successful experience in teaching," assisted Professor Van Hoose in the department of science. According to the *Atlanta Constitution*, "The scientific laboratories are well equipped. Young ladies do the same work in practical chemistry, botany, zoology [and] astronomy that young men do in our larger universities."¹⁸ Brenau apparently kept its labs current. By 1907, the *Constitution* related that, "The new scientific laboratory is another important improvement recently completed. Under the direction of E. H. Murfee most excellent work is being done in this department. Apparatus for the illustration of wireless telegraphy and the Roentgen rays has recently been installed."¹⁹ Also in 1907, the *Constitution* reported that, "The new department of history under

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ "Brenau College Completes New Buildings, Plans for the New Year," *Atlanta Constitution*, 8 December 1907, sec. A, p. 2.

the direction of Miss Florence M. Rohr is also doing excellently. A course in current history is being followed with much interest by a large body of students.”²⁰

The article suggested that early Brenau’s faculty members were fairly well-credentialed with expertise that permitted them to offer college-level courses in more than merely the core curriculum. From very early-on, Brenau students took courses outside of Brenau’s core as they had the option of enrolling in electives. In the early 1900s, the concept of electives was still novel to many colleges. The idea had emerged in 1869 when, as historian Christopher J. Lucas put it, in his inaugural address as president of Harvard College, Charles W. Eliot “threw down a gauntlet before defenders of the old order.”²¹ Lucas asserted that, “Against traditionalists committed to the notion of a fixed, uniform course of studies required of everyone, Eliot announced that from now on under his regime, students would have more freedom to select from among different classes and course of study.”²² In this way the “elective system” came into being.

Lucas contended that the system caught on. He wrote:

The first four decades of the 20th century witnessed a remarkable flurry of curricular reform and experimentation in American higher education. The supplanting of the more or less fixed, uniform classical curriculum of the mid-1800s with an elective system and the introduction of a vast array of utilitarian courses of study by century’s end had marked an important shift in academic thought.²³

However, things would change. Lucas went on to say that more remarkable reforms occurred and observed that:

There was irony possibly in the fact that some were inspired by dissatisfaction over the results of just those innovations enacted in the period immediately preceding. In a sense, with the pendulum of academic opinion having swung far

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Christopher J. Lucas, *American Higher Education: A History* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 165.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid., 210.

in one direction, it now began describing an arc leading in precisely the opposite direction. Specifically, the target of much criticism was the elective principle or system pioneered at Harvard under President Eliot.²⁴

According to Lucas, at many colleges and universities, “The original idea of allowing undergraduates to select their own patterns of study had been prompted by a desire to make academics more interesting and relevant. Instead of being compelled to submit to a single regimen of subjects selected for their supposed disciplinary value, students were allowed to pick and choose, based on their own individual interests, preferences, and career aspirations.”²⁵

However, at many of these same institutions, officials came to believe that whatever gains had come from allowing students to take electives had been offset “by a concomitant loss of coherence and intellectual integration.”²⁶ In short, Lucas concluded that, “The elective system, in a word, had borne bitter fruit.”²⁷

This was not the case at Brenau, which embraced electives warmly almost from the start. The July 2, 1905, edition of the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that, “It has recently been determined to make a still more radical innovation than any which has yet been adopted, viz.: the recognition of music as an elective study looking toward the A. B. degree,” Brenau’s Bachelor of Arts.²⁸ The *Constitution* indicated that, despite the fact that music had a long and storied place in human history, “in no college for women has definite provision been made for the study of music as a part of the regular college course.”²⁹ Brenau would be the first to do so. The article related that, “The faculty of Brenau after extended discussion, pro and con, have decided that since an intelligently directed study of music has an intellectual value equal at least to the study of many

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Display Advertisement—No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 2 July 1905, sec. D, p. 8.

²⁹ Ibid.

of the ‘ologies,’ the former should be placed on a par with the latter and equal credit given—under conditions which cannot be outlined here.”³⁰ Other colleges would follow suit. For example, Amy Thompson McCandless (incorrectly) wrote that, “In 1908 Converse College in South Carolina became the first liberal arts college to allow courses in music and art to count toward an A.B. degree.”³¹ Several decades later, virtually all colleges would routinely permit students to take courses in the arts for elective credit in earning other degrees. Brenau was on the cutting edge of this curricular revolution.

Of course, undergraduate students took electives, courses in the core, and courses in specific disciplines to ultimately earn a degree. Brenau has offered many different types of undergraduate degrees throughout its history. Some, like the A.B. (literally, the “*artium baccalaureus*”), have been common to many colleges and have been offered by Brenau since its inception. Others were unique to Brenau and were relatively short-lived, such as the B.D., the Bachelor of Domesticity. Others came and went and, occasionally, came again as was the case of the Bachelor of Science in Education. Tables A.1 and A.2 in the Appendix summarize Brenau’s undergraduate degree offerings over time.

Throughout its history, Brenau made changes to its academic offerings for many reasons. Some of these evince Brenau’s early innovative spirit, such as the development of its programs in domestic science, stenography, and teacher education, presently to be addressed. While Brenau wanted these changes, the college would have preferred not to have been required to make some others.

Academic trouble struck Brenau in the 1940s when the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools withdrew the college’s accreditation, which S.A.C.S. had earlier bestowed by 1930.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 57.

Brenau would have to shake up its academics to gain it back. It is not precisely clear from any materials in the Brenau University Archives as to why Brenau lost its accreditation. However, several things may have accounted for this. For instance, finances may have been one contributing factor. Since Brenau had only a new and relatively small endowment of \$650,000.00 by mid-century, it relied mostly on student tuition to cover operating costs.³² Consequently, a significant dip in student enrollment would leave the college financially strapped. Such dips were actually common at Brenau for many years. Ella D. Winfield's memo indicated that Brenau's enrollment had fluctuated wildly during the 1940s. Enrollment went from 268 students in 1942 to 450 students in 1946 and back to 228 students in 1949.³³ This would have impeded Brenau's ability to budget and made for much financial instability, perhaps enough to alarm the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

A more significant factor for the loss of accreditation may have been evident from the solution Brenau undertook to regain accreditation, which it had succeeded in doing by 1947. In essence, it reflected academic streamlining, which implies that S.A.C.S. may have been dissatisfied with the competency of Brenau's multiple degree offerings. Brenau decided to focus on offering a single degree to increase its chances for pleasing the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. The sentiment among the administration, as is evident from several memoranda and pieces of correspondence in the Brenau Archives, was that Brenau should focus on doing one thing—and doing it very well—to impress S.A.C.S. President Josiah Crudup said as much in a speech to the college trustees. He indicated:

³² "Letter from Walter Yust, Editor, Encyclopedia Britannica, to Dr. Josiah Crudup inquiring about the vital statistics of the college for publication in the Encyclopedia's 1950 Britannica's Book of the Year, dated October 21, 1949." Available in Registrar Files, Box 1 of 1, Folder 6, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Much of this \$650,000 endowment was probably not cash but rather the property value of a hotel in Gainesville (the "Dixie Hunt Hotel"), which an alumnae had given Brenau as a gift in the 1930s.

³³ Ibid.

About twelve years ago when we were trying to attain accredited membership in the Southern Association of Colleges for Brenau, the best strategy seemed to be that of developing a less expansive program with a high quality of work. This was necessary to meet Southern Association standards. At that time we limited the degree offering to the Bachelor of Arts degree and made no professional offerings. This strategy along with a successful financial campaign resulted in accredited membership for Brenau in 1947.³⁴

Dr. Crudup concluded that, “Since that time Brenau College has enjoyed an excellent standing in the Southern Association of Colleges.”³⁵

Brenau’s academic bulletins reflected the results of the strategy. According to its bulletin for 1949-1950, Brenau entered the 1950s with a changed curriculum, which the catalog referred to as the “Brenau Plan.” In regaining accreditation, Brenau had eliminated all of its degree programs except for the Bachelor of Arts degree. Students could essentially still major in everything that had been available to them before the overhaul, but could only earn the A.B. in doing so. Brenau offered majors in “English Language and Literature, Speech Arts, Foreign Languages, Psychology, Mathematics and Physics, Sociology and Economics, History and Political Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Music.”³⁶ As had been the case at Brenau for some years, roughly one-third of the bachelor’s degree consisted of required “core curriculum” courses; the remainder consisted of courses in the major area and elective course work. Multiple degrees would resurface at Brenau beginning in the 1960s, apparently after the institution had proven itself to S.A.C.S. over time.

While Brenau was under the knife to make its curricular changes of mid-century, the college made other changes earlier in life to stay on what it thought was the cutting edge of women’s education. This chiefly occurred as Brenau established vocationally-oriented programs

³⁴ Crudup, “Report to the Board (May 31, 1957),” p. 4.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ *Brenau Bulletin, 1949 – 1950 v. XXXXI n. 3* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1949), 43; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Catalog* (1949).”

for students in fields like domestic science, music, business, and education. Its aim was to supplement a student's liberal studies with an education that would equip her to enter a profession, such as teaching, stenography, musical performance, or even homemaking.

Such a trade-oriented aspect of higher education was frequently absent in American colleges in the nineteenth century, despite the fact that precedent for it dated back to the Middle Ages. Alan B. Cobban wrote that medieval society "expected its universities to be vocational institutions responding to vocational needs."³⁷ Course offerings reflected this. Medieval university students typically studied theology, law, rhetoric, and *dictamen* (essentially, letter writing) to prepare for careers in government (e.g., as administrators, counselors, diplomats, or notaries) or in the church (e.g., as administrators, notaries, or preachers). But universities supported "lesser" intellectual pursuits as well. For example, even at venerable Oxford University, there were "a number of teachers who specialized in the 'useful subjects' which had a direct application to the practical problems of business administration."³⁸

Most all early American colleges had little use for the useful subjects. McCandless observed that, "White private and church-affiliated women's colleges seldom offered any professional or vocational courses at all, preferring to emphasize instead a general education that provided 'an enriching heritage for life.'"³⁹ Such institutions as these had long grounded curricula in classical studies believing that the study of the classics "itself forms the most effectual discipline of the mental faculties."⁴⁰ Brenau and the Baptist Female Seminary innovated by following both paths. The institution emphasized the classics in its core and

³⁷ Cobban, *The Medieval English Universities*, 15.

³⁸ Cobban, *The Medieval Universities*, 224.

³⁹ McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 55.

⁴⁰ *Reports on the Course of Instruction in Yale College: By a Committee of the Corporation and the Academical Faculty* (New Haven, CT: H. Howe, 1828), 6-7.

simultaneously offered what amounted to professional coursework in several areas, which set it apart from similar southern institutions of the time.

Many women studied to become teachers at the seminary and, later, at Brenau College. In an 1893 interview in the *Atlanta Constitution*, Brenau's president, Professor Van Hoose, related that:

We have connected with the school a regular Normal Department in which we give girls who wish to teach special advantages. This department is presided over by a graduate of the Peabody Normal, Nashville, and has been of incalculable benefit to young ladies in their efforts to become teachers. I believe that, for its age, the seminary has given to Georgia more enthusiastic teachers than any institution in the state. This fact is rapidly becoming known and we can scarcely supply the demand made upon us for good teachers.⁴¹

Dr. Van Hoose provided proof of the seminary's fine preparation of teachers by quoting a June 30, 1892, letter from a state education official. He indicated that G. L. Carsson of Carnesville, Georgia, wrote: "I write you this morning simply to tell you of the success of our, or rather your, girls in the public examination last Saturday. Eighty persons, many of whom were old teachers, stood the examination. Claudia led the whole number, making a 99 3-7 on her paper. Delia came next, scoring 98, and Cora next, with 97 2-7. Seven of your pupils stood the examination and all of them received first-grade" scores.⁴² "The young ladies," the article indicated, "are pupils of the seminary."⁴³ Other officials were also pleased with the teachers produced by the seminary. The *Constitution* reported:

Mr. John T. Wilson, the efficient commissioner of Hall county [sic], says: "For the past five or six years I have examined a large number of girls trained at the seminary. In this number I believe that there are only two who have failed to receive the highest grade certificate. The penmanship, spelling and general manner of expression of these girls is excellent. I have never known one who did not make a successful teacher."⁴⁴

⁴¹ "The Georgia Female Seminary and Conservatory of Music," *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 August 1893, p. 18.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

Wilson concluded by saying, “The seminary does the most thorough work of any institution of my acquaintance” in preparing women to become teachers.⁴⁵

Brenau would continue its tradition of teacher preparation in the twentieth century. Around 1910, the college began offering a two or three year “Licentiate of Instruction” (L.I.) degree. The college catalog of that year indicated, “The L.I. degree is a new course which has recently been arranged by the faculty of Brenau. It is intended to be something of a Normal Course, and is especially adapted to young ladies wishing to fit themselves to teach in the public schools of Georgia and other States.”⁴⁶ The degree changed names to become the “Junior College Teachers Certificate” by 1930, but its requirements essentially remained the same.⁴⁷ While a two-year teaching degree had disappeared by about 1940 as teacher preparation came to require four years of study, Brenau students could still study education. The catalog for that year indicated that students could earn an A.B. with a major in “Psychology and Education.”⁴⁸ Also by 1940, Brenau had created a Bachelor of Science in Education degree program, wherein students could study “Physical Education or the Biological and Natural Sciences.”⁴⁹ Examining many editions of Brenau’s catalogs revealed that this degree would be discontinued in the late 1940s, revived in the 1970s, and discontinued again before being revived permanently in the 1980s. Also in the 1980s, Brenau created graduate programs in education. Students would eventually be able to earn M.Ed. degrees, M.A.T. degrees, and Ed.S. degrees in elementary and middle grades education at Brenau or at one of its satellite campuses.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ *Catalog* (1910), 15. According to historian Ronald Butchart, most contemporary normal schools that trained teachers required three years of study. Ronald Butchart, email message to author, 12 November 2007.

⁴⁷ *Catalog* (1929), 48.

⁴⁸ *Catalog* (1939), 56.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 52.

Brenau's early education offerings were innovative. To some extent, supporting teacher education programs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries uplifted women. Also, it is noteworthy that not all women's colleges developed such programs. Historian J. L. Rury wrote that "The fact that women were restricted to a narrow range of professional career options meant that teaching attracted a disproportionately large number of well-educated and talented women from relatively high-status backgrounds."⁵⁰ This lack of career options combined with a growth in teaching jobs led women to the profession. Scholars have observed that schools grew markedly in number beginning in the mid-1800s to accommodate increased immigration and increased urbanization brought on by the Industrial Revolution. This led to an increased demand for teachers.⁵¹ Schools employed women as teachers chiefly because they would work for less than men. Rury wrote that "feminization occurred because school districts were unwilling or unable to pay the rising costs of retaining male teachers as school terms became longer and teaching became less attractive to men."⁵² At the same time, educated men found other, more lucrative careers thanks to the changing economy. Male administrators also saw women as being more tractable than men, which may have led to their hiring in greater numbers. Finally, another "rationale for [women's] presence in the classroom replicated the sentimental rhetoric of child nurturance that was being heaped on motherhood."⁵³ In other words, since women were seen as nurturing, employers believed they would make good teachers of children.

Still, the uplift provided to women by teaching jobs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was imperfect. Rury noted that just because more women came to teach did

⁵⁰ J. L. Rury, "Who became teachers? The social characteristics of teachers in American history," in D. Warren, ed., *American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1989), 41.

⁵¹ See Carl F. Kaestle, *Pillars of the Republic: Common Schools and American Society, 1780-1860* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1983) for an overview of the emergence of public schooling and the profession of teaching in the nineteenth century.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 27.

⁵³ Madeleine R. Grumet, *Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 84.

not translate into more than modestly improved opportunity for women generally. Rury indicated that “Feminization in teaching did not mean more power or prestige for most women who became teachers.”⁵⁴ Instead, it contributed to the development of what Rury called a “two-tiered system of employment in education, one in which women did the bulk of the teaching under the supervision of an increasingly authoritative cadre of male administrators.”⁵⁵ This may have discouraged some women from joining the profession as time progressed. At the same time, as office jobs opened to women in the early 1900s, women moved into those professions, viewing them as more attractive. This shift should not, however, diminish Brenau’s efforts. Brenau trained women teachers when few other southern women’s colleges did to help women pursue better careers than they otherwise might have been able to pursue. This was somewhat groundbreaking.

The fate of Brenau’s teaching degrees over time should also not detract from viewing Brenau’s efforts as forward-thinking. To be sure, said degrees came and went at the college. However, nothing in Brenau’s archives suggests that the college ever stopped offering any teaching degree because it doubted the appropriateness of a program. When the institution cut back on its offerings, it apparently did so for other reasons, such as to appease S.A.C.S. This history suggests that Brenau has always believed in preparing women to be teachers even when it was forced to curb that preparation.

Besides innovating in teacher preparation, the Baptist Female Seminary and Brenau College also broke ground in the South around the turn of the century by preparing women to fill office jobs. Historian Jane Bernard Powers wrote that “commercial education emerged as an

⁵⁴ Rury, “Who became teachers?”, 29.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

important field of study during the latter years of the nineteenth century.”⁵⁶ The emergence came as a result of America’s vast economic growth. Powers noted that “the workplace required an army of clerical workers” and that women often filled these needs as employers deemed them “inexpensive” and “docile” compared to men.⁵⁷ By 1913, “offices were thoroughly redeemed as centers of female employment.”⁵⁸ Some private schools like Brenau “adapted their curriculum to meet workplace needs.”⁵⁹

An 1893 edition of the *Atlanta Constitution* related that, “The Commercial Department which Professors Van Hoose and Pearce propose to establish by the opening of the school year, is a new departure in female colleges.”⁶⁰ The intention of the seminary management, the article continued, was “to make the departments of the school so thorough and comprehensive that a young lady may fit herself for any work in life.”⁶¹ The reasons for doing this were obvious: “Every one [sic] knows that women are today filling hundreds of places whose duties have heretofore been performed by men. Lady bookkeepers, stenographers, typewriters, etc., are to be found everywhere.”⁶² However, while such jobs were everywhere, training for them was scarce in women’s colleges. The *Constitution* indicated that, “For want of a thoroughly equipped business department in our female colleges, ladies desiring to perfect themselves in these branches have been compelled to attend the business colleges of Atlanta and other cities.”⁶³ The article asserted that:

It is proposed to organize a commercial department at the seminary, equipped with every known faculty for teaching stenography, typewriting, bookkeeping,

⁵⁶ Jane Bernard Powers, *The “Girl Question” in Education: Vocational Education for Young Women in the Progressive Era* (Washington, D.C.: Falmer Press, 1992), 39.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 40.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁶⁰ “The Georgia Female Seminary and Conservatory of Music,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 August 1893, p. 18.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*

etc., practically and invite young ladies to come here, where they can have all the surroundings and influence of a pleasant home, and obtain the same advantages at about half the cost of a course at the average city business college. A large room is being furnished with all appliances and conveniences for such a course, and a gentleman, a graduate of one of the best commercial schools, will be in charge of the department.⁶⁴

The article concluded that, “The cost of a business course will be much less than that usually paid, while the instruction will be of the highest character.”⁶⁵

Students could continue to study some aspects of business at Brenau at the turn of the twentieth century. The *Atlanta Constitution* reported in 1904 that:

Brenau maintains a business department in which bookkeeping is thoroughly taught. The students become familiar with all the work of a bookkeeper in a business establishment, learning to handle properly all forms of business correspondence and the meaning of checks, drafts, bills of lading, invoices, receipts, notes, etc. Stenography and typewriting are also taught.⁶⁶

The article indicated that, “Many young ladies who have mastered those useful branches of an education in business methods at Brenau have good positions.”⁶⁷ In addition to bookkeeping, the college offered courses in shorthand, spelling, punctuation, reporting, typing, and stenography. Brenau continued to claim that stenographers, in particular, were in very high demand. To meet this demand, the catalog went so far as to indicate that, “Rooms will be opened in the city in addition to the department at the College and to accommodate a large and increasing demand for instruction in the commercial department, young men and young women will be admitted to these classes.”⁶⁸ Long a women’s college, Brenau seemed willing to get into the business of educating men in business.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Josiah Carter, “A Day at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *Catalog* (1900), 34.

⁶⁹ Brenau’s foray into coeducation was apparently as brief and as unremarkable as it was unexpected. Nothing in the archives or in newspaper advertisements makes more mention of the experiment and it is not even clear that any men even ultimately enrolled.

Examining contemporary advertisements in several newspapers placed by other educational institutions in the Deep South revealed that the Baptist Female Seminary and, later, Brenau College had few peers when it came to offering a business course around the turn of the twentieth century. The *Macon Telegraph* reported in 1887 that, “The addition of stenography, typewriting and telegraphy to the curriculum of Wesleyan Female College...has been made and the teachers in these departments secured.”⁷⁰ And, over a decade later, a Montgomery advertisement for the Judson Institute for young ladies in Alabama indicated that school offered business courses.⁷¹ However, no other women’s college in Brenau’s region (such as Agnes Scott) ever advertised bookkeeping, stenography, or similar programs around the turn of the century. Brenau filled a novel niche as it sought to enable women to obtain comfortable and fairly well-paying white-collar positions.

While Brenau’s early business offerings were novel in time and place, they were not long-lived. Brenau ceased to advertise these programs or mention them in its catalogs by about 1910. Brenau probably discontinued its early programs simply because of competition that eventually did emerge and not because of any erosion in the belief that the programs benefited women. Beginning in the twentieth century, secretarial trade schools grew in numbers and size throughout the country.⁷² These schools could offer women adequate (if not collegiate) training to enter office environments cheaper and closer to home than could Brenau. Brenau likely folded its programs as girls chose to enroll in such trade schools in increasing numbers.

⁷⁰ Display Advertisement—No Title, *Macon Telegraph*, 10 September 1887, p. 5.

⁷¹ Display Advertisement—No Title, *Montgomery Advertiser*, 1 August 1901, v. LXXII, n. 171, p. 4.

⁷² See Amy Eagle, “A Job Once Filled by Men Became a Pink Profession,” *Chicago Tribune*, 26 April 2006, available from

http://www.goucher.edu/documents/MediaHits/Chicago%20Tribune%20news_%20A%20job%20once%20filled%20by%20men%20became%20a%20pink%20profession.pdf; Internet; accessed 23 December 2007.

Business studies would eventually return to Brenau, however. In the 1940s, Brenau offered a two-year certificate in “Secretarial Studies.” To earn the certificate, students took a year of courses in the college in such subjects as English, modern languages, and history and then took a year of courses on typing, shorthand, stenography, office methods, dictation, and the like.⁷³ Beginning in 1950, Brenau taught these business-related courses through a department of “Commerce.”⁷⁴ Brenau offered the certificate for some time, even during the restructuring period in which the college had eliminated all but its Bachelor of Arts degree. In the 1980s, Brenau began offering degrees dedicated to business. A Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration came first and would eventually be followed by an M.B.A. degree beginning in the 1990s. In modern times, these ubiquitous degrees and the college’s certificate could not be considered truly novel. However, while they are today fairly commonplace, Brenau’s earliest efforts at business education were almost unique.

Similarly unique were Brenau’s offerings in domestic science. Barbara Miller Solomon wrote that, “in the 1900s home economics gained a solid place as an academic offering” in colleges.⁷⁵ This gain “derived from the interest of students” as college officials responded to their desires to acquire practical skills.⁷⁶ The movement for home economics study was not without detractors, however. Feminist educators saw this as a setback as they believed women would gravitate to “Home Ec” departments and not study other disciplines, which did occur to some degree. Also, colleges with home economics departments often relegated female academics to those departments regardless of their credentials, as was the case of one woman

⁷³ *Catalog* (1939), 117.

⁷⁴ *Catalog* (1949), 55.

⁷⁵ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 85.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 86.

historian Solomon described. Still, student demand (quite probably stoked by parental and social views) won out in places like Brenau.

By 1904, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported of Brenau that, “The college believes that its highest duty and privilege is to fit its girls to become homemakers; to know every duty pertaining to the care of a well ordered home, and to this end it has established its department of Domestic Science.”⁷⁷ College officials believed that, “Brenau’s ideal woman is one who is not only well educated from a literary or musical standpoint, but who can, when occasion demands, make a garment, cook a meal, or keep a home in beautiful order.”⁷⁸ Consequently, the Department of Domestic Science taught Brenau girls “to cook, sew, receive and dispense homelike hospitality.”⁷⁹ Times demanded that a woman of good standing have such knowledge. Brenau contended that, “In this day of poor help such instruction is greatly needed and it is believed that the department will soon become one of the most popular and prominent in the college.”⁸⁰

Indeed, even prior to this prediction, the Domestic Science department had already garnered attention. The *Constitution* reported in 1903 that:

The school of domestic science at Brenau College is growing rapidly in interest and is commanding attention under the able management of Miss Estelle Allen, of Atlanta, who is a graduate of the Oread Institute, Worcester, Mass. Special zeal is evidenced by the Brenau students of the cooking classes. They are taught first the chemistry of foods and the principles underlining the cookery.⁸¹

⁷⁷ “Domestic Science,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 July 1904, p. 7.

⁷⁸ “Girls are Trained as ‘Home Makers,’” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 5.

⁷⁹ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 January 1904, sec. B, p. 6. It is interesting to note the effort to elevate the course work to the status of a “science.” This would have been done in an effort to legitimate it in the college curriculum. Other institutions similarly called course work of this nature “home economics” to imply an association with another legitimate academic subject, economics.

⁸⁰ “Girls are Trained as ‘Home Makers,’” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 5. Note the class consciousness on the part of the administration in this quote.

⁸¹ “Brenau College Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 November 1903, sec. C, p. 5.

Brenau students applied what they learned in their “frequent and instructive lectures.”⁸² The *Constitution* indicated that, “After taking the course in cooking, both from a practical and theoretical standpoint, the girls frequently entertain their friends in the city at breakfast, lunch or dinner, some acting as hosts, while others prepare and serve the meal.”⁸³ Brenau considered each of these occasions to be a “pleasant feature of the school” and “a social evening” when outside friends of the class were “invited to come in and test the good things to eat as prepared by the students.”⁸⁴ Domestic science students entertained in the mornings as well. The *Constitution* reported that:

It is a matter of college interest that the cooking class is soon to serve a breakfast to a limited number of friends. The breakfast is to be planned, prepared and served by the girls of the class. The delightful menu selected will be all the more appetizing when served by dainty misses in their white aprons, caps and cuffs.⁸⁵

Classes in the Domestic Science department were “conducted in a cottage adjoining the college, which is furnished with every convenience that goes to make the study a delightful pursuit.”⁸⁶ In other words, Brenau students had their own “model home” to work it.⁸⁷

By 1910, Brenau offered a degree called a “B.D.” (a “Bachelors of Domesticity”) for that “large class of girls who desire to spend two or three years in college to fit themselves for the duties of society and the home.”⁸⁸ Brenau envisioned that the course of study for this degree “will be planned with special reference to a preparation for the life which is distinctly womanly.”⁸⁹ Consequently, “Household Economics” and “Child Study” were part of the B.D. curriculum. Officials acknowledged that the majority of Brenau graduates would work in the

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ “Girls are Trained as ‘Home Makers’,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 5.

⁸⁴ “Brenau College Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 November 1903, sec. C, p. 5.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 January 1904, sec. B, p. 6.

⁸⁸ *Catalog* (1910), 16.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

home and asserted that if “a college for women has any practical mission at all, that mission must be the preparation of its students for the kind of life which circumstances will necessarily determine for them.”⁹⁰ Over time, Brenau upgraded its model home and its domestic science kitchen laboratory to prepare students for this life. Students could continue to take a turn at doing such things as “planning menus and color schemes, inviting guests, marketing, keeping accounts, apportioning work, laying the table for formal and informal meals, and general entertaining.”⁹¹ Importantly, though, Brenau stressed that its aim was *not* “to train cooks, dressmakers, etc.” but, rather, to train ladies who expected “to require the services of cooks and dressmakers.”⁹² Clearly, the college sought to prepare women for not just any home, but rather for upper-class homes—assuredly white—that could afford to hire “help.”

Interestingly, while home economics thrived early-on at Brenau, it failed at other nearby women’s liberal arts colleges. McCandless wrote that, “Converse College offered home economics as early as 1914,” but that in 1927, “all home economics courses were discontinued.”⁹³ She continued, writing that “Home economics suffered a similar fate at Agnes Scott in Georgia. In 1934, J.R. McCain, the college’s president, proposed the establishment of a department of the home where students could take courses in child psychology, nutrition, and household budgeting. Neither faculty nor students at Agnes Scott seemed overly enthusiastic about McCain’s plans, however, and the school continued to offer only a traditional bachelor’s degree.”⁹⁴ By contrast, by 1930, Brenau students who completed sixty-six hours of course work that included courses like “Cookery” and “Dietetics” and “Household Physics” and who satisfied all other requirements for the A.B. degree would be granted a “Home Economics Certificate” in

⁹⁰ Ibid, 32.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 58.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

addition to the baccalaureate.⁹⁵ By 1940, as one of its *bone fide* four-year degrees, Brenau offered a “course leading to the A.B. degree with [a] major in Home Economics.”⁹⁶

Curiously, by 1950, students could no longer major in home economics, but could still choose from among about a dozen courses to use as electives in their programs.⁹⁷ This is somewhat odd given the widespread assumption that the popularity of domesticity actually increased in post-war America. In light of this, one would think that Brenau would not have eliminated the major.⁹⁸ It is likely that Brenau did so to focus on its liberal arts subjects in an effort to appease S.A.C.S. At any rate, by 1970, home economics was once again an approved major at the college.⁹⁹ Again, the timing was ironic as the re-introduction of the very conservative major coincided with the rise of the quite progressive modern women’s rights movement. At any rate, home economics would remain a major at Brenau for some years before being dropped again by the twenty-first century. While Brenau would ultimately discontinue its domestic science programs as times changed, the college’s initial decision to offer such programs was, for the time and place, unique and innovative.

Similarly unique and innovative were Brenau’s early offerings for students studying fine arts, particularly music and elocution (i.e., public speaking). While many women’s colleges had these subjects as part of their curricula, it is doubtful that many could match Brenau’s offerings for the time. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Brenau had a large and active

⁹⁵ *Catalog* (1929), 79.

⁹⁶ *Catalog* (1939), 95.

⁹⁷ *Catalog* (1949), 66-67.

⁹⁸ But see Susan Lynn’s essay entitled, “Gender and Progressive Politics: A Bridge to Social Activism of the 1960s” in Joanne Meyerowitz, ed., *Not June Cleaver: Women and Gender in Postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994). Lynn takes on the popular view of post-war domesticity, claiming it to be largely unsubstantiated. She claims that “scholars...often assumed, rather than demonstrated, the all-pervasiveness of that ideal. The notion that domestic ideology suffused American society, popularized by Betty Friedan’s *The Feminine Mystique*, gradually made its way into standard accounts of the period” (104).

⁹⁹ *Brenau College Bulletin 1970 – 1971/Annual Catalogue Edition/Vol. LX No. 1* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1970), 81; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Catalog* (1970).”

conservatory. Like the college's domestic science and secretarial business schools, such a conservatory (especially one of great quality) was uncommon at other women's colleges.

The *Atlanta Constitution* identified the conservatory with glowing terms. It reported that, "Another great feature of the seminary is the Conservatory of Music, which, under the direction of Professor C. J. Wallace, has become one of the best known and most popular music schools in the entire south. The course is regularly graded and is as high as that of the New England Conservatory and other northern institutions."¹⁰⁰ In an interview published in the *Constitution*, Professor Van Hoose described the Conservatory:

We have a music department unsurpassed and hardly equaled in the southern states. To obtain a diploma from the conservatory, a pupil must study and thoroughly master all the principles of theory, harmony, thorough bass, etc., and be able to write a melody of two strains, or thirty-two measures, from a given theme of four measures. The pupil is also thoroughly grounded in all the principles of orchestration. She must be able to arrange a given theme for ten instruments; this is where the principles taught in theory, harmony, etc., are put into practice. The idea that any one who can play well can [not] teach well is an exploded one, and those teachers who understand the science of music are rapidly taking precedence over those who know only how to execute. I simply state a fact when I say that the conservatory is unable to supply the demand made upon it for teachers. Our course is everywhere recognized as thorough and complete and people appreciate the good work we do.¹⁰¹

The *Constitution* went on to describe the "Full Orchestra" that worked in connection with the conservatory. The orchestra was comprised of "some twenty-five or thirty pieces, consisting of cornets, clarinets, violins, piccolos, trombones, flues, drums, etc."¹⁰² Apparently, it was unique: "As far as we have been able to discover," Van Hoose related, "this is the largest female orchestra in the United States."¹⁰³ In addition to a fine orchestra and conservatory, the seminary could boast of excellent departments of voice (grounded in "the pure Italian school") and art.

¹⁰⁰ "The Georgia Female Seminary and Conservatory of Music," *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 August 1893, p. 18.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Brenau's conservatory faculty members were quite accomplished, especially in music. The 1900 college catalog devoted several pages to reprinting short newspaper articles that lauded performances given by Brenau's voice and instrumental instructors.¹⁰⁴ Brenau also took pains to relate the credentials of several of those faculty members in advertisements and stressed that the college's principle teachers had been trained abroad. A 1904 article in the *Atlanta Constitution* trumpeted, "Virtually all of the faculty members in Brenau's music and voice departments were trained in Europe. Several attended the Royal Conservatory in Leipsic [sic] and one attended the Royal Conservatory in Stuttgart."¹⁰⁵

Like its music faculty, Brenau's facilities for musical study were exceptional. The college had literally dozens of pianos in many practice rooms. Brenau also declared that, "No other institution in the south, so far as we know, can boast of being the possessor of two pipe organs."¹⁰⁶ Brenau's primary stage for musical and dramatic performances during the twentieth century was its Pearce Auditorium. Brenau constructed this lavish venue in cooperation with the city of Gainesville, which provided the college with a \$10,000.00 no-interest loan in the 1890s for construction. Builders completed the 700 seat Victorian opera house in 1897. The facility's acoustics have always been exceptional and the auditorium has played host to many prominent performers over the years.¹⁰⁷

Students availed themselves of Brenau's exceptional faculty and facilities in earning their music degrees. Students studying music at the college could focus on "Pianoforte, Violin, Organ, Voice, and Theory."¹⁰⁸ To obtain a degree from the conservatory, the 1900 catalog

¹⁰⁴ *Catalog* (1900), 46-48.

¹⁰⁵ Josiah Carter, "A Day at Brenau," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ Display Advertisement—No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 12 July 1905, p. 8.

¹⁰⁷ Brenau University, "Uniquely Brenau: Pearce Auditorium"; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/about/Uniquely/pearce.htm>; Internet; accessed 29 December 2007.

¹⁰⁸ *Catalog* (1900), 63.

indicated that a pupil must have “completed a literary course equivalent to that required to obtain our B.L. degree [the “Bachelor of Letters,” Brenau’s literary degree] when the applicant may be eligible [for] the degree Associate in Music.”¹⁰⁹ This would have been a very rigorous program indeed. Brenau expected students to work in the collegiate courses for the B.L. (i.e., history, math, English, etc.) while simultaneously devoting many hours of study and practice to their conservatory courses. The catalog published the names and compositions of famous composers that students were expected to master in each year of study. Many were quite challenging. Also, throughout its history, Brenau has also required its music and voice students to gain stage experience by playing in periodic recitals. According to various summaries published in the “Brenau Notes” column of the *Atlanta Constitution*, these were generally very well-attended public performances in Pearce Auditorium.¹¹⁰

Despite the rigor of these requirements, Brenau graduated students who met them. Some students apparently did more than just meet minimum standards. The catalog indicated that Brenau offered a Bachelor of Music degree to students who met the requirements for the lower degree and completed additional work. Also, exceptional piano students could undertake what amounted to post-graduate study as Brenau offered a seventh-year “University Course” beyond the five or six year normal period of study for the “Collegiate Course.”¹¹¹

Elocution students at Brenau in 1900 studied such topics as gesturing, dramatic interpretation, Shakespeare, speech, and even anatomy. These students also took more courses in physical culture (roughly akin to modern physical education) to prepare them for the rigors of stage work. Art students focused on two-dimensional art and worked with charcoal, crayon, pen

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ See also *Catalog* (1900), 69 - 70.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 51 – 52.

and ink, and water-color, in addition to paint. Art students also studied both portraiture and landscape painting under the tutelage of personnel the college touted as being very talented.¹¹²

By 1910, oratory students at Brenau Conservatory could earn a Bachelor's of Oratory degree. One fourth of the requirements for the degree were "Literary Interpretation and Expression" while another quarter were divided among English (mostly) and mathematics.¹¹³ As was the case in 1900, oratory students continued to take more physical education than other Brenau students. Beyond this, Brenau's general catalog of 1910 said little about the school of oratory. Instead, the college instructed interested parties to write for a publication focusing on Brenau's dramatics in particular. Also, no mention at all is made in the general catalog of 1910 of the Business Division, which had figured so prominently in the materials of just a decade before.

Brenau's conservatory still thrived in 1910. Instruction remained focused on piano and certain orchestral instruments. By now, though, the conservatory also offered a course "arranged for those intending to prepare themselves thoroughly for the profession of teaching music."¹¹⁴ Brenau's art department continued to emphasize drawing and painting (though ceramic work was on offer as well) and students now had to study four years to earn a diploma in art. Brenau's conservatory continued to offer the four-year diploma in art and the B.O. degree by 1920. The college continued to offer the Mus.B. degree, or the Bachelor of Music, with performance emphases in piano, voice, violin, and organ.¹¹⁵

The conservatory would change heading into mid-century. Brenau's 1930 catalog spoke of the Brenau Conservatory as a separate entity from Brenau College proper, having a separate

¹¹² Ibid., 62.

¹¹³ *Catalog* (1910), 16.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 42.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

charter and a separate board of trustees. The catalog indicated, however, that Brenau College students pursuing the A.B. degree were still welcomed to take conservatory work to apply toward their degrees. In addition, the conservatory continued to offer the Bachelor of Music and the B.O. degree and made use of courses in Brenau College. The catalog mentioned little more than this about the conservatory, however. Where past catalogs had described conservatory course offerings and faculty qualifications and the like, the 1930s catalog dispensed with this. By 1940, the conservatory had changed status again. It went from separating from Brenau College to being completely absorbed by it. No mention was made of a B.O. degree. However, as the conservatory had done, Brenau College still maintained robust offerings in the courses previously governed by the conservatory (art, music, etc.).

This several-decade chronology of Brenau's conservatory is significant because of what it depicts, namely that the conservatory had few peers in fine arts education during its lifetime. It was not an unrivalled innovator, however. For example, the School of Music of all-women's Converse College in Spartanburg, South Carolina, developed outstanding programs and "received a national rating as a professional school of music" in the early 1900s.¹¹⁶ Still, though not peerless, the depth and breadth of Brenau's offerings set the institution apart from many others. This left Brenau as one of the few southern institutions able to prepare students with truly first-rate artistic training of the sort that could secure the best opportunities for them as women.

While "innovative" could mean many things, it seems an appropriate descriptor of Brenau in its early days. Until just before the mid-twentieth century, the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary and Brenau College offered programs in teacher education, business, home economics,

¹¹⁶ Converse College, "History of Converse College"; available from <http://www.converse.edu/Overview/History.html>; Internet; accessed 29 December 2007.

and fine arts that were uncommon, especially for a southern women's college. Still, "uncommon" did not mean "successful." Student receptivity to these novel programs varied and was generally very modest, except in the case of Brenau's musical offerings. The 1930 edition of the *Brenau Bulletin* included a section entitled "Alumnae of the College" in which Brenau published information about each of its graduating classes to-date including what degree or certificate each graduate received. These data revealed the popularity of the college's various programs and may explain why Brenau's innovative non-conservatory programs were generally short-lived.

Of course, enrollment in Brenau's conservatory and fine arts programs had always been very robust. Several dozen (or more) young women routinely received degrees or certificates in music each year during the first few decades of the twentieth century, which suggests that Brenau's innovative music programs were quite popular. By contrast, it is not evident that Brenau's bookkeeping and stenography programs ever truly took off as no student is listed as having received a certificate from the program. Some students apparently did enroll, however. For example, Brenau's 1910 catalog listed eleven students as being in the "Bookkeeping and Stenography" program.¹¹⁷ However, the program's numbers clearly must have remained small for its brief existence.

According to the 1930 *Brenau Bulletin*, the vast majority of Brenau's non-conservatory students in the first quarter of the twentieth century took A.B. or B.L. degrees rather than pursue one of Brenau's more unique programs.¹¹⁸ From 1900 until 1925, Brenau conferred 380 Bachelor of Arts degrees, making the A.B. the institution's most granted degree by far. Another 111 students received the B.L. during this period. None did so after 1914. The college's

¹¹⁷ *Catalog* (1910), 20.

¹¹⁸ See the section on "Alumnae" in *Catalog* (1929), 10.

catalogs indicated that the degree was still on offer at Brenau, but was apparently nowhere nearly as popular as the A.B. The same was true for the Bachelor of Science. Although the college offered the degree for many years, only eighteen students earned it prior to 1909 and none received the degree from 1909 until 1930. The A.B and B.L. degree programs overshadowed Brenau's programs in domestic science and teacher education, but some students still enrolled in these innovative programs. Brenau offered its first teacher education degree, the L.I., from 1907 until 1913. Eighteen students earned the degree during this period. The Domestic Science Certificate was more popular, but still never enrolled many students. Brenau offered the certificate from 1908 until 1922, during which time only 41 students earned it.

Beginning in the late 1920s and into the 1930s, Brenau's innovative curricular offerings faded. This culminated in the 1940s when Brenau began offering only a single degree (the Bachelor of Arts) and would be the norm until Brenau expanded its programs as it became a university. Brenau's promotional materials for its earlier novel programs suggest that the college innovated in the belief that it was uplifting women. Recall that Brenau offered the L.I. and the B.D. degree to women to "fit themselves to teach in the public schools" or to "fit themselves for the duties of society and the home," respectively. Brenau wanted to give women opportunities they might otherwise not have had absent its uncommon programs. Were there other reasons for offering such programs? Perhaps. For example, could the Baptist Female Seminary and Brenau College have made the somewhat unusual moves into vocational training as a means to retain or attract students? Might the institution have created these programs in the belief that doing so would generate more tuition revenue? We can only speculate about the answers to questions like these since insufficient evidence exists to provide more exact claims.

Interestingly, the failure of many of Brenau's innovative programs might have left women better off than they would have been had the programs been widely successful. Despite its good intentions, by offering degrees in fields like teaching and domestic science, Brenau inadvertently reified a social status quo that relegated women to occupying only a few selected and accepted roles in society. McCandless wrote that southern women's colleges like Brenau that embraced the liberal arts "were careful to complement their 'masculine' liberal arts curriculum with a 'feminine' atmosphere conducive to ladylike deportment and cultured elegance."¹¹⁹ In part, Brenau created this atmosphere through its innovative academic offerings, which were geared to preparing women students to occupy "suitable" roles in society.

As a case in point, although the Baptist Female Seminary and Brenau prepared women for the suitably feminine role of office worker (to support businessmen with dictating and stenographic skills), the institution offered no courses like economics, finance, or business or personnel management. Brenau kept with the prevailing view in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century American society that women should not or could not run businesses, but rather only serve as minor functionaries to the men who ran them. Consequently, Brenau's programs prepared women to assume only a support role in business. Similarly, Brenau prepared women to teach school, but did not prepare them to become administrators. Consequently, the college contributed, perhaps unwittingly, toward the continued marginalization of women in the field of education. Also, Brenau prepared women to perform or teach music, but, as evinced by its course offerings, it did not anticipate that they would become leaders of the band. And, finally, with its domestic science offerings, Brenau encouraged women to avoid working outside the house altogether and to embrace fully the woman's sphere of hearth and home.

¹¹⁹ McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 55.

It would take roughly a hundred years, but Brenau would eventually empower women to lead more extraordinary lives. By the twenty-first century, Brenau offered a plethora of undergraduate and graduate academic programs that gave students access to many careers and not just the few that society had once deemed suitable for women. The sad irony is that it might have happened sooner.

Over the years, Brenau has been fortunate to have enrolled many able students of the sort that might have thrived in a wide variety of academic programs. Since the college's inception, admission was competitive by contemporary standards. To be admitted to the freshman class of the Collegiate Department in the Baptist Female Seminary, Brenau examined students to gauge their ability in mathematics (mostly arithmetic and fundamental algebra), English (grammar and composition), Latin (two books of Caesar), United States history, and physical geography. Students could apply for entrance into higher classes and would be given more difficult exams to judge their fitness for skipping grades. Conversely, if a student did poorly on the freshman examinations, but still seemed able to do the work, she might gain admission on a trial basis.¹²⁰

The 1910 Brenau College catalog indicated that admissions requirements to Brenau had increased since 1900. In 1910, the college offered a single entrance examination, which still covered English, Latin, math, and history, but also expected students to demonstrate some proficiency in either science, Greek, French, or German. Alternatively, Brenau admitted without examination students who could present certificates from "other schools of recognized standing" proving their mettle or who were "graduates of high schools which have been accredited by the University" of Georgia.¹²¹ By the 1960s, Brenau dispensed with its own examination and required the S.A.T. for freshman admission, which bespoke the college's interest in attracting

¹²⁰ *Catalog* (1900), 22.

¹²¹ *Catalog* (1910), 11.

qualified applicants. Perhaps reflecting this and the college's improved financial fortunes, the 1961 catalog made more mention of merit scholarships for students than did the catalogs of previous decades. This would have attracted still better students to Brenau.

Historically, Brenau's admission requirements would have served to ensure that able students would have attended the college. Other evidence similarly suggests the capability of Brenau's students over time. For example, many honor societies have established chapters at Brenau over the years. In the spring term of 2007, Brenau announced that it had been granted a charter of Phi Kappa Phi, the "oldest and largest national honor society" in America.¹²²

Membership in the selective society is reserved mainly for the top ten percent of Brenau's graduating seniors. Phi Kappa Phi would join a long list of (typically) discipline-specific honor societies that had existed at Brenau at one time or another throughout the institution's history.

Rigney wrote that:

In 1909, the honorary literary society, Phi Beta Sigma, was founded at Brenau to stimulate scholarship, foster the "love and truth and worth", [sic] and to promote the interest and ideals of Brenau. Zeta Phi Eta, the national professional speech arts fraternity was established October 10, 1893. Mu Phi Epsilon, organized in 1911, is a national honorary music fraternity. Alpha Delta, an honorary journalistic fraternity; Tau Sigma, an honorary dancing fraternity; Tau Kappa Alpha, national honorary forensic fraternity; and Delta Psi Kappa, an honorary physical education fraternity were active in 1935.¹²³

Rigney also indicated that Brenau would claim chapters of the following honoraries at one time or another:

Sigma Pi Alpha (an honorary society connected with foreign culture)
Gamma Sigma Epsilon (a chemistry honorary society)
Sigma Theta Tau (a nursing honor society)
Pi Theta Epsilon (the National Honor Society of Occupational Therapy)
Alpha Lambda Delta (a society honoring freshman scholarship)
Kappa Pi (an international honorary art fraternity)

¹²² "Brenau Tapped to Host Prestigious Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society Chapter"; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/PR/news/prarticle.cfm?ID=320>; Internet; accessed 7 October 2007.

¹²³ Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*, 68-69.

Tau Sigma (an honor society for dance students)
Omicron Delta Kappa (a national leadership honor society)
Kappa Delta Pi (an honor society for education majors)
Lambda Iota Tau (a national honorary society for literature students)
Phi Alpha Theta (a history honor society)
Psi Chi (a psychology honor society)
Sigma Tau Delta (an English honor society)
Order of Omega (an honor society open only to sorority members)¹²⁴

Honor societies such as these would not have been chartered at Brenau had the college not enrolled students capable of meeting the eligibility requirements for membership set by each society. This, coupled with Brenau's admissions practices, suggests that Brenau's students were, generally speaking, intellectually able.

It seems plausible that such students could have excelled in many areas of academic study, including areas that lay beyond what Brenau offered, and that they might have wanted the chance to do so. Brenau might have known this had it given its students, its primary consumers, a real role in negotiating about the college's curriculum and programs. Little suggests this occurred, at least in the college's youth.

The closest that Brenau ever got to giving students agency in determining anything relating to academics in the early twentieth century occurred in a handful of faculty meetings. In these few instances, Brenau administrators and professors considered student petitions that pertained to academic matters. For example, the minutes of the Brenau College faculty meeting of November 4, 1924 indicated that "a petition is read from the Senior Class asking that seniors be excused from taking the May Examinations—provided they have made a grade of not less than 80 on their daily recitations."¹²⁵ The meeting secretary wrote that, "The petition is unanimously denied."¹²⁶ Indeed, this would be the fate of many student petitions relating to

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 4 November 1924.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

academic matters. Moreover, of the few petitions the students presented that could be seen as being academic in nature, none took the form of a request to alter the curriculum. It appears that Brenau's early students were either uninterested in offering their two-cent's worth to faculty regarding the college's academic offerings or, perhaps more likely, gathered that doing so would have been futile. Had Brenau officials permitted such negotiations to be truly bilateral, had they but listened to what such students were saying throughout the history of the institution instead of merely dictating the curriculum, they might have heard these remarkable young women ask for more academic opportunities than Brenau afforded them.

CHAPTER THREE

SEGREGATION AT BRENAU

I first taught at the Women's College of Brenau University in the fall semester of 2006. Among the 35 remarkable young women in my "Survey of World Civilizations I" course were eleven African American students, two Hispanic students, one international student (from Zimbabwe), and two students in wheelchairs. This was an invigorating change for someone who routinely taught classes at another nearby college in which the vast majority of the students were white, male, from the United States, and not disabled. In fact, I had never had such a diverse class as the one I taught at Brenau in a decade of involvement in college teaching at five institutions.

Such diversity, it turns out, is fairly typical of Brenau. In 2006, the Women's College enrolled 747 students from 20 states and 14 countries. Twenty-five percent of these students were from minority groups (not including international students) and 17% were older than 25. Brenau also maintained an Evening and Weekend College that offered undergraduate and graduate degrees and that held classes on multiple campuses throughout Georgia. This division enrolled 1420 students in 2006 of which 80% were female and 20% male. Minority students comprised 32% of this population, the majority of whom were over the age of 25.¹

Much about the student diversity that was typical of Brenau in 2006 would have been unfathomable some two centuries earlier when minority students (particularly African

¹ Brenau University, "Discover Brenau: Facts and Figures"; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/about/facts.htm>; Internet; accessed 21 January 2008.

Americans) were generally bared from attending college with white students or from attending college at all. Indeed, historically speaking, there was a time when *none* of the students currently in Brenau’s Women’s College division could have obtained a college education simply because they were female. The story of African American women overcoming the dual strikes of race and gender to obtain higher education—both in the United States generally and at Brenau College in particular—is a fascinating tale of overcoming obstacles.

This chapter describes how Brenau’s governors went to great lengths to retain segregation at the college when other similarly situated institutions integrated, assenting to both the spirit and the letter of the Civil Rights legislation and judicial holdings of the 1950s and 1960s. Thanks to very careful planning on the part of one of its powerful presidential administrations in particular and the implementation (sometimes at great cost) of unique and, at times, even crafty institutional policies, Brenau successfully resisted integration for much longer than other southern colleges. However, despite this past, Brenau would go on to become a diverse institution committed to non-discrimination.

Understanding Brenau’s experience requires some background information. Although black women have been an integral part of the American experience since the early 1600s, racism and sexism kept them from higher education until the nineteenth century. Historian Linda M. Perkins has indicated that a handful of northern female “seminaries” emerged in the 1820s and 1830s to educate white women in curricula that resembled those of modern secondary schools. While a very few of these forerunners of women’s colleges opened their doors to black women, none did so “on a continuous basis.”²

² Linda M. Perkins, “The Education of Black Women in the Nineteenth Century,” in John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe, eds., *Women and Higher Education in American History* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988), 70.

The continuous enrollment of African American women in an institution of higher education would not commence until 1842. In that year, Oberlin College of Oberlin, Ohio (a pioneer in black men's and in white women's education) admitted its first black female student, Sarah J. Watson Barnett. Others would follow. In 1850, Lucy Stanton became the first black woman to earn a four-year degree from an institution of higher education.³ Mary Jane Patterson became the first black female in the United States to receive the Bachelor of Arts degree, doing so at Oberlin in 1862. Oberlin would go on to graduate 128 black students by 1900, many of them women.⁴

Oberlin College blazed a trail educating black women in the nineteenth-century that some other colleges would follow. The eminent African American historian and scholar W.E.B. DuBois documented this in landmark work entitled, *The College-Bred Negro; Report of a Social Study Made Under the Direction of Atlanta University*, which he published in 1900. The report explained that, "Before the [civil] war ten [black] women graduated [from college], as far as we have been able to ascertain; from 1861 to 18[79, forty-four]; from 1880 to 1889, seventy-six; 1890 to 1898, one hundred and nineteen." In addition, three women graduated "Class Unk'n," making a total of 252 African American women who "finished a college course" prior to 1899, according to DuBois.⁵

³ According to Ronald Butchart, Stanton received the "Lit.B" degree, which "was a college degree, intended for women, as a somewhat 'softer' course than the one open to men; it was Oberlin's way of handling co-education, and gave women a less rigorous education than they would have received at a women's college." Ronald Butchart, e-mail message to author, 27 June 2008.

⁴ Roland M. Baumann, "A History of Recording Black Students at Oberlin College and the Story of the Missing Record"; available from <http://www.oberlin.edu/archive/holdings/finding/RG5/SG4/S3/2002intro.html>; Internet; accessed 28 October 2006.

⁵ W.E. Burghardt DuBois, *The College-bred Negro: Report of a Social Study Made Under the Direction of Atlanta University, Together with the Proceedings of the Fifth Conference for the Study of the Negro Problems, held at Atlanta University, May 29-30, 1900* (Atlanta, GA: Atlanta University Press, 1900), 54-55; available from The Digital Library of Georgia collection at <http://fax.libs.uga.edu/E185x5xA881p/aup05/>; Internet; accessed 28 October 2006.

The first half of the twentieth century saw expanded educational opportunities for black women and men alike. Historian Jeanne Noble indicated that, “For the first fifty years of the century, the vast majority of these students were enrolled in black colleges,” which would have accounted for thousands of graduates by mid-century.⁶ Strong enrollment in black colleges continued past 1950. According to the United States Department of Education, “By 1953, more than 32,000 students were enrolled in such well known private black institutions as Fisk University, Hampton Institute, Howard University, Meharry Medical College, Morehouse College, Spelman College, and Tuskegee Institute, as well as a host of smaller black colleges located in southern and border states.”⁷ At the same time, “over 43,000 students were enrolled in public black colleges.”⁸ These were institutions established by states under the “separate but equal” doctrine created in the 1896 United States Supreme Court case of *Plessy v. Ferguson*.⁹ Though they were separate, racially segregated higher educational facilities were seldom equal. Still, in an era largely lacking any policing of racial inequality, these separate institutions sufficed legally to forestall the enrollment of black men and women into predominately white state colleges and universities.

Whatever college they attended, most African American students in the twentieth century would have been women because black women have historically attended college in far greater numbers than black men. Noble observed, “A pattern of black women’s superiority over black men in degree attainment begins in high school, continues in college, and includes one or two

⁶ Jeanne Noble, “The Higher Education of Black Women in the Twentieth Century,” in John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe, eds., *Women and Higher Education in American History*, (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988), 98.

⁷ U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights, “Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Higher Education Desegregation”; available from <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/hq9511.html>; Internet; accessed 8 November 2006.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ See *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 163 US 537 (1896).

years of graduate work.”¹⁰ This pattern began in 1910 and, with the exception of the decade of the 1920s, has continued until the present day.

The landmark Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas* (1954), overturned the decision in *Plessy* and, coupled with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, set in motion events that would further expand the enrollment of African Americans (both men and women) in colleges and universities.¹¹ Title VI indicates that, “No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”¹² Within the former Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the federal government established the Office for Civil Rights (O.C.R.) to police the provisions of Title VI. Many states and private entities both received federal financial assistance for higher education and operated racially segregated colleges and universities. Though told to desegregate by the O.C.R., very few did so speedily. It would be years before all major state systems and virtually all private colleges receiving funds integrated. The last institutions of higher education to integrate were in the Deep South where, driven by racist mindsets, segregation remained at a handful of schools until as late as the 1970s. A study of United States Census Bureau data by the National Center for Education Statistics revealed that the number of African Americans under the age of 35 enrolled in institutions of higher learning “rose to a high in 1977 of 1.103 million students, or 10.8 percent of the nation's college population, from

¹⁰ Noble, “The Higher Education of Black Women,” 99.

¹¹ See *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*, 98 F. Supp. 797 (1951), 347 U.S. 483 (1954), 349 U.S. 294 (1955).

¹² “Civil Rights Act of 1964.” (Pub.L. 88-352), *United States Statutes at Large*, 78 Stat. 241 (July 2, 1964).

234,000, or 5 percent, in 1965, the first year such comparisons were made.”¹³ Again, most of these students would have been young African American women, owing to historical trends.

Just as Title VI guards against racial discrimination in higher education, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 guards against gender discrimination in colleges and universities and facilitates the enrollment of black women in programs of higher education. The act indicates that, “No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”¹⁴ Prior to the passage of this statute, little more than good common sense induced colleges to become coeducational—but this good sense often sufficed for much. Historian Rosalind Rosenberg wrote that women’s access to higher education “owed much to the efforts of the early women’s rights movement, whose leaders declared that coeducation was an essential precondition of woman’s emancipation from her ‘separate sphere.’”¹⁵ These efforts had paid off somewhat handsomely as, “by the end of the nineteenth century coeducation had become the predominant form of higher education in this country.”¹⁶ Still, while many colleges and universities did admit women, few did so in great numbers.

While coeducation predominated in the United States at large prior to 1900, only a few southern institutions contributed to this. Rosenberg wrote:

¹³ Reginald Stuart, “New Trend in College Desegregation Emerges”; *The New York Times on the Web*; September 3, 1981; available from <http://partners.nytimes.com/library/national/race/090381race-ra.html>; Internet; accessed 3 November 2006.

¹⁴ “Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 to the Civil Rights Act of 1964.” (Pub. L. 92-318), *United States Statutes at Large*, 86 Stat. 235 (23 June 1972).

¹⁵ Rosalind Rosenberg, “The Limits of Access: The History of Coeducation in America” in John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe, eds., *Women and Higher Education in American History* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 1988), 107.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 109. Rosenberg indicated that, “Today more than 95 percent of all college women are enrolled in coeducational institutions” (109).

As a consequence of the Civil War and the conservative social tradition that lingered in the South, collegiate education developed more slowly than in the rest of the country, and sexual segregation persisted longer in both public and private institutions. Where traditions were weaker and economic constraints pronounced, however, coeducation was adopted. Thus, coeducation in the South came first to the state universities of Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi and to the black colleges. Only slowly did it spread eastward to the old South.¹⁷

Guilford College in North Carolina (founded in 1837) and Texas Christian and Rice universities in Texas (founded in 1873 and 1912, respectively) were the only southern colleges to be coeducational from establishment until well into the twentieth century. Among public colleges and universities in the South, only the University of Mississippi and the University of Kentucky admitted women prior to 1890 in 1885 and 1888, respectively. The University of South Carolina, Auburn University, the University of Tennessee, and the University of Alabama all began admitting women in the 1890s. The slow spread of coeducation in the Old South continued into the twentieth century as the Universities of Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, and Virginia eventually accepted female students.¹⁸

Though coeducation was lacking in the South, women who could not study alongside men in many state systems or in all-male private colleges could attend a women's college. This was especially true in Georgia. In 1878, William C. Wilkes founded the forerunner of Brenau University, the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary in Gainesville, Georgia. Prior to this year, forty-three other women's colleges had been established throughout the country, all catering to white students. Three were neighbors to Brenau: LaGrange College in LaGrange, Georgia, was founded in 1831 as a female academy and became a college in 1851; Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, was originally named the Georgia Female College and was first chartered in

¹⁷ Ibid., 111.

¹⁸ Wikipedia, "Coeducation"; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coeducation#Years_U.S._educational_institutions_became_coeducational; Internet; accessed 23 October 2006.

1836; and Tift College near Macon was founded in 1849 as the Forsyth Female Collegiate Institute. Spelman College in Atlanta and Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, would be founded as female seminaries in 1881 and 1889, respectively. Several other women's colleges existed in Georgia at one time or another, though few survived into the twentieth century. Americus Female College in Americus closed in 1879. Bethel Female College in Cuthbert closed in 1875. The Madison Collegiate Institute and Methodist Female College in Madison and the Houston Female College in Perry closed in 1880 and 1896, respectively. The presence of these several institutions made Georgia a center for women's collegiate education in the nineteenth century.¹⁹

Unfortunately for black women in Georgia, thanks to southern racism, the presence of many women's colleges in the state did not provide them with much educational opportunity. Of these institutions, only Spelman College, which was founded in 1881 to educate black women, admitted African-Americans prior to the 1950s.²⁰ Though African Americans and women shared the common problem of discrimination, this shared experience never fostered integration. Women's colleges discriminated against African Americans in the same manner in which women were discriminated against by men.

¹⁹ Several other women's colleges existed in Georgia at one time or another. Among them were:

Andrew College, Cuthbert (co-ed since 1956)

Cox College, LaGrange (closed in 1934)

Georgia College & State University, Milledgeville (co-ed since 1967)

Shorter College, Rome (co-ed since 1950s)

Valdosta State University, Valdosta (co-ed since 1950)

Wikipedia, "Timeline of women's colleges in the United States"; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_women%27s_colleges_in_the_United_States; Internet; accessed 18 May 2008.

²⁰ Though not a woman's college, Atlanta University also admitted black women before the 1950s. Ron Butchart, personal email, 28 June 2008.

In *The College-Bred Negro*, DuBois observed, “Among the women’s colleges the color prejudice is much stronger and more unyielding.”²¹ He cited several examples of this prejudice in women’s college admissions of black students prior to 1900. DuBois indicated that the secretary of Vassar College wrote:

We have never had but one colored girl among our students, and as no one knew during her course that she was a Negro there was never any discussion of the matter. This young woman graduated from the college, and although it is now well known that she is a Negro, the feeling of respect and affection that she won during her college course has not been changed on the part of those who knew her here. There is no rule of the college that would forbid our admitting a colored girl, but the conditions of life here are such that we should hesitate for the sake of the candidate to admit her and in fact should strongly advise her for her own sake not to come.²²

The administration at Barnard College in New York indicated to DuBois that:

No one of Negro descent has ever received our degree, and I cannot say whether such a person would be admitted to Barnard as the question has never been raised, but there is nothing in our regulations that excludes anyone of any nationality or race.²³

Regarding black applicants, the trustees of Mills College for women in Alameda, California, “decided some years ago that it was not best for us to receive such students.”²⁴ The Randolph-Macon Woman’s College of Lynchburg, Virginia (a “prominent Southern Institution”) related to DuBois that, “We entirely favor the education of Negroes to any degree they may wish but are not prepared to enter upon that work ourselves. We believe that in all boarding schools and colleges the races must, for the good of both, be educated separately.”²⁵

In the nineteenth century, only in New England, DuBois wrote, was there “usually no barrier” to the entry of African Americans to women’s colleges. He cited Smith College,

²¹ DuBois, *College-Bred Negro*, 34.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 35.

²⁵ Ibid.

Wellesley College, and Radcliffe College as all having Negro students. However, even in radical New England, not all institutions favored integration. DuBois indicated that Mount Holyoke College “puts the statement negatively” when it responded to an inquiry about their willingness to admit black students: “We do not refuse admission to colored persons, but we seldom have application for this class of candidates.”²⁶

Whether at a coeducational institution or an all-women’s college, the implication of this data is that even if gender might not have barred a black woman from attending college prior to the mid-twentieth century, with only a few exceptions, race would have. If the integration of African American women into institutions of higher education came slowly to the United States and even slower to the South, it came even slower still to private colleges and universities in the Deep South. Far below the Mason-Dixon Line, an entrenched segregationist mentality prevailed well into the twentieth century in the minds of many whites. This simply would have prevented the consideration of—let alone the occurrence of—racial integration at almost all southern institutions of higher education until after the *Brown* decision. This was decidedly the case at Brenau College. Much historical evidence suggests that, led by powerful administrators who were staunch segregationists, Brenau defiantly resisted integration until very late in its history, often going to great lengths to do so.

This historical evidence takes many forms. Over the years, Brenau University has conscientiously maintained a thorough history of itself in pictures. Brenau’s University Archives contain a plethora of vintage and modern photographs of students dating back years to its days as a female seminary. In addition, the college began producing a robust yearbook (called “*Bubbles*”) as early as 1900. It was not until 1973 that any African American students appeared

²⁶ Ibid.

in any college photographs.²⁷ This photographic record suggests that African Americans were not welcomed at Brenau until after the 1960s. Other evidence also supports the view that Brenau was unwelcoming to black students during much of its long history.

Some of this evidence speaks to student attitudes toward race. In a memorandum written on November 27, 1973, Dean John E. Sites addressed the establishment of secret societies at Brenau. Part of his memorandum references a photograph of a club that appeared in the 1912 edition of *Bubbles*. Sites wrote:

The clubs that were developed during this time [at the college in the early 20th century] seem to have secret ideals that were not like the sororities of today, even though many local sororities did begin to spring up. It is suggested that these organizations at that particular time had a lighter touch, stressing fun and fellowship rather than scholastic goals.

In 1912, history indicates that the first of these organizations developed. It was called Tri-Kappa and had no affiliation with any other chapter. It appears to have been planned and originated at Brenau College.²⁸

Dean Sites continued, describing the Tri-Kappas:

One wonders whether KKK was borrowed from the infamous racist organization of the South, the Klu Klux Klan [sic]. A number of features seem to be similar, but no official record or mention is made of the other organization. The dress of each member was a white robe, covering most of the body except their heads. As a symbol, the members displayed three K's and two pictures of the palm of the hand. As was usually the case, the group adopted a password which we're unable to determine today. However, it is indicated that it had no origin but probably had some symbolic meaning to the girls that made it up. Their flower was the Bleeding Heart.²⁹

While Sites is probably correct in saying that no direct linkage with the Klan could be made, in the group's yearbook photograph, the dress of members does perhaps bear a resemblance to that of hooded Klansmen (see Figure 3.1). An Internet search conducted in 2007 returned no

²⁷ Brenau University, *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA; Brenau College, 1973).

²⁸ Memorandum written on November 27, 1973, by Dean John E. Sites as quoted in Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*, 66.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

information about the meaning of the group’s motto, “Devilamenger.” However, several Web sites associated the Tri-Kappas’ pass word (which, contrary to what Dean Sites says, is easily determined since it was printed in the annual) “didiki” as meaning “gypsy” or “traveler.” No association of either word with the Ku Klux Klan appeared. Likewise, neither the Black Hand nor the Bleeding Heart seem to be Klan-related.

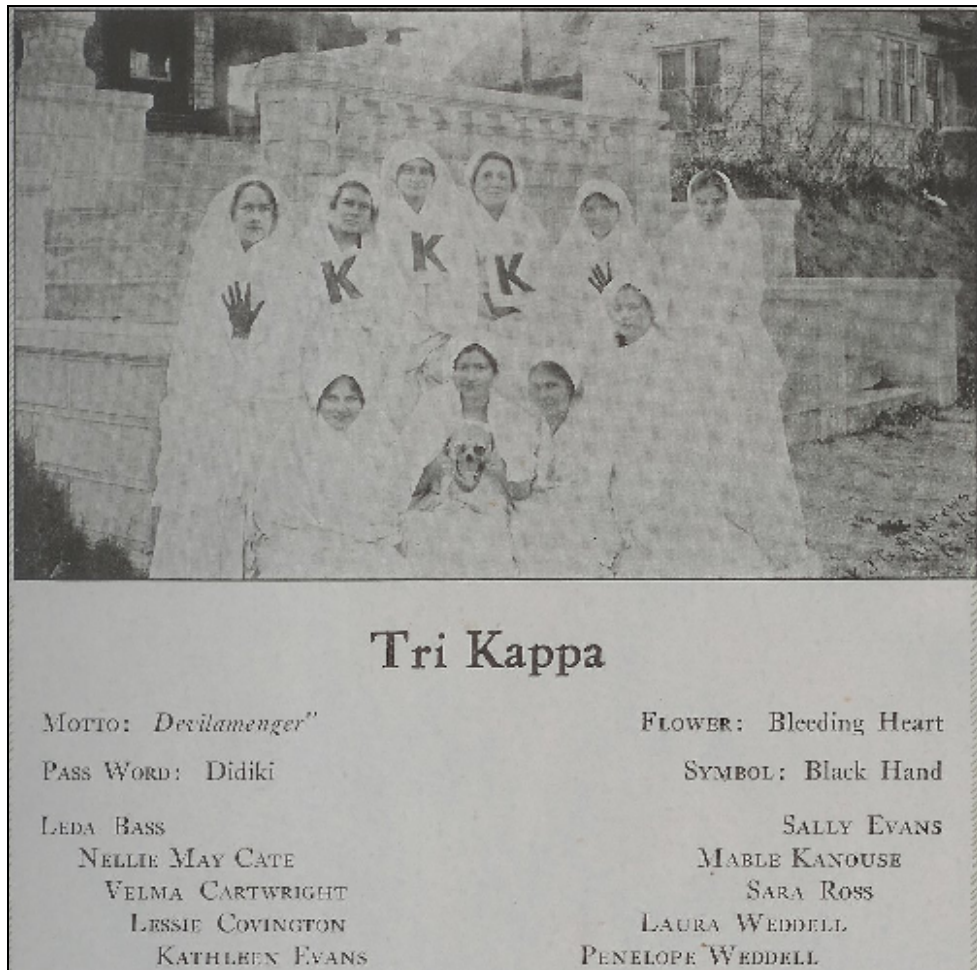


Figure 3.1: The Tri-Kappa Society of Brenau College circa 1912³⁰

While much of this evidence suggests that there was no linkage between the Tri-Kappas and the Ku Klux Klan, some aspects of the club’s founding might be conspicuous. Originally

³⁰ Brenau University, *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA; Brenau College, 1912), n.p.

founded in the 1860s in the aftermath of the Civil War, the Ku Klux Klan suffered a decline in the late nineteenth century as federal and state authorities cracked-down on violent Klan activities against blacks. However, largely in response to white dissatisfaction with urbanization and massive immigration from eastern and southern Europe, the Klan would rise again. The organization was re-formed around 1915 in Atlanta and went on to garner millions of members by the 1920s. Brenau girls founded the Tri-Kappas in the nineteen-teens in close proximity to Atlanta. One might wonder whether more than coincidence accounted for the close birth dates and places of the two organizations.³¹

The existence at Brenau of student groups that may have supported segregation and the absence of African American students in college photographs for much of the college's history are not the only evidence that suggests Brenau may have harbored an institutional culture of prejudice. A 1924 edition of the *Alchemist*, Brenau's student newspaper, included a description of the college's traditional freshmen initiation week (called "Rat Week") that spoke to Brenau's views on race. The paper read:

Friday night...all 'rats' were initiated into the holy order of Brenau. This ceremony was very beautiful and impressive. The "rats" were dressed in black bathing suits and blacked to represent slaves. The name of every Freshman was read out and on the reading of her name she came forward to give her sacrifice of fruit and one dime to the Holy Cat of the Sophomore class. Along with her other offering each one offered to the fire some undesirable trait.³²

Nothing suggests that the depiction of freshmen as lowly slaves fazed any of Brenau's students or faculty members. A later edition of the *Alchemist* (this one from 1935) also spoke to Brenau's views on race. This edition described the college's annual May Day Fete of that year. It read:

³¹ For more on the history of the second Ku Klux Klan, see Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³² "Freshman—Sophomore Week," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XII, no. 6 (3 December 1924), p. 1.

The title of the program was May Fete At The Old Plantation. The manor was covered with Dorothy Perkins roses, and in the midst of this southern atmosphere the arrival of the queen was awaited on the eleventh day of May, 1850, to accept the crown to be presented by the Colonel. All the slaves and their children were allowed to come out and have a part in the festival by singing, dancing, or saying a word of greeting, for that was the day the Queen met her Prince Charming, the Beau of the Fifties, and received her crown.³³

Brenau underclassmen would have played the roles of the singing and dancing slaves and their children in this spectacle. Despite knowing of the evils of the “peculiar institution,” the college chose to ignore history and instead presented a sanitized version of slavery in a pageant that celebrated and sanctified the Old South.

Brenau’s views on race were evident from more than ceremonies. Official documents often addressed the issue. While the university registrar’s office indicated that academic transcripts do not speak to race, college admissions office personnel said applications to the college have inquired about an applicant’s racial background for many years. This process began in the nineteen-seventies. It did not occur prior to this time because it was a foregone conclusion that all applicants would be white.³⁴

These sources suggest that Brenau possessed a segregationist mentality through much of the twentieth century. Some other schools were different. Because they wished to continue receiving federal funding, many southern state colleges and universities and many private colleges in the South on the public dole integrated (willingly or otherwise) in the 1950s and 1960s. However, at this time when other colleges and universities throughout the United States were breaking down color barriers, some private institutions in the South held out. Brenau was one such school. The college’s institutional leadership went to great pains to try to ensure that

³³ “Vernice Hurst is Queen of May Day Fete,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XXI, no. 9 (14 May 1935), p. 1.

³⁴ Staff member of the Brenau University Office of Admissions. Interview by author, 31 October 2006, Gainesville, Georgia. Written notes. The interviewee requested that her name be withheld from publication.

Brenau would remain all white. This backward mindset contrasts sharply with both Brenau's current diversity and the forward-thinking in the nineteenth century that called for the creation and sustenance of an institution of higher learning in north Georgia dedicated exclusively to educating young women.

Dr. Josiah Crudup was perhaps the driving force behind Brenau's resistance to integration. He became the fourth president of the college in 1945 and served until 1968. Prior to joining Brenau, Crudup was a graduate of Mercer University, the University of Chicago, and a member of the Kappa Alpha Order men's fraternity. When the new president came to Brenau, the college's student newspaper, the *Alchemist*, published an article written by a friend of Crudup's, Elliot Dunwody, describing him. Dunwody wrote glowing praise for Crudup. He lauded Crudup for having "a fresh and original way of saying everything;" for being "a great teacher, a great leader, [and] a great speaker;" for being a nationally famous Kiwanian; for having "a fine Christian character;" and for being a person who "stimulates and inspires you."³⁵ According to Dunwody, Crudup would "teach you to admire without envy, to disagree without bitterness, to fight injustice without hatred, and to cultivate humility without surrender of conviction."³⁶ A fellow employee at Brenau remembered Dr. Crudup "for his efforts to beautify and restore the campus property as well as to improve Brenau's financial status."³⁷ In the first two years of his administration, Dr. Crudup eliminated half-a-million dollars worth of debt incurred by the college over the years. He also guided the college in its process of securing for the first time lasting national accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and

³⁵ Elliot Dunwody, "Dunwody Writes His Impression of Dr. Joe Crudup," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College) vol. XXXII, no. 3 (23 October 1945), p. 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Brenau University, *Annual Catalog, Vol. 122* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau University, 2006), 12; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as "Catalog (2006)."

Schools. In addition, archived correspondence indicates that Dr. Crudup oversaw the construction and renovation of several buildings on campus.

These significant contributions earned Dr. Crudup the esteem of many people associated with Brenau. His popularity did not stop there, however. The following article with the headline, “Last Four-Year Class Graduates; Dr. Josiah Crudup Gives Address” appeared in the *Chatsworth Times* on May 17, 1951:

Fifty-six Murray County High School graduates donned caps and gowns to receive their diplomas Sunday and had the distinction of being the last class to graduate under the old four-year high school program. There will be no graduating class next year since the first five-year class will still have another years [sic] work to complete.

Dr. Josiah Crudup, president of Brenau College at Gainesville, gave the commencement address.

Introduced by Elswick Keith, school principal, as the “most popular speaker in the state,” Dr. Crudup held his audience’s attention by relating a series of humorous anecdotes, by congratulating everyone connected with the class, including the Dads [sic] “who had to pay the bills” and by giving the graduates some sound advice about the problems confronting them in the world today.

The speaker urged the class not to stop in the pursuit of education with a high school diploma. With thousands of war veterans taking advantage of government-paid college training, the present high school graduate has no particular advantage unless he goes on with his education, Dr. Crudup said.

In the face of such questions as whether or not we will have atomic warfare and how strong Communism will become, the graduate will do well to “Be faithful to your training, to the things that endure,” Dr. Crudup said.³⁸

This and other sources suggest that Dr. Crudup was a personable individual and a dedicated educator. He was, at the same time and like many of his contemporaries, a dedicated segregationist.

³⁸ “Last Four-Year Class Graduates; Dr. Josiah Crudup Gives Address,” *Chatsworth Times* 17 May 1951; available from http://murraycountymuseum.com/mchs_5p_rev.html; Internet; accessed 1 November 2006.

Segregation was a concern for Dr. Crudup for at least two decades before Brenau would integrate. This is revealed by several addresses to the Brenau College Board of Trustees that Dr. Crudup delivered in annual meetings as Brenau's president beginning in 1953. In the annual meeting of the College Board of Trustees for that year, Dr. Crudup said:

[A] problem confronting many colleges in the future is a matter of racial segregation. With continued rulings from the United States Supreme Court to the effect that Negroes have the right of enrollment at colleges supported by public taxation, the problem of segregation becomes more acute. While a mild interest has been aroused recently on our campus by the attendance of a few Negroes at recitals in Brenau Auditorium, yet [sic] segregation will never be an acute problem at the independent colleges such as Brenau.³⁹

Dr. Crudup brought up the topic of segregation again in 1957 and 1958 in regard to Brenau Academy, the college's secondary school for girls. In 1957, he indicated that, "Recent national developments have brought about increasing popularity in private boarding schools for high school girls. Last summer 125 applications for enrollment were received and we could admit only 80 girls. If this condition continues, we should be making plans to expand the facilities of the Academy."⁴⁰ He reiterated this point in 1958:

Because of the problems of segregation, more people are thinking of private schools. Several years ago, the Westminster schools in Atlanta were founded. The success has been spectacular. Last week, the papers give an account of another private school development on the north side of Atlanta. Except for being coeducational, the schools are very much in design like Brenau Academy, which has had more than 30 years of very successful operation.⁴¹

These early addresses indicated that Dr. Crudup, while cognizant of desegregation, was not truly concerned about it. The integration of Brenau's concert performances was only mildly

³⁹ Crudup, "Report to the Board (May 29, 1953)," p. 4.

⁴⁰ Crudup, "Report to the Board (May 31, 1957)," p. 8.

⁴¹ Crudup, "Report to the Board (May 30, 1958)," p. 8.

interesting to Dr. Crudup and he saw the integration of public schools as presenting not threats but business opportunities for the college. In this regard, Dr. Crudup was being savvy.

In the 1950s, many southern states adopted a policy of “massive resistance” toward school integration. U.S. Senator Harry F. Byrd, Sr., of Virginia originated this policy, which had as its linchpin “a law that cut off state funds and closed any public school that agreed to integrate.”⁴² Private schools offered alternatives for whites to public schools that either closed or integrated. The term “segregation academies” applied to many of these private institutions (like the Westminster schools Dr. Crudup speaks of) that came into being during the civil rights era to accommodate white flight from public schools. Though Brenau Academy had existed for decades prior to the formation of the segregation academies, Dr. Crudup wisely saw it as an alternative to integrated public education. He viewed school integration not as something for Brenau to fear but rather for Brenau to capitalize on. This tone would change, however.

Dr. Crudup raised the red flag regarding segregation in his 1961 address to the Trustees. Indeed, much of his speech related to the topic. He began by addressing what he referred to as “new trends in American education.” He said:

The newspapers and magazines this week of May, 1961, tell the story of new trends in American education. U.S. News this week tells a story of serious objections in the Congress to the Kennedy plan for federal aid to education. There has been an increase in the number of educational leaders who have raised serious questions concerning the federal government's student loan plan and loans of federal funds for school buildings. There is the unanswered question concerning the extent of government control which will follow the use of federal funds.⁴³

Dr. Crudup went on to relate how fearsome government control could be. He indicated:

In the Atlanta Journal of May 7 appears a story telling that the federal government has gone to court to force Prince Edward County in Virginia to reopen its schools

⁴² Virginia Historical Society, “The Civil Rights Movement in Virginia”; available from <http://www.vahistorical.org/civilrights/massiveresistance.htm>; Internet; accessed 30 January 2008.

⁴³ Crudup, “Report to the Board (June 2, 1961),” p. 2.

and on a desegregated basis. According to story, Attorney General Robert Kennedy has asked the court to enjoin Virginia from operating any public schools until they force Prince Edward to reopen on a desegregated basis. There is a suggestion that financial support be withdrawn until there is compliance with federal demands.⁴⁴

Dr. Crudup predicted that this phenomenon would not be confined to Virginia and drove home the point that integration enjoyed governmental support at the highest levels. He said:

Last Saturday, May 6, Attorney General Robert Kennedy made an address at the law day exercises at the University of Georgia. In this speech Mr. Kennedy reaffirmed the present federal government administration's determination to use all means within its power to bring about desegregation in our schools and colleges. Also on the radio last week was the account [that] over 250 colored students in the 11th and 12th grades in Atlanta had applied for admission to white high schools next September.⁴⁵

Dr. Crudup likewise contended that integration efforts would not be confined to primary and secondary schools. He told the Trustees, "All of this action brings before us again the possibility of complications in a college administration when federal funds are used in the promotion of the institution."⁴⁶

Dr. Crudup went on to intimate to the Board of Trustees that these "complications" would soon become very problematic for most other nearby independent colleges. Dr. Crudup revealed that these schools had made the mistake of accepting government funding for various purposes. He told the college trustees that, "seven out of the 10 members of our Georgia Foundation for Independent Colleges have applied [for] and are receiving federal government loans for new buildings."⁴⁷ Dr. Crudup implied that, for having done so, these unfortunate institutions would now be subject to governmental control, which would ultimately mean that they would be subject to forced integration.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 2-3.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

But this fate would not befall Brenau. Dr. Crudup proudly stated that, “Brenau College continues to make progress without federal aid.”⁴⁸ Though other institutions could be forced to integrate, the government simply had no leverage on Brenau. Dr. Crudup concluded this section of his 1961 address to the Board of Trustees by declaring that, “All of the above accounts confirm our convictions in the wisdom of our policy to remain free of debt preserved by independence, and continue the promotion of Brenau College according to its traditional plans.”⁴⁹ Of course, a very large part of Brenau’s traditional plans embraced segregation. He reminded the Trustees of this, pointing out that “nationality, race and personal background are acceptable considerations in our plan of student selection at Brenau College.”⁵⁰

This, then, was Dr. Crudup’s strategy: keep Brenau white by keeping away from government money. It was a point he would try to drive home repeatedly over the years. In 1962, Dr. Crudup again addressed the Board of Trustees and again spoke on desegregation. He said:

During the past year there has arisen much evidence that this rapid evolutionary change in our country is including some of our independent colleges, both from the standpoint of independence and racial segregation. This spring news reports revealed the intention of Agnes Scott College to consider the applications of Negro girls next year. A recent lawsuit in Atlanta permitted Emory University to admit a Negro boy to enrollment. Last week a news item told of the admission of Negro boy to a fraternity at the University of North Carolina and another report revealed that Tulane is soon-to-be desegregated.

There are also indications that the completely independent colleges will become modified in future years as more of these colleges will receive federal government financial aid. Among the ten colleges in the Georgia Foundation for Independent Colleges, there remain only two or three of these institutions who had not sought and been granted financial aid from the federal government. I am pleased to report to you again that Brenau College remains free of debt and has not sought any financial aid from the federal government.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

As we survey our Brenau College heritage we are proud of the record. Through the past years Brenau College has been selective and granted the right to enrollment only to those who seem to be qualified to benefit from the atmosphere of this campus and the training offered by this faculty. Without financial obligation to the federal government and without coercion from any controlling church organization, it seems to be reasonable that this policy can be continued here at Brenau College.⁵¹

Needless to say, the only students qualified to benefit from the atmosphere of Brenau were white.

Dr. Crudup used a huge portion of his 1965 report to the trustees to reiterate and clarify Brenau's strategy of maintaining whiteness by abstaining from partaking of government funding. He entitled this section of his speech, "The Civil Rights Act effect on higher education." Dr. Crudup told the Board of Trustees:

Probably no single event in the history of American higher education has effected [sic] more colleges with the kinds of problems than the Civil Rights Act of 1964 passed by the Congress of the United States. In an effort to eliminate discretion and bring the full rights of citizenship to all people in this country, our government has posed more problems for its colleges. Along with the introduction of these many complicated problems, our federal and state governments have also instituted many ways in which these colleges can obtain financial assistance and guidance in meeting these critical situations. Many of our church-related and private colleges, along with all of our state-owned tax supported colleges, have been taking full advantage of this financial assistance with government money. Only very few of our private colleges have not made federal government loans or participated in financial benefits of government-sponsored projects.⁵²

"Brenau College," Dr. Crudup declared, "is one of these independent colleges not yet receiving any governmental financial support whatsoever."⁵³

⁵¹ Crudup, "Report to the Board (June 1, 1962)," p. 2.

⁵² Crudup, "Report to the Board (June 4, 1965)," p. 4.

⁵³ Ibid.

Other institutions were not so lucky—or as foresightful in their financial planning—as Brenau. Dr. Crudup described the plight of one such school that happened to be much like Brenau:

Recently, the president of Converse College, which seems to be under pressure because of the Civil Rights Act, sent me a letter asking our position in this matter. More recently, the Chairman of the Converse Board of Trustees sent to Mr. Thurmond [a Brenau Trustee] a letter revealing the same concern for Converse in the matter of dormitory housing and discipline. The use of borrowed federal government funds to build new buildings has some advantages and can easily implement big developments, but it also has its complications.⁵⁴

In describing the “complications” of Converse College, Dr. Crudup told Brenau’s Trustees about the horror that might have been. The two institutions were, after all, very similar, both being small, private, southern liberal arts colleges for women. However, because Converse College had made a deal to get funding with the devil that was the federal government, it would have to integrate. But this would not just mean that white students at Converse would have to attend classes with black students. Dr. Crudup intimated that white students would have to do nothing less than to live alongside black students in the college dormitories. Brenau students would not have to suffer this indignity thanks to the foresight of Brenau’s leadership in not taking money from the government. Dr. Crudup declared, “Mr. Thurmond and I agree that we feel quite happy that Brenau College has been making its progress on a cash basis about borrowing any funds whatsoever.”⁵⁵

Elsewhere in his 1965 report to the Board of Trustees, Dr. Crudup took pains to validate his strategy with the mantle of legal expertise. He told the Trustees:

Last December, the Southern Association of colleges invited Dr. Jerry Williams, Rex Baker Professor of Law, University of Texas Law School to address the Association on the implications of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Copies of this

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

address were delivered to the college presidents following the meeting. I carefully studied Dr. Williams's analysis of the Civil Rights Act and its effect on our colleges. As Dr. Williams analyzes the act from Title I to Title VIII, it becomes evident that this law requires all college recipients of federal financial support from tax moneys to desegregate. However, Dr. Williams concludes the analysis with this statement, "This law has nothing to do with the segregation or integrating of students or faculty of a purely private school. If there is no question of public accommodations, nor employment question, and if it has not had federal programs, state aid of one kind or another, then this law simply does not apply to it."⁵⁶

Dr. Crudup concluded, "It is my opinion that Brenau College falls in the category of a purely private College and the mandates of the Civil Rights Act do not apply to this college."⁵⁷

While Dr. Crudup believed that not complying with the mandates of the Civil Rights Act left Brenau free to remain segregated, noncompliance came at a cost. Dr. Crudup told the Trustees that:

Recently, Brenau College received a form from the US Department of Health, Welfare, and Education asking this college to sign the Assurance of Compliance with the Civil Rights Act and return it to Washington. This has not been done. Later, we received a notice from the Georgia State Government Surplus Agency in Atlanta informing Brenau that we can no longer take advantage of their bargain purchases without signing the assurance of compliance. This has not been done and we have not attempted to make any purchases from this agency since that time.⁵⁸

Records do not indicate how much Brenau might have benefited from this program. However, it was apparently worth something to many other institutions. Minutes from the Trustee's meeting reveal that, "[Dr. Crudup] reported that according to information received, all colleges in Georgia had signed certificates of compliance as to non segregation except Mercer, LaGrange, Shorter, and Brenau, and that Brenau cannot receive any surplus United States property" for not

⁵⁶ Ibid., 4-5.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 4.

signing.⁵⁹ Among other reasons, it is possible that most schools had signed on to keep availing themselves of this program.

Another cost of non-compliance was minor, but real. The minutes of the trustees' meeting indicated that because Brenau chose to remain segregated, Brenau could not "continue with students under Vocational Rehabilitation programs."⁶⁰ This had little immediate impact on the college since, according to the minutes, Dr. Crudup determined that "only two students were at Brenau under that program when he recently checked the situation."⁶¹ Of course, how much Brenau might have been able to take advantage of these programs had it not remained segregated can not be determined. However, it seems reasonable to assume that some benefits—possibly large ones—would accrue to institutions that chose to avail themselves of such programs supported by the vast federal largess.

Other programs might have helped Brenau as well, chief among them being programs that provided federal government financial aid to students. Brenau's archives include several pieces of correspondence from Dr. Crudup that indicated Brenau wanted no part of this. In a September 1, 1964, letter, Dr. Crudup wrote, "Our philosophy of education here at Brenau College and Academy does not involve acceptance of any responsibility in helping parents pay tuition fees."⁶² In a letter to congressman Carl Elliot dated April 6, 1964, Dr. Crudup expressed that, "Brenau College has not participated in any federal grant programs nor any state-financed

⁵⁹ Brenau Trustees, "Minutes of Meeting of Trustees of Brenau College (Friday, June 4, 1965)," William Clark Files, Box 7 of 7, Folder 3, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia, p. 1. While what exactly constitutes "surplus United States property" is never qualified in the minutes, the term presumably relates to the Surplus Property Act of 1944 (49 USC 47151). Property is defined broadly in the Act to permit the government to sell anything from desks and chairs to boats, aircraft, and even real estate. Congress apparently intended that the Act primarily facilitate the disposition of surplus military equipment.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Josiah Crudup, "Sept 1, 1964, letter to Mr. Malcolm Reese, Chairman of School Committee, Committee of 1000, Perry, Georgia," Dr. Crudup Files, Box 34 of 40, Folder 9, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

educational projects.”⁶³ Another letter to the congressman written on May 28, 1964, drove the point home further as Dr. Crudup indicated, “Brenau College does not participate in any Federal Government program of student assistance.”⁶⁴ Had Brenau assisted students in obtaining federal financial aid, tuition money to the college might have been more forthcoming. Contained in the archived correspondence of Dr. Crudup are copies of literally dozens of very polite letters written to parents to inform them of a balance due on their daughter’s account and to point out to parents that because Brenau obtained no government money, it relied heavily on prompt payment of tuition to cover operating costs. Some of the outstanding bills were for several hundred dollars, which was a great deal of money at the time. Had parents had the assistance of Brenau in obtaining federal aid for their students, it stands to reason that more tuition might have been paid more promptly, which would have empowered Brenau financially.

Another great cost of resisting integration related to donorship. Large corporate and philanthropic foundations had been financial benefactors of private colleges like Brenau for decades, often donating several thousand dollars or more to these schools. Such gifts were godsend for institutions with modest financial resources. Brenau itself received large donations from the Ford Foundation in the 1950s.⁶⁵ However, this well might run dry. Dr. Crudup told the Trustees that, “many of the larger Foundations seem to be inclined to continue their support only to those independent colleges which have completely desegregated in harmony with the purpose of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.”⁶⁶ Colleges like Brenau that refused to integrate did so at the

⁶³ Josiah Crudup, “April 6, 1964, letter to the Honorable Carl Elliot, Congressman, United States House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.,” Dr. Crudup Files, Box 34 of 40, Folder 9, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

⁶⁴ Josiah Crudup, “May 28, 1964, letter to the Honorable Carl Elliot, Congressman, United States House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.,” Dr. Crudup Files, Box 34 of 40, Folder 9, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

⁶⁵ Ford Foundation, “Archives: Ford Foundation Annual Report 1957”; available from <http://www.fordfound.org/archives/item/1957/text/101>; Internet; accessed 5 July 2008.

⁶⁶ Crudup, “Report to the Board (June 4, 1965),” p. 5.

risk of losing this great financial support. This was a high price to pay for adherence to segregationist principles, but it was apparently one Brenau was willing to stomach. Even after hearing this information, the Brenau trustees supported their president's strategy for remaining an all-white institution: "Upon motion of Trustee Carter Estes, Brenau's policy of student selection in keeping with Brenau's traditions was approved."⁶⁷ Of course, keeping with tradition at Brenau meant barring African American women from attendance.

Despite these many and sometimes significant costs, Brenau College resisted integration primary by relying on the notion that it could not be forced to integrate because of its policy against accepting government money of any kind. However, one record indicated that so great was the desire on the part of college officials to remain segregated that they contemplated other means to resist integration as well. Dr. Crudup revealed this information in a portion of his 1965 report to the Brenau College Board of Trustees dealing with the Hall County School of Nursing, a joint venture between Brenau and local government. He related:

Hall School of Nursing will complete its fourth year and present its third class of registered nurses for graduation this summer. The enrollment of the school has now reached its full enrollment and will be graduating approximately 20 registered nurses each year from this time forth. It requires no imagination to clearly see the tremendous service to society being rendered by Hall School of Nursing and Brenau College in this splendid joint enterprise. But, we are now confronted with some very serious problems brought about by the Civil Rights Act.⁶⁸

In keeping with his view that any educational institutions that received government funding would be subject to integration, Dr. Crudup acknowledged that the joint educational enterprise that was the Hall County School of Nursing would be affected by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, Dr. Crudup stated that other measures would suffice to forestall desegregation of the school for some time. He indicated:

⁶⁷ Brenau Trustees, "Minutes of Meeting of Trustees of Brenau College (Friday, June 4, 1965)," p. 2.

⁶⁸ Crudup, "Report to the Board (June 4, 1965)," p. 13.

The pressure to desegregate Hall School of Nursing because of its federal government financial support has already made itself known in applications for enrollment. Because the school is small and applications for enrollment far exceeding the capacity of the school have come in early, we have temporarily solved the problem of integration. However, this procedure will not be satisfactory as a regular practice in the years ahead. Ultimately, all tax supported educational institutions must desegregate.⁶⁹

This passage indicates that Brenau would also rely on simple white applicant volume to keep blacks out of school. By implication, Brenau would have passed over a very qualified black applicant in favor of admitting one of the many more average white applicants in its large applicant pool. But even if this measure failed, Dr. Crudup indicated that other measures might be taken. He warned the trustees that, “When the problem of integration at Hall School of Nursing becomes acute, the Trustees of Brenau College will be faced with a major decision concerning integration.”⁷⁰ He went on to say that, “While this is not an acute problem at the present time and there are several possible solutions to this matter, yet [sic] I call this to the attention of the Trustees so that their thinking can prepare us for careful consideration when this time comes.”⁷¹ Dr. Crudup did not indicate what the several other possible solutions to the problem of integration might be, but, based upon his statements, he presumably had some backup plans in mind. Exactly what lengths Dr. Crudup would have gone to in keeping Brenau’s doors closed to blacks is uncertain. What is certain is that Brenau remained firmly segregated during Dr. Crudup’s nearly twenty-five year tenure as college president.

Despite the arguably central role Dr. Crudup played in keeping Brenau segregated, it would be unfair to blame him alone for perpetuating the college’s resistance to integration. For segregation to have succeeded at Brenau as well as it did for as long as it did would likely have required an institutional culture of prejudice. It is probable that this existed and was maintained

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 14.

⁷¹ Ibid.

by Brenau's faculty and, perhaps, its students as well as its administration prior to the 1970s. Dr. James Southerland, a veritable "institution within an institution" who has taught history at Brenau since 1969, spoke about this culture in an interview. Regarding integration, he indicated:

I came in with about 20 new faculty in 1969 in anticipation of a [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools] self-study. We were brought in to change the complexion of the campus to secure reaccreditation. Dr. Crudup had recruited folks who were retired from high school teaching. He paid them very little but gave them housing. Most of them were in their sixties. By the time African American students came to Brenau, they had retired. They might have objected, I suppose, had they still been there.⁷²

The faculty members photographed in the *Bubbles* annuals of the 1950s and 1960s are all white and mostly male; indeed, the only photographs of black people included in these yearbooks at all are of the dormitory and sorority house maids. Dr. Southerland's estimation that these members of the old guard might have been likely to join Dr. Crudup in resisting integration is perhaps given more credence by this observation.⁷³ Regarding the new faculty members and the students, Dr. Southerland also said that, "I don't recall any controversy on campus, at least not with the new faculty. There may have been some among the students, but it wasn't apparent. The average faculty member had no problem with integration; in fact, most of the faculty were pretty liberal and wanted that to happen."⁷⁴

Whether the white students at Brenau during the decades of the fifties, sixties, and seventies wanted integration to happen or wanted Brenau to remain segregated is more difficult to discern. No archived student correspondence or articles in student publications or the like

⁷² Dr. James Southerland, telephone interview by author 03 November 2006, Gainesville, Georgia. Written notes.

⁷³ Another possibility is that Dr. Crudup kept a very heavy hand on Brenau's tiller and that faculty opinion regarding integration (or anything else) would not have mattered one way or the other to an administration that ran the entire show, so to speak. However, minutes of several faculty meetings at Brenau do document that faculty members were voting on matters pertaining to the college's curriculum, discipline, degree conferment, and student admissions, among other things. This suggests that the faculty was at least in the habit of giving input to the administration on matters of importance to the college. Of course, how much credence Dr. Crudup gave such input is the greater question for which an answer is difficult to discern.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

ever spoke about integration, pro or con. However, it might be telling that despite the fact that African American students began enrolling in Brenau in the early 1970s, the photographs in the *Bubbles* of many student organizations generally depict no black women members until the mid to late 1980s and then often depict only one or two. This suggests that these organizations did not recruit blacks—though, in fairness to these groups, they may not have discouraged them from joining either.

Brenau's sororities were even slower to integrate. They would remain all-white until as late as 1994. In that year, photographs in the *Bubbles* indicated that a single African American woman had joined Alpha Gamma Delta, making this the first sorority at Brenau to admit a black member. However, even a decade later, only one or two African American women are listed as being members of any of Brenau's predominately white sororities, despite the fact that Brenau had increased its enrollment of black women significantly. This seems to suggest that Brenau's Greek organizations have historically been indifferent toward integration.

At least some Brenau students apparently knew about and actually appreciated Brenau's policies of fostering institutional independence from government interference. In an April, 1965, edition of Brenau's student newspaper, the *Alchemist*, editor Zella Octavia Buttram demonstrated this. She wrote an editorial that dealt with Brenau's image and essentially responded to an unfavorable article about Brenau published in the *Red and Black*, the student newspaper of the University of Georgia. Buttram wrote of Brenau that "we are one of two absolutely free and independent institutions left in Georgia" and that "As yet, we are not coerced by having accepted state, federal, or church funds, and so our opinions like our campus are still our own."⁷⁵ Though she never engaged the subject of segregation, Buttram's sentiments about Brenau's independence

⁷⁵Zella Octavia Buttram, "Image Controversy Continues," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College) 29 April 1965, p. 2.

echoed those of Josiah Crudup. Such sentiments would have led either to conclude that Brenau had the ability to exclude from attendance whomever it saw fit.

Whether students agreed or disagreed with Dr. Crudup's stance regarding the admittance of African Americans to the college is unclear. It is probable that opinions about this varied among students over time. However, in the final analysis, student opinion apparently counted for very little. No where in any of his speeches or correspondence regarding desegregation did Dr. Crudup mention what Brenau students might have wanted. The implication of this is that Brenau's governors simply never took student views on the matter into account. The ongoing negotiation regarding race on campus was, therefore, decidedly one-sided. However, this may have been an instance where no negotiation was needed. The students and the faculty and administration may have all been on the same page. Students may not have pressed the administration for a voice in any negotiation over admitting blacks simply because they were silently assenting and agreeing to the college's practices and policies. On other college campuses during the Civil Rights era, students rallied and protested racially restrictive admissions policies and perhaps contributed to the rescission of such policies at some institutions. Nothing in the archives suggests that Brenau students ever raised their voices on the subject.

Given this history, it is striking how far Brenau has come. The college was once truly remarkable for the lengths to which it went to remain segregated. Few other colleges anywhere in the country employed so successfully for so long such a calculated strategic policy to avoid integration as did Brenau. Today, it almost seems as if Brenau is trying to make up for lost time, trying to make amends for this segregated history. The college aggressively recruits both students from racial minority groups and international students, which accounts for its current

diversity. Where they were once excluded from campus, today African American students thrive at Brenau. Recent college yearbooks repeatedly depict these women as being integral members of the college community. Many hold important leadership positions. Several resident assistants in college dormitories are African American. Recently, two officers in Brenau's Student Government Association were African American, including the president. Several of Brenau's star athletes are black as are many of the college's brightest students. Put simply, Brenau in the twenty-first century fully embraces an ethos of inclusion and is doing as much to encourage integration today as it did to discourage integration only a handful of decades ago.

CHAPTER FOUR

RULES AND DISCIPLINE AT BRENAU

Rules and discipline have long been a part of college life in the United States. As far back as 1790, Samuel Hall published *The Laws of Harvard College* to advise students of proper conduct. Some laws dealt with religion as Harvard decreed:

Whoever shall profane the [Sabbath] day by unnecessary business, or visiting, or walking on the Common or in the streets or fields of the town of Cambridge, or shall use any diversions, or otherwise behave himself disorderly or unbecoming the season, shall be fined not exceeding three shillings, or be admonished, degraded, suspended, or rusticated, according to the aggravation of the offence.¹

Other rules forbade association with “any person of dissolute morals.”² Harvard even had a dress code of sorts as a rule stated that, “All the Undergraduates shall be clothed in coats of blue gray, and with waistcoats and breeches of the same colour, or of a black, a nankeen, or an olive colour.”³

Decades later, rules still bound Harvard College students and students at America’s other colleges and, indeed, had become more complicated. Laurence R. Veysey, an historian of American higher education, observed that:

¹ Samuel Hall, “The Laws of Harvard College (1790): Chap. II. -- On Devotional Exercises, and the Observation of the Lord's-Day, Rule III,” *18th-Century Reading Room.com*; available from <http://18thcenturyreadingroom.wordpress.com/2006/02/23/item-of-the-day-the-laws-of-harvard-college-1790/>; Internet; accessed 13 September 2007.

² Samuel Hall, “The Laws of Harvard College (1790): Chap. IV. Of Misdemeanors and Criminal Offences., Rule I,” *18th-Century Reading Room.com*; available from <http://18thcenturyreadingroom.wordpress.com/2006/02/23/item-of-the-day-the-laws-of-harvard-college-1790/>; Internet; accessed 13 September 2007.

³ Samuel Hall, “The Laws of Harvard College (1790): Chap. V. Miscellaneous Laws., Rule IX,” *18th-Century Reading Room.com*; available from <http://18thcenturyreadingroom.wordpress.com/2006/02/23/item-of-the-day-the-laws-of-harvard-college-1790/>; Internet; accessed 13 September 2007.

The hallmark of the college disciplinarian was an elaborate codification of rules and regulations. A glance at college rules during the decade after 1865 reveals the extreme particularity with which the conduct of students was prescribed. At Harvard the listing of such regulations required eight pages of fine print. Students there were prohibited from leaving the college on Sundays without special permission, and they were forbidden to loiter in groups anywhere on college property.⁴

But not all colleges were like-minded. The disciplinarian's strict code would begin to disappear at some forward-thinking institutions in the mid-1800s. Frederick Rudolph noted that, "before the nineteenth century was half over, many of the leading institutions had abandoned the strict discipline and the extended code of laws which had characterized so many of the colleges."⁵ Still, some colleges persisted with old ways. These institutions maintained fairly strict rules and regulations well into even the twentieth century. This was true of virtually all of the women's colleges in America, especially those in the South.

Regarding rules at southern women's colleges, Amy Thompson McCandless observed that, "Southern women were expected to behave as 'ladies' on and off the campus."⁶ Hence, "Regulations against smoking, drinking, cardplaying, and dancing with men remained in force longer at southern colleges" than at northern schools.⁷ Brenau College was a typically southern institution in this respect. However, Brenau was far less typical than other southern women's colleges in other respects regarding rules, regulations, and discipline.

The history of rules and discipline at Brenau reveals much about the on-going negotiation between Brenau students and Brenau's faculty and administration to refine the Brenau College experience. Throughout Brenau's history, the college's faculty and presidential administrations promulgated regulations regarding a plethora of topics, including such themes as chapel

⁴ Laurence R. Veysey, *The Emergence of the American University* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 33.

⁵ Rudolph, *American College and University*, 106-107.

⁶ McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 127.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 128.

attendance, dating, smoking, cheating, and student dress. In doing so, college officials sought to maintain student discipline. In response, students pushed back against these efforts—often through rule breaking—as they sought their independence. An unspoken negotiation ensued between the two parties. For much of the institution’s history, Brenau’s faculty won out in most disciplinary matters. Students were made to abide by rules and suffered often stiff penalties for not doing so. However, the faculty was not totally free to mold the college as they saw fit. Students had some agency and, upon occasion, successfully negotiated with college officials over disciplinary matters. In response to student pressure, many rules softened over time or, in some cases, disappeared altogether. Examining this evolution of rules and regulations at Brenau shows both the process and the product of the contest for space between Brenau’s students and the faculty and administration.

According to a description by Professor A. W. Van Hoose, an early president of Brenau College, the system of student discipline developed at the college was atypical virtually from the institution’s founding. A reporter interviewed Van Hoose for an article published in 1903 in the *Atlanta Constitution* that described in robust detail how this system originated. The article read:

One day several years ago Professor Van Hoose was sitting in the “home building” looking out across, the cool, well-shaded campus, when he saw fifty of the college girls walking down the street, two abreast, under the supervision of four teachers who looked like so many overseers. This thought came to Professor Van Hoose: Now, is that the way to treat young ladies of from sixteen to twenty-five years, who have been reared in good families, and who are supposed to have had good home influences? They are not treated that way at home. A girl living with her parents who goes out for a short walk and seeing an acquaintance does not ignore him and stare straight before her. She recognizes him with at least a slight inclination of the head, and meets the obligations of courtesy. It would be rudeness to do less, and how can practicing rudeness develop politeness, or accustom any one to those easy and graceful manners which seem to sit so naturally upon those who are well-bred. And why should a young lady when she comes to college be always under surveillance—watched by half a dozen guards as if she were not to be trusted?⁸

⁸ “‘Self-Governed Girls’ is the Plan at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 5 July 1903, sec. A, p. 4.

The article related that, “From the incident described sprang what is known as the self-government system of Brenau College.”⁹ This system supposedly arose because Brenau’s “great purpose” was “the development of good women, well-rounded, perfectly developed [in] character.”¹⁰ Brenau officials saw their system of self-government as an exceptional way to cultivate a woman’s good character and so facilitated its adoption. Brenau students took to the system quickly, no doubt pleased at the degree of self-determination it afforded them.

The 1903 article continued, describing how the self-government system operated. It indicated that, “In Brenau there are three classes of students, an ‘honor roll,’ a ‘self-governed list’ and a ‘privileged list’” and proceeded to explain the system “in a nutshell.”¹¹ The article stated:

When the term opens all the new girls are on the same footing, so far as the rules governing their conduct are concerned. The student body elects what is known as a board of honor, consisting of twelve of the older girls. The ballots are cast in a regular election by the students and the faculty. The tenure of office is for six weeks, and the board of honor constitutes the real governing power of the college. They take a general oversight of the conduct of the girls, and at the end of their term of office they recommend to the faculty such girls as they deem worthy of a place on the “honor roll,” which is the first step toward being a “self-governed” or “privileged” student. If their recommendations meet with the approval of the faculty, these girls are placed on the honor rolls and certain of the usual school-girl restrictions are removed. Thus they may go to walk in groups of four without a teacher; they may attend church on the Sabbath without a teacher; they are not required to sit in the study hall, but may study in their rooms or in such places as may be most pleasant or convenient for them. At the end of another six weeks they are eligible to the self-governed list, and their privileges and responsibilities are correspondingly broadened. At the expiration of the third six weeks they are eligible to the privileged list when practically all restraint is removed from them and they become in the full sense of the word self-governed girls.¹²

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid. It is particularly intriguing that teachers voted as well as the students.

Brenau put this system into operation in 1898. When the *Constitution* reporter asked Professor Van Hoose if the system was a success, he replied, “Why, we have not had a case of discipline in so long that I can hardly remember when we did have one.”¹³

Van Hoose continued, describing how the system actually encouraged the Brenau girls to abide by the rules. He said:

Self-governing girls who do not govern themselves as they should are reduced in ranks and then they feel the full force of the rules and regulations. . . . The Brenau college girl is relieved of many arbitrary restrictions which in the old times interfered with the liberty of the student, but she forfeits these privileges if she fails to appreciate them. The system rewards faithfulness of the careful, conscientious student and develops her capacity for independent action, while a powerful and usually effective stimulus is given the careless, negligent girl, impelling her to use every effort to prove herself worthy of receiving the same position and privileges attained by her classmates and companions.¹⁴

Van Hoose concluded, “If a girl is wasteful of her time and indifferent to her opportunities, or will not obey the rules of the college, her parents are notified and she is quietly sent home.”¹⁵

A later article in the *Atlanta Constitution* indicated that the novel system of discipline worked well. The piece revealed that, “Six years of actual trial have demonstrated the success of the system, and the management point with pride to the fact that many other colleges for girls have followed the example of Brenau and, abandoning the old system, have adopted, in whole or in part, [t]he system inaugurated here in 1898.”¹⁶ Since its inception, Professor Van Hoose observed that, “It has been a very long time since we have had a case of discipline.”¹⁷

While Brenau’s system of discipline may have been remarkable among southern women’s colleges in the early 1900s, it was not truly “novel” in every sense of the word. In *Alma Mater*, Helen Horowitz examined several women’s colleges in New England in the

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ “‘Self-Governed Girls’ is the Plan at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

¹⁷ Ibid.

nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Among other things, she commented on their systems of enforcing good behavior. Horowitz wrote that, “While college authorities kept one essential weapon, the right to expel students for academic failure or a serious breach of the rules, they lacked the ability to shape behavior within this broad limit. Thus...several of the colleges turned to student self-government, enlisting certain students to monitor the behavior of others.”¹⁸ This begs the question of how much Brenau might have emulated these northern women’s colleges in developing its system of discipline. No source speaks to this, but Van Hoose, the architect of Brenau’s disciplinary system, could have known of the policies at northern schools. He was a graduate of the University of Georgia and had been working in higher education for almost a decade before associating with Brenau. Traveling in these circles could have placed him in a position to learn of and adopt “cutting edge” developments. Still, that said, it would have taken some courage on the part of Van Hoose to implement such a system in the more conservative South.

As was the case in the northern schools, students, with occasional faculty guidance, monitored the behavior of their peers at Brenau. Brenau expected all students to know its rules. Incoming students received a student handbook (called *The Brenau Girl* for a time) that spelled out the college’s rules and regulations in great detail. By 1937, the college had additionally established an honor code. It read, “Honorable conduct in academic work and student activities is the spirit of conduct at Brenau College. Such is the command and decree of the Student Government Association; upon it rests the traditions of honor and machinery by which offenders of the tradition are brought to an accounting.”¹⁹ The student handbook of 1945 indicated that,

¹⁸ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 149.

¹⁹ Louise Culler, ed., *The Brenau Girl: Official Handbook of Information, 1937-1938* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1937), 9; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Handbook* (1937).”

“Every fall each new Brenau girl is asked to sign the Honor Code whereby she pledges her responsibility for her own actions.”²⁰ The handbook continued, saying “When she signs the code, she legally acknowledges a thorough understanding of the system and agrees to abide by the rules and regulations.”²¹

The essence of the code would remain the same for years, though it would evolve. By 1955, the college’s student handbook indicated that the code had become more robust. It read:

We, the undersigned, as students of Brenau College, do hereby pledge ourselves to uphold the honor of the College by refraining from every form of dishonesty in our college life, and to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of honesty and honor on the campus.

We acknowledge that this Honor Pledge also applies to any infringement of the Student Government Regulations as set forth in the Student Handbook, and that failure on our part to treat these matters with due regard is considered a breach of the trust placed in us by the faculty and our fellow students, and thus, a violation of this Honor Pledge.²²

The pledge would remain essentially the same for the next several decades and, as in 1955, occupy a prominent position near the front of the student handbooks during this time. By 1974, signing the pledge was optional; a student demonstrated her intent to abide by the honor system merely by enrolling in the college.²³ Also by this year, the student handbook carefully defined plagiarism.²⁴ By the twenty-first century, the code remained much as it had half a century before. It read:

I promise to uphold the Brenau University honor code by refraining from every form of dishonesty and cheating in university life, and will strive to create a spirit

²⁰ Marguerite Duncan, ed., *Official Handbook of Information* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1945), 11; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Handbook* (1945).”

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Sarah Allen, ed., *Students’ Handbook, Brenau College, 1955 -1956* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1955), 7; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Handbook* (1955).”

²³ Margie Thrasher, ed., *Student Handbook, Brenau College, 1974-1975* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1974), 32; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Handbook* (1974).”

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 32-33.

of honesty and honor. Failure to do so is considered a breach of trust toward the faculty and student body. I accept this commitment as a personal responsibility to refrain from and to report all forms of dishonesty and cheating.²⁵

Students routinely recited the honor code at the beginning of all formal convocations.²⁶

Despite Brenau's best efforts to encourage honesty and good behavior, disciplinary infractions did occur. This happened as students, in their negotiation with college faculty and administrators to refine their college experience to their liking, pushed boundaries. The 1900 catalog indicated that, "the girls themselves become largely the governing power" in policing violations.²⁷ This they did in groups that evolved with the college. The 1900 catalog related that, "Should any one of our girls abuse any privilege granted her, she is at once reported by the Board of Honor (all of whose members are students) and her name is taken from the list to whom privileges are extended, until by six weeks of blameless conduct she shows that she regrets her misconduct and really wants the confidence of the faculty and students."²⁸ For several years in Brenau's early history, students elected other students to comprise the Board of Honor. By the nineteen-teens, Brenau's student handbooks revealed that students elected in campus-wide elections comprised the college's Executive Council. The council assumed the job of appointing students to Brenau's Honor Board or, later as it would come to be called, the Honor Court. Originally, students could be appointed from the general student body. By the mid-1920s, Honor

²⁵ *Brenau University Undergraduate and Graduate Catalog 2007-2008*, v. 123 (Gainesville, GA: Brenau University, 2007), 34; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as "*Catalog* (2007)."

²⁶ Brenau University, "Georgia Senator Steen Miles, Brenau University Celebrate Martin Luther King Day 2007"; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/PR/news/prarticle.cfm?ID=284>; Internet; accessed 8 September 2007.

²⁷ *Catalog* (1900), 64.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 65.

Court appointments made by the Executive Council consisted of members drawn from the ranks of the Executive Council itself.²⁹

The Executive Council acted on minor cases of discipline (generally violations that could not, by themselves, lead to expulsion) and passed on student petitions for changes in the rules to the faculty for consideration. The Honor Court met as needed to consider more serious infractions of the rules or violations of the honor code. By the mid-1930s, the Honor Court was “composed of five Senior Executive Council members, including the President of the Y.W.C.A. as an honorary member.”³⁰ By the mid-1940s and up until the 1970s, the president of Brenau’s Student Government Association served as the chairman of the Honor Court. She appointed four other young women (typically from the senior class) to serve on the court for the academic year. By the mid-1970s, the chairman of the Honor Board was elected by the student body and she, in turn, appointed the other members of the board to their positions.³¹ By 1984, the Honor Court had morphed to become a Judicial Board and an Appellate Board comprised of student justices. Also by this year, Brenau’s student handbook published eleven pages of impressively sophisticated and intricate text called the “Judicial Constitution and Procedures,” which covered topics ranging from the rights of a respondent brought up on disciplinary charges to investigative procedures in discipline cases to trial and appellate procedures and sanctions in discipline hearings.³²

What is interesting to note in this historical development is the consistent centrality of student agency in maintaining discipline at Brenau. Dating back to the institution’s inception,

²⁹ See the *Official Hand-Book of Information, 1925 – 1926* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1925); available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Handbook* (1925).”

³⁰ *Handbook* (1937), 15.

³¹ *Handbook* (1974), 33.

³² Jody Duncan and Lynn Smith, eds., *Brenau Women’s College Student Handbook, 1984-1985* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1984), 25-36; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Handbook* (1984).”

students, either directly or indirectly, selected several of their peers to serve on Brenau's honor boards or courts. Virtually any student was eligible for selection in this democratic process.³³ These selected students passed on disciplinary recommendations to the faculty. Entries in the minutes books of the Brenau faculty meetings that were kept throughout much of the twentieth century consistently indicated that the faculty often went along with the student recommendations.

The operation of the disciplinary system at the college is an excellent example of the ongoing negotiation between students and faculty to each refine "their Brenau." Students, through their generally good conduct, negotiated for self-discipline and proved to the faculty that they could successfully police their own behavior. The faculty and administration, in turn, were content to leave many aspects of enforcing discipline to the students since the students demonstrated by their conduct that they were enthusiastic about the system.

Over the years, Brenau subjected students who violated the rules to a range of punishments commensurate with the infraction committed. A simple loss of privileges attended minor infractions of the rules. More serious wrong-doers might be "campused," which meant losing many privileges and being restricted to campus. Girls found guilty of very serious disobedience could be suspended from school, asked to withdraw themselves from the college, or, in the most severe cases, expelled from Brenau entirely. It is interesting to note that in instances requiring punishment, the student honor board representatives passed along a recommended punishment to the faculty, which often adopted the student recommendation at

³³ While one might argue that the move toward appointing (as opposed to electing) honor board members shows an elitist shift, this was probably not the case. The appointments were, after all, made by students who had themselves been voted into office in campus-wide elections. Still, even if one could criticize the process as becoming more exclusive, this may have had good results. As an example, consider the United States judicial system. Presidents appoint members of the federal judiciary to the bench precisely to establish an independent judiciary and to avoid the vagaries of participatory democracy. See Maeva Marcus, ed., *The Documentary History of the Supreme Court of the United States, 1789-1800: Volume 8* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2007), 5.

face value. The practical effect of this was that students could essentially get other students expelled if their disciplinary breach was severe enough. Also, as early as the 1920s, serious honor violations led to a loss of status on campus. The faculty meeting minutes book entry for April 1, 1924, indicated that the faculty approved a motion that would bar from holding “important office” in any club any student guilty of “a serious breach of discipline.”³⁴

The Brenau University Archives contains, in various forms, copies of college rules and regulations dating back to the turn of the twentieth century. These show that Brenau’s rules developed rather organically over time in response to changing times. The rules also reflect that student discipline at Brenau touched on a wide variety of subjects. Importantly, Brenau girls did not merely enforce rules handed down to them by the faculty and administration. Brenau’s students had the ability to actually promulgate some new rules, to change existing rules, or to have obsolete rules revoked. This occurred as students submitted petitions to the faculty for approval. While the faculty did not pass all petitions, they gave student petitions serious consideration and, often, approved them. For example, at one time, simply playing cards was forbidden at Brenau. The faculty meeting minutes book entry for April 1, 1924, indicated that the faculty approved a petition from the student union “to substitute the word ‘gambling’ for the word ‘card-playing’ in the College handbook.”³⁵ Students were willing to accept that gambling was wrong while the faculty were willing to accept that simple cardplaying was harmless. This is typical of how some student petitions played out. Sources intimate that there seemed to be relatively little friction between the rule-making power and the rule-enforcing power of students and faculty at Brenau since the students had this ability to petition for changes to rules.

³⁴ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 1 April 1924.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

One subject engaged by the rules for many years was the required attendance at religious services by students. Brenau was originally founded as the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary and the 1900 catalog said of the college, “It is a Christian institution, and young ladies entrusted to its care will receive instruction in all that pertains to the development of their spiritual nature.”³⁶ Yet, despite these religious ties, Brenau maintained an exceptional degree of religious toleration. The college advertised itself as being “undenominational,” as early college promotional materials put it, and attracted girls from many faiths. A 1911 article in the *Atlanta Constitution* reported of Brenau that “here nearly every denomination is represented during the scholastic year—Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Jews, Episcopalians, daily mingle with each other, and daily, as they go to and from their classes, as they play, talk and work they are receiving from each other the tolerance which the interchange of varied opinions always brings out. Prejudices disappear, while each girl is strengthened in her own affiliations.”³⁷ Moreover, even despite its early name, the college never received much more than the moniker from the Baptist denomination. No funding came to Brenau from any large Baptist organizations, though many individual Baptists and smaller congregations likely did donate. Additionally, no evidence suggests that the Baptist denomination ever held any influence over Brenau’s curriculum or over the governance of the college.

Brenau’s stand on religion in the early twentieth century is quite remarkable. The college was, after all, a woman’s college, in the Deep South bible-belt, during a very pious age. By all accounts given this triumvirate, Brenau should have been a very religious place. Yet, Brenau actually relaxed its rules during this time to become more religiously liberal. This was bold. Most similar institutions interested in “lightening up” religiously (assuming there were any)

³⁶ *Catalog* (1900), 9.

³⁷ “Religious Influences in College Education,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 30 July 1911, sec. D, p. 8.

would most probably have simply become lax in their enforcement of rules requiring attendance at church services. Brenau went further and actually dropped the rule entirely. This says something interesting about Brenau.

In the early twentieth century, the college regulations stated that, “Pupils are required to attend church of their choice on each Sabbath.”³⁸ Missing church around the turn of the century was frowned upon. According to Brenau’s 1900 catalog, a student could miss church only on account of illness or if her parents gave her permission “to remain away from church” on Sundays.³⁹ Still, even this early-on, Brenau was beginning to relax its stance. The college permitted students (with parental permission) to avoid church. In essence, then, with parental permission, Brenau would have even tolerated agnostics and atheists.

Beginning in the 1920s, required church attendance ceased to be the rule at the college. The student handbook for 1925 – 1926 stated, “Church attendance is not compulsory, but is encouraged.”⁴⁰ Just how many students acted on Brenau’s encouragement and went to church is a matter for speculation; in fact, it may have been very few. In a called faculty meeting of February 20, 1924, the faculty considered “a communication from the pastors of the city churches, calling attention to the fact that a goodly number of the Faculty and the great majority of the students do not attend the services of church or Sunday School, and asking for a larger cooperation on the part of the academic colony of the community.”⁴¹ The faculty resolved to encourage church attendance more, but stopped short of any attempt to mandate this.

³⁸ “‘Self-Governed Girls’ is the Plan at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

³⁹ *Catalog* (1900), 71.

⁴⁰ *Handbook* (1925), 34.

⁴¹ *Brenau College Faculty Journal for Twelve Years (1910 – 1922)*, entry dated 12 December 1922; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Faculty Journal* (12 years).”

Of course, Brenau students were not entirely irreligious. Occasionally, Brenau's student government administration acted to try to strengthen the religious affiliations of students, whatever they may have been. For example, in 1938, the faculty assented to a student petition that requested to "have a blessing asked regularly at the College tables" in the dining hall at meal times.⁴² This assent shows that even as late as the 1930s, some members of the Brenau community clung to the still-existent southern worldview that a girl's inherent nature was a religious one and that piety, the most cherished of all feminine virtues, should be cultivated.

Views such as this explain Brenau's attitude about chapel. While church attendance was optional for Brenau students in the early twentieth century, attendance at daily chapel service was mandatory. The college held services both mornings and evenings. By the 1920s, Brenau had established the position of "Chapel Monitor" and entrusted this student with the responsibility to police chapel attendance and the authority to keep order among students in chapel. Little short of illness excused one from chapel. Indeed, the rules required that, "Notice of illness must be filed with the Chaperon on the day of illness in order to obtain class and chapel excuses."⁴³ Late or retroactive filing was not acceptable. While some students probably enjoyed attending chapel, others apparently did not. Some, it seems, even resorted to positively un-Christian means to get out of chapel. An entry in the faculty meeting minutes book for 1926 indicated that the faculty had to deal with "a number of young ladies who are guilty—according to their own confession—of having forged excuses for absences from classes and chapel."⁴⁴

Rules regarding chapel attendance also softened over time. As late as 1946, Brenau's student handbook indicated that "Chapel and Vesper attendance is compulsory" and that "chapel

⁴² *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 3 May 1938.

⁴³ *Handbook (1925)*, 13.

⁴⁴ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 19 February 1926.

monitors will be held personally responsible for order there.”⁴⁵ But by the mid-1950s, chapel services had been reduced in number. The student handbook of 1955 indicated that:

A regular chapel program is prepared Tuesday through Thursday from 12:00 – 12:30. On Tuesday and Thursday the administration presents the program. The Wednesday program is under the auspices of the Fine Arts Department and the Student Body.⁴⁶

In addition to reducing the amount of chapel Brenau students had to attend, the character of the chapel services changed as well. At the beginning of the century, chapel services dealt with religious themes. By mid-century, articles in various editions of the *Alchemist* indicated that official business and entertainment were more the order of the day as evidenced by the involvement of the administration and the fine arts department. According to Brenau’s student handbook, the college still required chapel attendance as late as at least 1966. However, the college only required attendance at least twice a week by that time. By 1970, the weekly chapel attendance requirement no longer existed, though Brenau’s catalog indicated that “Each Thursday, students are offered the opportunity to participate in a college chapel program.”⁴⁷ Even then, however, the catalog indicated that these chapel sessions were “not always religious in nature.”⁴⁸ Faculty members or guests of the college might speak during chapel or students might have enjoyed performances by musical or dramatic groups.

What is not evident from sources is how much (if any) of the reduction in chapel attendance was the result of student agency. Still, it is conceivable that students might have negotiated for less chapel over time, something that occurred at several college campuses in the mid-twentieth century. Whether students were or were not behind the changes of Brenau’s rules relating to chapel, nothing suggests that students minded the reduction.

⁴⁵ *Handbook* (1945), 27.

⁴⁶ *Handbook* (1955), 80.

⁴⁷ *Catalog* (1970), 17.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

This is not to say, however, that Brenau students were necessarily losing interest in religion. One of the largest and most active groups on campus since Brenau's founding had been the Young Women's Christian Association. While the Y.W.C.A. at Brenau frequently engaged in secular activities (e.g., sponsoring musical performances or bringing guest speakers to campus), the group was still, fundamentally, a religious organization. It was still going strong even in the era when Brenau dispensed with mandatory chapel attendance. Also, even as late as 1984, Brenau still required students to attend any chapels and convocations occurring during the term that the college declared to be compulsory.⁴⁹ These occasionally had religious foci.

Of course, Brenau rules dealt with more than religious services. Over time, the college published many rules that involved class attendance. The general thrust of these rules was that students should attend class and official college events unless they had some compelling reason (such as illness or a family obligation) that prevented them from doing so. Students on the honor roll or who were performing very well academically were able to "cut" more than other students. The college's 1904 policy regarding attendance stated that, "Absences from school duties for any other than strictly providential causes are not excused. Five unexcused absences during any one term are sufficient cause for the removal of a student from any position of honor or privilege which she may have attained under the self-governed system. Exceptions can be made to this rule only by unanimous vote of the faculty and the honor board."⁵⁰ Assuming this policy was a hold-over from the days of the Baptist Female Seminary, it may have had more bark than bite. In the late nineteenth century, the society section of the *Atlanta Constitution* often published announcements indicating that Georgia Baptist Female Seminary students made frequent and, at

⁴⁹ *Handbook* (1984), 22.

⁵⁰ "'Self-Governed Girls' is the Plan at Brenau," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

times, lengthy visits to home during the academic year. One might wonder how such protracted visits would have affected the academic standing of a student.

The 1925 student handbook published what seemed to be a stricter rule. It indicated that, “Each student is allowed two unexcused absences from each class for each semester. If any student exceeds this number of unexcused absences, she forfeits her credit in that subject or subjects.”⁵¹ The 1937 handbook reiterated this rule, modifying it only to indicate that the college permitted only a single absence for a one-hour class and that “no student is allowed to cut a class before or after a holiday.”⁵² Presumably, some “excused” absences would have been tolerated in addition to the two “unexcused” absences (a.k.a. a “cut”) allowed to each girl per class per term.

The “cut” policy at Brenau had become somewhat more complicated by nineteen-forties. The *Faculty Minutes Book for Twenty-Five Years*, which recorded what transpired at Brenau faculty meetings for decades, indicated that in the early 1940s, the college began focusing much attention on student attendance. By 1945, Brenau’s attendance policy had become more detailed. The college published in the student handbook of that year and of a decade later a table which indicated how many classes students could miss based upon such factors as their class standing, academic standing, and the number of days per week a course met.⁵³ In essence, juniors and seniors doing “A” or “B” quality work could miss five or six days of a typical class, while struggling students in any class were not allowed any unexcused absences.

By 1965, Brenau had largely abandoned its college-wide attendance policy in favor of giving individual instructors discretion over attendance. The college retained some universality by indicating that more than twelve absences (excused or unexcused) from any three or four hour

⁵¹ *Handbook* (1925), 14.

⁵² *Handbook* (1937), 25.

⁵³ *Handbook* (1945), 60.

class would result in failure.⁵⁴ Likewise, in 1974, the student handbook indicated that any student on academic probation (i.e., those with below a 2.0 grade point average) could not miss more than one day per term per credit hour of class due to an unexcused absence and still receive academic credit for the course.⁵⁵

Brenau's attendance policies clearly looked threatening on paper. However, in reality, they may have been only modestly enforced. The minute books of the Brenau faculty meetings kept up until the 1940s do not indicate that the college expelled any student for poor class attendance, though Brenau did expel several students on other grounds. This suggests that either Brenau students seldom cut class or that the spirit of the law was perhaps more lenient than the letter of the law. If the former was the case, this would be made all the more remarkable by the fact that, at least until 1950, Brenau actually held classes six days a week. Brenau's catalogs indicated that Saturday morning classes were common until at least mid-century, which would have made each girl responsible for attending one more day of school per week.

In fact, what is more likely is that Brenau girls did cut class and other official functions but received relatively mild punishments. The faculty meeting minutes entry for March 2, 1926, indicated that the faculty "put under restriction those students who confessed to having forged excuses for absences."⁵⁶ Several years later, in 1933, several girls were again found guilty of forging excuses for absences.⁵⁷ In neither instance did cutting class or even forging excuses for their absences lead to suspension, expulsion, or other severe punishment for those students.

⁵⁴ Patsy Fargason and Cheryl Gibbons, eds., *Students' Handbook, Brenau College 1965-1966* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1965), 60; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as "*Handbook* (1965)."

⁵⁵ *Handbook* (1974), 30.

⁵⁶ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 2 March 1926.

⁵⁷ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 7 February 1933.

Other college rules related to campus housing. Since its founding, Brenau students have lived on-campus in dormitory residence halls and, beginning in about the nineteen-teens, in sorority houses. Living on campus was not mandatory, however, and many “town girls” attended Brenau while living with their families in Gainesville. Brenau’s sorority houses have always been somewhat unique compared to those at other colleges in that they have been owned by the college since their establishment. Brenau has given each sorority the right to occupy its house and the right to restrict occupancy to members of the sorority, though, at times, in fact, non-sorority girls lived in sorority houses as well. The faculty meeting minutes book entry for February 3, 1925, indicated that enough non-sorority girls lived in sorority chapter houses at times to prompt the faculty to pass a motion that would hold those girls to the same standards of scholarship sorority members were held to. Consequently, any girl making an academic average of less than 80% could be ejected from the house and moved into a dormitory.⁵⁸ The college expected residents in each sorority house—and in each dormitory—to abide by this and other college housing rules.

Throughout Brenau’s history, these housing rules have typically dealt with such things as quiet hours, visitation, and “lights out” time. In 1904, the college promulgated three simple rules on these subjects. They were:

[Rule] 4. At 9:45 o’clock in the evening all pupils are required to retire to their rooms, and at 10:45 all lights must be out and absolute quiet observed.

[Rule] 12. Sunday afternoons, from 3 to 5 o’clock, shall be observed as quiet hour, during which time pupils are required to remain in their rooms and to preserve absolute quiet.

[Rule] 13. During school hours and study hours in the evening, pupils are required to remain in their own rooms or in the school rooms or library. Visiting either in bed rooms or practice rooms or loitering in the halls during such hours is absolutely forbidden.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 3 February 1925.

⁵⁹ “‘Self-Governed Girls’ is the Plan at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

Twenty years later, the rules on these subjects had become more complicated. The 1925 *Official Hand-Book of Information* for the college published expanded quiet hours. The handbook decreed:

- (a) Quiet shall be observed during the following hours:
 - (1) 9 A.M. to 1:20 P.M., 2:30 to 3:30 P.M., 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.
 - (2) On Mondays from 7:30 to 9:30 P.M.
 - (3) On Sundays from 11:30 A.M. to 1 P. M., 3:00 P.M. to 5 PM. and 6:30 to 7:30 P.M.
 - (4) Quiet hour does not have to be observed on Saturday night
 - (5) All members shall maintain quiet in the library.⁶⁰

To further qualify what could be done during “quiet hours,” the *Hand-Book* indicated: “Stringed instruments may be played in rooms on Sundays, except from 11:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., 3:00 to 5:00 P.M., 6:30 to 7:30 P.M. They may *not* be played during quiet hours on any other days. Pianos and Victrolas may be used for appropriate music between 7:30 and 10:00 P.M.”⁶¹ This rule, like several others, came into being thanks to a student initiative. The faculty meeting minutes book entry for October 7, 1924, indicated that, “A petition from the Executive Council [asking] that students be allowed to have appropriate music in their rooms” was considered.⁶² The faculty granted the petition, yet it placed the onus upon the Executive Council to police the “appropriateness” of the music the students played. Consequently, the council had to “assume responsibility for seeing to it that there shall be no jazz and no dancing.”⁶³

The 1925 handbook also dealt with “lights out” time. It indicated that, “All students must extinguish their lights at 10:30, when the light bell is sounded.”⁶⁴ If any campus performance ran past 10:30 p.m., students had a half-hour after dismissal to prepare for bed. Deserving

⁶⁰ *Handbook* (1925), 12.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶² *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 7 October 1924.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Handbook* (1925), 12.

students could obtain something called “light extension” through special permission, which would allow for lights out at midnight.⁶⁵

The 1904 rules said little else that related to college housing. By contrast, in 1925, Brenau’s student handbook required that, “All rooms shall be orderly in appearance by 9:00 A.M. each morning except Sunday, when the time [is] extended to 11:30 A.M.”⁶⁶ Also, while students could spend the night in other dormitories or in sorority houses on weekends simply by informing their house chaperone that they intended to do so, sleeping “outside of one’s own room on any night except Saturday and Sunday” required official permission.⁶⁷ Furthermore, day pupils were not permitted to spend the night with friends on campus.

A little over a decade later, little had changed regarding housing-related rules and regulations. According to the 1937 *Brenau Girl* student handbook, quiet hours were essentially the same as they had been in the nineteen-twenties. However, students no longer had to observe quiet hours on Sunday afternoons or on Saturday afternoons after 1:00 p.m.⁶⁸ Interestingly, the college now went to the trouble to spell out what had probably been assumed in early publications of the regulations—the 1937 handbook indicated that 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. were quiet hours. Rules regarding “lights out” were also pretty much as they had been, though students in the 1930s had until 11 p.m. to turn off their lamps and could not ask for “light extension” more than twice per month.⁶⁹ Also, by the mid-1930s, students were exempt from tidying up their rooms on Sunday, prohibited from bringing day pupils to meals in the dining hall

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ *Handbook* (1937), 20-21.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 21.

at any time, and were forbidden from sleeping with friends in other dormitories during weekdays.⁷⁰

By 1945, Brenau had eliminated quiet hours on Saturday entirely, but otherwise basically retained the schedule of quiet hours from previous decades. Also, regulations in the nineteen-forties now specified that neither musical instruments nor typewriters could be used before 7 a.m. Lights out on Saturdays extended to midnight, though students were required to be in their rooms by 11 p.m. In addition to speaking to the “lights out” time, the 1945 student handbook also included a housing rule that read, “Each student is responsible for the care of her room and any student may be campused for defacing the walls of her room.”⁷¹

By 1955, students living on-campus enjoyed no quiet hours on weekends, save at night. The handbook for this year did require students to be quiet around the auditorium during performances or services. In addition, the lights out rule that had applied only to Saturdays in 1945 was now the rule throughout the week. In deference to studiousness, the 1955 handbook also indicated that, “During mid-semester exams and semester exams lights do not have to be extinguished by 12:00 midnight.”⁷²

Several room regulations in the 1950s had changed substantially from earlier times. Day students were now permitted to spend Saturday nights on campus with their friends in the dormitories. It was also easier for a dormitory resident to spend the night with another dormitory resident. In addition, students were cautioned that, “All rooms shall be in orderly appearance by

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ *Handbook* (1945), 24.

⁷² *Handbook* (1955), 24.

11:00 A.M. If the student's room is not orderly before the maid leaves then it is the student's responsibility to put the room in order."⁷³

The 1965 - 1966 student handbook persisted in maintaining essentially the same scheduled quiet hours as had existed in the previous decade at the college. This edition of the handbook also made a distinction between "complete quiet" and "quiet," with the former applied only to traditional sleeping hours. Presumably, then, "quiet hours" did not require absolute silence. The 1965 edition of the student handbook also set different standards for sorority houses and dormitories. Residents in sorority houses were permitted to "watch television from 7:30 P.M. – 11:00 P.M. any night if they maintained a C average and if the television is turned low."⁷⁴ No mention is made of dormitory residents being permitted to watch T.V. at all. Also, another rule stated "Students living in sorority houses and upper-classmen in dorms may leave their lights on indefinitely any night, but quiet must be maintained after 11:00 P.M."⁷⁵ Freshmen and sophomores living in sorority houses, then, had it better than their counterparts living in Brenau's residence halls. Regarding cleanliness, the 1965 handbook stated: "Rooms are checked every morning, except Sunday, for neatness. The maid will clean the floor, sweep, and check the bathroom each day. The responsibility for the rest is yours."⁷⁶

Housing rules and regulations changed substantially from the mid-nineteen-sixties to the mid-nineteen-seventies. Regarding quiet hours, the 1974 – 1975 edition of the student handbook published no schedule of hours and said only that "Reasonable quiet shall be maintained at all times in the residence halls and houses."⁷⁷ Campus officials now permitted overnight guests

⁷³ Ibid., 25. Responsibility for tidying up has always apparently rested with Brenau's students, despite the presence of maids. According to photographs in the *Bubbles*, the college employed maids since about the 1930s to clean housing bathrooms, floors, and common areas. Students were responsible for cleaning everything else.

⁷⁴ *Handbook* (1965), 42.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 14.

⁷⁷ *Handbook* (1974), 24.

(apparently, females only) at any time in the dorms and houses and permitted guests to stay up to three days. Regarding tidiness, the regulations said only that “Students are expected to keep their rooms neat and orderly.”⁷⁸ By 1974, Brenau had also implemented a key policy. Under the policy, seniors received keys for their residences and enjoyed an unlimited curfew on Friday and Saturday nights. Duplicating or loaning a key to someone else was prohibited. Losing a key was a serious matter which resulted in a student having to pay for several new keys and to install new locks in their residence hall or sorority house. The student handbook stressed that the key policy was “experimental” and that “the abuse of the key privilege by any student will mean the forfeiture of this privilege for all students.”⁷⁹

The unlimited curfew for seniors on weekends by the 1970s was a vast departure from earlier times. Up until about 1945, Brenau student handbooks indicated that curfew was at 10 p.m. on the days when Brenau girls could go out. A decade later, students could stay out until 10:55 p.m.⁸⁰ By 1984, non-seniors in good academic standing could remain out until 2 a.m.⁸¹ No curfew was mentioned at all in the housing regulations of 2006.

By 1984, each dorm or house determined its own “Study Hours,” which was an interesting example of Brenau’s willingness to give the students a good deal of control over their own affairs. Quiet hours were a thing of the past, though students were “required to refrain from excessive noise.”⁸² The “key policy” experiment of the 1970s was apparently a success as Brenau retained it. Brenau still expected students to keep their rooms neat and now, to categorically promote this in case there had been any doubt about the matter, the rules specifically forbade pets in college housing. The 1984 handbook indicated that dorms would be

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 23.

⁸⁰ *Handbook* (1955), 27.

⁸¹ *Handbook* (1984), 15.

⁸² Ibid., 17.

open to all visitors from noon until 9:00 p.m. on weekends—including male visitors, something earlier handbooks did not speak to. Brenau even permitted men in student rooms, though doors were required to be left open.⁸³

The evolution of rules and regulations regarding student housing at Brenau actually reflects much more than simply a college's concern with quiet and discipline in its houses and dormitories. In fact, this evolution mirrors nothing less than the changing status of women in American society and the success of Brenau students in negotiating with the faculty. Brenau's early housing rules had the effect of verily cloistering students. This reflected the staunchly conservative mindset in the Deep South regarding women during this time. Women were objects to be protected, their virtue something to be safeguarded. This attitude changed hesitantly over time as women's liberation ran a slow course through Dixie. But change it would. Officials of the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary would have been mortified at finding a man in a student's room, whether the door was open or not. Yet less than a century later, men could visit student rooms—albeit not behind closed doors—which reflected substantial changes in attitude that were responses to changed times and student agency.

Like its housing rules, Brenau's dress code also changed with the times. The 1904 rules said nothing about student dress, other than pointing out to students that, "No loose wrappers are allowed in the halls."⁸⁴ The 1925 – 1926 student handbook made no mention of dress at all. Other than an extensive description of "Sports Costumes" (which is dealt with elsewhere in this work), the 1937 – 1938 handbook said only that "Students must be properly dressed when crossing campus or going to the tea room [a small café on campus]."⁸⁵ In an interview much later in her life, a student at Brenau in the 1930s qualified this by saying, "Oh—we really had to

⁸³ Ibid., 16.

⁸⁴ "'Self-Governed Girls' is the Plan at Brenau," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

⁸⁵ *Handbook* (1937), 26.

dress up. If you went to town, you [won't] believe this, but we wore hats and gloves, heels and always had on hose, and dresses, if we just walked up to the drug store. We couldn't even go to the tea room with a gym suit on—you'd have to put a raincoat over it, to go to the tea room."⁸⁶

The reason that Brenau's early materials said little about dress was that little needed saying. Like this alumnae, girls from polite society such as those that attended Brenau simply would have known what to wear and when to wear it. They would have relied upon a lifetime of training in the social graces by their families for this knowledge. And when in doubt, Brenau girls would have erred on the side of caution and elected to dress up rather than down.

It was the rapidly changing perception of what, exactly, womanhood meant in American society that eventually led to Brenau's adoption of a dress code. Rather than leave open to question whether or not wearing this or that item would render a girl "properly dressed," Brenau students eventually began setting standards for themselves. By 1945, Brenau had fully developed its dress code, which the student handbook of that year spelled out. Regarding "Manner of Dress," it read:

1. By formal dress is meant evening dress, hose, and evening shoes,
2. By informal dress or semiformal dress is meant a formal street dress, hose, no oxfords.
3. No student is allowed to cross the campus or go to the Tea Room in irregular dress, such as pajamas, etc. A formal house-coat is acceptable at night.
4. Slacks may not be worn on campus except going from the houses to the woods and to play practice.
5. Only playsuits or tennis dresses may be worn on the tennis courts.⁸⁷

Formal dress would have been required at campus performances, recitals, sorority open houses, and other similar functions. Informal dress would have been acceptable for attending class.

Also, as had previous handbooks, the 1945 student handbook also continued the tradition of

⁸⁶ Mary Helen Hosch, Brenau student (1931-1935), interview by Andrea Davis, typed transcript, 27 February 1995, Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia, p. 3.

⁸⁷ *Handbook* (1945), 35.

spelling out what constituted a proper “Sports Costume” on campus.⁸⁸ This would be a fixture in student handbooks for the next several decades.

Brenau’s dress code of the 1940s sought to ensure that Brenau girls dressed femininely. Helen Horowitz indicated that northern women’s colleges were generally ahead of southern institutions like Brenau in permitting students to wear saddle shoes, pants, and slacks. These changes would come to Brenau in the mid-1950s. The 1955 student handbook indicated that students had successfully negotiated to be able to wear jeans, slacks, pedal pushers, and shorts—new, “hip” fashions for the day. Even so, Brenau went on to say that “semi-formal” dress (what had been “informal” dress in the 1945 handbook) was required at lyceum numbers, concerts, church, and Sunday dinner and asked students to wear a coat over sleeping-wear when traveling to the infirmary.⁸⁹ To the dress regulations in force in the 1940s were added the following:

5. Students may wear blue jeans, pedal pushers, and slacks
 - a. On campus except to class
 - b. To the library after 5:00 P.M.
 - c. While riding if remaining in the car
 - d. Picnics
6. Students may wear shorts on back campus after class hours without raincoats going to and from the tennis courts and physical education classes and during the months of April, May, and June.
7. Shorts may be worn while riding with Brenau girls if remaining in the car.⁹⁰

Clearly, a decade of student negotiation made quite a bit of difference. Brenau students went from not being able to wear pants at all—except for on very specific occasions—to being permitted to wear much less than pants—shorts, albeit again on very specific occasions.

The 1965 – 1966 student handbook opened its section entitled “Helpful Hints” by expounding, “The good old typical American college dress and a smiling ‘hi’ as you pass each

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

⁸⁹ *Handbook* (1955), 29.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 30.

student are your first introductions to the Brenau way.”⁹¹ The handbook went on to qualify what “college dress” was. One new regulation that students no doubt greatly appreciated in light of the oftentimes hot Georgia climate was a rule that said, “Students are not required to wear hose in hot weather as announced by Executive Council.”⁹² Bermuda shorts were added to the permitted clothing rule concerning blue jeans, pedal pushers, and slacks. Brenau now permitted students to wear these articles while bowling or golfing (though a raincoat was required to be worn to and from the sporting venue) or while participating in sports off-campus. Also, Brenau girls wearing shorts could egress cars by 1965 without fear of reprisal. The 1965 handbook permitted students to wear “sports clothes excluding short shorts any time in the sorority houses except on Sundays in the rooms where guests are entertained.”⁹³ At the same time, the handbook cautioned that “Students may not leave the campus with their hair rolled-up.”⁹⁴ Finally, the handbook emphasized that “*Brenau girls are expected to be well-groomed and neatly dressed at all times.*”⁹⁵ The implication of this was, again, that students should dress up rather than down for any given occasion and err on the side of caution. Making the mistake of not dressing properly came with consequences. The handbook indicated that improper dress earned a student a “warning” and that three warnings would place a student on campus-restriction for one week.⁹⁶

Brenau had overhauled the section on dress by the publication of the 1974 – 1975 student handbook. The section read:

Brenau students have traditionally been noted for their well-groomed appearance and taste in choice of clothing. As in other areas of campus life, individuality is encouraged. However, Brenau students are expected to dress neatly at all times.
A. Curlers may be worn only on back campus, and they must be covered.

⁹¹ *Handbook* (1965), 14.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 50.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

B. Shoes must be worn to all meals, classes, administrative offices, and off-campus.

C. At Sunday lunch dresses or nice pantsuits should be worn.

D. In classrooms and at other meals, clean jeans and jerseys, and shorts in summer school are acceptable.

E. Students are expected to wear at least a swim suit when sun bathing.

Designated areas are:

1. Bailey Hall.

2. Crudup Sundeck.

3. Sorority property—not in general public view.

4. Natatorium sundeck.⁹⁷

Elsewhere, the 1974 student handbook indicted that casual dress was acceptable any time in the dining hall (Sundays excepted) and, regarding “Sports Costume,” said only that gym uniforms would be sold during the fall for students. The 1984 – 1985 student handbook altered little the dress code published in the handbook of 1974, saying only that a t-shirt and shorts should be worn over a swimsuit when traveling to or from the pool and that nursing students were expected to wear uniforms to their clinical labs.⁹⁸

As was the case with housing regulations, Brenau’s dress code changed with the times. Throughout its history, the code was meant to ensure that Brenau students represented their alma mater well by maintaining a pretty and proper, lady-like appearance. As the institution matured, Brenau became more about turning out talented young scholars than refined southern ladies. As this happened, official concern over appearance diminished. By the twenty-first century, dress at Brenau was essentially self-regulated. That said, a visit to campus in 2007 would bear out that Brenau students as a whole still seem to hold themselves to high standards regarding personal appearance. Their attire is generally tasteful though much less formal in nature than in previous decades.

⁹⁷ *Handbook* (1974), 25. One wonders what incident(s) prompted the handbook’s language that women must wear “at least” a swim suit when sun bathing.

⁹⁸ *Handbook* (1984), 17-18.

While Brenau's good fashion sense has remained mostly consistent over time, the same can not be said for attitudes about smoking at the college. In writing about the early twentieth century, Horowitz wrote that smoking among young women at college was "the outward sign of acknowledged female sensuality," and, as such, became "the most highly charged issue" on women's college campuses in the North.⁹⁹ Horowitz explained that, "Its lure for the female collegian was that it announced her sexual maturity and her interest in men even when she remained in the weekday company of women."¹⁰⁰

Interestingly, early students at Brenau apparently thought little of the habit. An April, 1895, edition of the *Seminary Signal*, the student newspaper of the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary, decried it. In a column entitled simply "Advice to Boys," the author wrote, "Never smoke cigarettes; it is a habit that will undermine your health and character and render you despicable in the eyes of intelligent people."¹⁰¹

Times would certainly change, however. By the twentieth century, Brenau students wanted to smoke. However, well into the 1930s, college regulations expressly forbade smoking and, worse for would-be smokers, lumped the practice in with such mortal sins as drinking and gambling.¹⁰² The 1925 - 1926 *Official Hand-Book of Information* declared simply that, "Drinking, smoking and gambling are not tolerated by the college."¹⁰³ A girl could have been expelled for engaging in any of those three activities. Things would not change at Brenau until 1932. An entry in the minutes book of the Brenau faculty meetings for that year related to

⁹⁹ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 289.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ "Advice to Boys," *Seminary Signal* (Gainesville, GA: Georgia Baptist Female Seminary), vol. 1, no. 6 (April, 1895), p. 13, Early Publications, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

¹⁰² *Handbook* (1925), 14.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

smoking and illustrated that students could prevail in negotiations with the college faculty over disciplinary matters. The entry read:

A petition is read from the Executive Council, approved by the Student Government Association, asking that smoking be hereafter allowed in the sorority houses and the dormitories—with the understanding that it is to be explicitly forbidden (and a ‘probation offense’) to smoke on the campus, in public places, or in cars.

Certain young ladies, representing the Council and the students at large, appear before the Body and support the petition with oral statements.

Dr. Haywood Pearce, Jr., offers the following as an answer to the petitioners: “Resolved that smoking at public functions, or in public places—whether on or off the campus—is expressly prohibited.” After some discussion, the motion is passed. The Dean is directed to report and interpret this action to the students.¹⁰⁴

Elizabeth “Lib” Wheeler Thurmond attended Brenau from 1929 until 1933 and recalled when the college lifted the moratorium on smoking. Speaking of her sorority sisters and their conduct in the sorority house, she said:

I was over there when smoking was first allowed. Why we didn’t burn that house up, I don’t know. We used to climb up in the attic. That was back in the days when it was real classy to smoke, devilish, and we’d crawl up in that attic. Mrs. Cunningham was our housemother and she was gone most of the day. I remember when they found out that we had been allowed to have smoking. She came back in and there we all sat with cigarettes in our hand. She nearly fainted; she didn’t know it had been passed. She didn’t know what in the world to do. She was just horrified. And we said, “Ah, we can do it now, we can do it.” Why we didn’t burn that house down, I do not know.¹⁰⁵

Lib concluded by recalling, “It was that way all over the campus.”¹⁰⁶

The 1937-1938 *Brenau Girl* student handbook said nothing of the by-then-permitted practice other than, “Students are not to smoke while entertaining gentlemen friends.”¹⁰⁷ The

¹⁰⁴ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 14 March 1932.

¹⁰⁵ Elizabeth Wheeler (Lib) Thurmond, Brenau student (1929-1933), interviewer unknown, typed transcript, date unknown. Available in Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Handbook (1937)*, 24.

1945 – 1946 student handbook had more to say on the subject. A section was devoted exclusively to smoking, which read:

1. Students may smoke only in rooms or sorority houses.
2. Students must not smoke in Atlanta when they are there for Concerts.
3. Students must not smoke when entertaining gentlemen [sic] friends at any time.¹⁰⁸

By a decade later, the 1955 student handbook indicated that the smoking privilege had expanded from rooms and sorority houses to include permission to smoke “while riding in private cars with dates, close friends, relatives, families, or other students.”¹⁰⁹ Additionally, Brenau permitted students to smoke “in eating establishments” but not in “drugstores, other public places, or taxis.”¹¹⁰

Brenau had expanded smoking regulations still further by the mid-1960s. The student handbook of 1965 indicated that “Students may smoke in the following places:”

1. On property of sorority houses.
2. While riding in private cars.
3. During Open House in a specific room where there is no dancing and on porches of sorority houses.
4. On terraces of freshman dormitories.
5. In restaurants and beauty parlors; this does not include stores (drug stores), taxis, and other public places.
6. In the Y.W.C.A. recreation room.
7. In the Tea Room.
8. Lobby of Crudup Hall.¹¹¹

The college prohibited smoking only in the halls of its dorms, in the library, and, curiously, specifically in its English classrooms.

Smoking as a pastime arguably reached its zenith at Brenau in the 1960s if one alumnae’s account can be believed. This anonymous student wrote a letter to Brenau’s president, Dr. Josiah Crudup, in 1964, which read:

¹⁰⁸ *Handbook* (1945), 29.

¹⁰⁹ *Handbook* (1955), 23-24.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Handbook* (1965), 44.

Knowing how interested you are in the health of the Brenau girls, I would like to call your attention to the serious problem of the smoking of cigarettes at the college. ...

At present, for a Brenau girl to be considered at all by any of the sororities for membership she must smoke, or be willing to start smoking in order to be "one of the girls."

Your consideration of the problem of smoking at Brenau will be greatly appreciated by all concerned.¹¹²

Nothing suggests that Dr. Crudup pursued the matter, but it is perhaps conspicuous that a young woman went to the trouble to raise the issue at all. Her letter suggested that smoking at Brenau went from being viewed as a bad habit at the turn of the century to being a requirement for social acceptance after mid-century.

Time would see the toleration of smoking come full-circle at the college. Smoking was not mentioned at all in the student handbooks published in either 1974 or 1984. By the twenty-first century, Brenau had adopted a very restricted smoking policy. Students could only smoke outside in certain designated areas. The college stated that, "No smoking or tobacco use is allowed in any buildings, entrance or exit doorways, or anywhere on the front campus. The designated outside smoking areas are limited and marked."¹¹³ The move to create what Brenau called a "modified smoke-free environment" apparently enjoyed much student support as no correspondence to college officials, letters to the *Alchemist* editor, etc., exist to indicate any objection to the change. Given this, it is likely that the young women who advocated this policy at the turn of the twenty-first century were thinking very much like the students at the Baptist Female Seminary at the turn of the twentieth century who advised boys to steer clear of tobacco.

¹¹² Letter written anonymously by a "Brenau Alumna" on June 18, 1964 to Dr. Josiah Crudup, President. Dr. Crudup Files, Box 29 of 40, Folder 4, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

¹¹³ Brenau University, "Orientation Information"; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/EWC/OrientationOnline/GainesvilleCampus.htm>; Internet; accessed 13 September 2007.

While smoking came full circle at Brenau, it was decried for different reasons in this and the previous century. In the modern era, people vilify smoking largely because the practice is known to harm health. One hundred years ago, people saw smoking as harming not health but a woman's "pure" image, something that could not be countenanced at a southern women's college like Brenau.

In her book *The Past in the Present*, Amy Thompson McCandless observed, "Purity was one of the most cherished qualities of the Southern woman."¹¹⁴ McCandless asserted that in the first half of the twentieth century, southern women's colleges were largely homogenous places and decidedly more conservative than their northern counterparts. Rules at southern women's colleges reflected this, especially in regard to the perception of womanly virtue. Most notably, rules in southern women's colleges in the first few decades of the 1900s "provided little opportunity for unsupervised contact with the opposite sex."¹¹⁵ The strict regulation of heterosexual contacts by institutions of higher education most definitely reflected this concern for virtuous behavior. Rules relating to virtually all social interactions—but especially interactions with men—were common to all the early women's colleges. Brenau was no exception.

Brenau's 1904 regulations actually said little about student interaction with men. One rule sought to ensure that any interaction with men that happened to occur in town would be supervised. The rule declared that, "Pupils are not allowed to leave the grounds without express permission, not to appear on the streets unchaperoned."¹¹⁶ Another rule required that, "Young ladies who desire to correspond with gentlemen other than the immediate members of their

¹¹⁴ McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 123.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 125.

¹¹⁶ "'Self-Governed Girls' is the Plan at Brenau," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4. Also, Brenau only permitted students to enter town at certain times. Another 1904 rule read, "Pupils are allowed to visit the stores in the city for shopping purposes only on Thursdays and Fridays of each week."

respective families, must deposit in the office a written permission to this effect containing the names and addresses of those with whom correspondence is permitted.”¹¹⁷ Nothing beyond these two rules really touched on interaction between men and women. In fact, nothing else needed to be said. Given the time and place, it would simply have been a foregone conclusion in the South that Brenau students would have had no contact with men other than their professors and male relatives. Indeed, the fact that Brenau required parental permission for students to merely *correspond* with men in the very early twentieth is telling of its staunchly conservative ethos. In her book, McCandless listed several schools that required written permission from parents for students to date. Brenau required this for simply writing a letter to a man.

In fact, until the early 1920s, Brenau apparently had rules that forbade girls from even speaking to boys. An entry in the faculty meeting minutes book for February 6, 1912, read, “The Student Council petitions that the prohibition against conversing with young men in the ice cream parlors be rescinded. The petition is denied.”¹¹⁸ In 1914, Brenau suspended two girls for allowing young men to come to their dormitory window to engage in conversation.¹¹⁹ It was not until 1922 when Brenau’s students were able to negotiate for permission to engage in casual conversation with young men. The entry for December 12, 1922, in the minutes book for faculty meetings read:

The Discipline Committee recommends that, with the beginning of the new year, the students be allowed the privilege of conversing with young gentlemen when they meet them in suitable places, and that the rule forbidding such conversations be repealed.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ *Faculty Journal (12 years)*, entry dated 6 February 1912.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., entry dated 11 December 1914.

¹²⁰ Ibid., entry dated 12 December 1922.

The Brenau faculty members voted to adopt the recommendation—but only after adding “instructions to throw around such conversations all proper safeguards.”¹²¹ Precisely what those safeguards were or would have been is not indicated.

As the nineteen-twenties roared by, Brenau expanded its policies on associating with the opposite sex. By mid-decade, the college permitted its young ladies to receive male guests, albeit under very specific and very scrutinized circumstances. The 1925 – 1926 student handbook included a section of rules on “Callers.” The handbook read:

1. All callers received in the Yonah Hall Parlors *only*.
2. All arrangements for callers to be made with the Counselor.
3. General calling hours, 8 to 10 Saturday evening, 3:30 to 5 Sunday afternoon.¹²²

Built in 1893, Yonah Hall was Brenau’s main dormitory for many decades in the early twentieth century.¹²³ A Brenau student in the early 1930s recalled the Yonah Hall Parlor by saying, “You had to sit in the Chinese Parlor on that uncomfortable furniture for a date ... every piece was heavily carved Chinese furniture.”¹²⁴ Clearly, the setting was not meant to be inviting, which might have discouraged lingering on the part of men.

The 1925 handbook went on to say that, “Certain privileges are granted students in regard to their association with their men friends in the city and on the streets; details concerning which are outlined by the Counselor and Dean.”¹²⁵ Seniors held some of these privileges and they were quite telling. The handbook indicated:

4. Seniors may have callers at any time without chaperonage by filing at the office of the Counselor.
5. Seniors may accompany their men friends to entertainments in the auditorium.

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² *Handbook* (1925), 13.

¹²³ *Catalog* (1929), 13.

¹²⁴ Mary Helen Hosch, Brenau student (1931-1935), interview by Andrea Davis, typed transcript, 27 February 1995. Available in Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia, p. 3.

¹²⁵ *Handbook* (1925), 15.

6. Seniors may lunch down town with their men friends on any day, including Sunday. It is understood that this privilege is not to be used after 6:00 P.M.
7. Seniors may have the privilege of walking on campus with their men friends.¹²⁶

These rules are so telling because they imply that other students could *not* walk, lunch, or see shows with “men friends,” let alone receive callers outside of weekends. Indeed, other regulations essentially eliminated these and other social possibilities. One rule stated that,

“Students are not allowed to leave the campus before 3:30 P.M. without permission.”¹²⁷

Students who received permission to go off-campus had to return to campus by 6 p.m. Also, the college did not allow students “to attend the moving picture theatre in town at *any time*.”¹²⁸

Brenau additionally required written permission and college chaperones for students to leave town for dances at other college towns or to shop in Atlanta.¹²⁹ Brenau students who broke the rules to be with men did so at their peril. The handbook indicated that “offenses for which students have, in the past, been expelled” included “clandestine meetings with men” and “attendance at public dances in Gainesville.”¹³⁰

Little changed regarding the rules for gentlemen callers from 1926 until 1937. The handbook of that year published essentially the same limited hours for calling (8 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Saturdays, and, now, 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Sundays), but added that male guests could, by now, also be received in sorority houses on Sundays. By the mid-1930s, association with men at some other times would also be tolerated, but under very particular circumstances. For example, students could attend church with gentlemen friends, providing they apprised officials of their intention to do so. Also, officials added another rule that said, “Guests from distant

¹²⁶ Ibid., 17.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 16.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 17.

places may be allowed to visit in fraternity houses when passing through Gainesville for a short period of time, providing the house chaperone is present.”¹³¹ However, the handbook noted that “This does not include guests from nearby towns, colleges and universities, such as Clemson, Atlanta, and Athens.”¹³² Additionally, the 1937 handbook forbade students to receive callers at the homes of friends in Gainesville or to smoke while entertaining gentlemen friends. Also, once per month on a Saturday evening, officials permitted Brenau’s sororities to have an “Open House,” to which gentlemen could be invited.¹³³

Rules regarding off-campus activity remained quite strict in the nineteen-thirties as they had been in the nineteen-twenties. Still, some leniency had developed as the result of successful student negotiations with faculty. The minutes for the faculty meeting of March 2, 1926, indicated that, “The petition from the Junior Class has been granted as to going to town and visiting picture-shows,” which put juniors on near equal footing with seniors in terms of movie-going privileges.¹³⁴ The senior class had less luck with a petition it submitted roughly a year later. On February 1, 1927, the faculty ruled that “A petition by the senior class to add to their privileges the ability to go down town at night in the company of a chaperon is denied.”¹³⁵ Still, it is worth noting that the petition was not denied on the basis of principle but “on the basis of being inexpedient.”¹³⁶ This is perhaps an indicator that the faculty was not distrustful of the seniors, but rather appreciative of the fact that finding chaperones for outings would have simply been too challenging at late hours. The college did require chaperones for other occasions or, more rarely, let students go to select events unchaperoned altogether. For example, Brenau

¹³¹ *Handbook* (1937), 24.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ *Faculty Journal* (25 years), entry dated 2 March 1926.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, entry dated 1 February 1927.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

required students attending the Sunday afternoon parade at the Riverside Military Academy to be chaperoned. At the same time, no chaperone was needed for walking with boys, providing the walkers stayed on a few specific streets near the downtown Gainesville square.

Chaperones notwithstanding, there were some off-campus places even within the downtown area that Brenau students absolutely could not go. The faculty Discipline Committee forbade “students to make use of a certain beauty parlor in the City” in a meeting of October 6, 1931.¹³⁷ It may have been the “beauty-parlor of the Newman Drygoods Co.,” which was identified in the November 1, 1932, entry of the Brenau faculty meeting minutes book.¹³⁸ Why students could not use the salon is not indicated. Presumably, though, it attracted a questionable clientele that the college expected Brenau girls to avoid in the interest of preserving their ladylike reputations. Finally, regarding off-campus activity, the handbook decreed that “Students are not permitted to use the cars of young men.”¹³⁹

Breaking the rule about using the cars of gentlemen incurred particularly serious consequences. Brenau personnel referred to this as “night riding,” given that students typically committed the infraction in the evening. Almost nothing could get a girl thrown out of the college faster. The minutes books of the Brenau faculty meetings report violations of this offense more than any other and the consequences to offenders were invariably severe. The first recorded expulsion of a student for night riding occurred on May 23, 1916. Brenau expelled two more girls on April 20, 1917, and another two on January 16, 1919. In a meeting on November 4, 1919, the faculty voted that students living off campus were to be held to the same standards

¹³⁷ Ibid., entry dated 6 October 1931.

¹³⁸ Ibid., entry dated 1 November 1932.

¹³⁹ *Handbook* (1937), 27.

regarding automobile riding as students living on campus. This may have opened the door for increased prosecutions of the offense.¹⁴⁰

The secretary for the Brenau College faculty meetings described these and other night riding prosecutions quite robustly in the minutes of the 1920s. The November 5, 1922, entry in the minutes reported that, “The Discipline Committee reports that misses Alice Cox and Dorothy Stauffer have been guilty of automobile riding, at night, with men, that the two students have made a full confession, and that the committee recommends immediate expulsion.”¹⁴¹ The recommendation passed unanimously. The March 15, 1923, entry in the minutes reported that Louise McLeod was “expelled from the Institution, because of automobile riding with a young man after dinner in the evening.”¹⁴² November 4, 1924, saw two more girls in trouble again for “riding clandestinely with men.” The faculty expelled one girl and permitted the other, for reasons unknown, to save some face and withdraw herself from school rather than be expelled.¹⁴³ Finally, on April 6, 1926, the minutes book of the faculty meetings reported that, “Eight young ladies have automatically expelled themselves, through violation of our regulation touching clandestine night-riding.”¹⁴⁴ This mass expulsion may have sent a clear message to Brenau’s other students. Outside of expelling three girls for night riding on January 14, 1930, no other violations of the night riding rule appear for about a decade.¹⁴⁵

The 1937 *Brenau Girl* student handbook continued to assert that, “Students are not permitted to use the cars of young men.”¹⁴⁶ However, by this decade, breaking the rule no longer appeared to incur automatic expulsion as had been the case in the not-so-distant past. The entry

¹⁴⁰ *Faculty Journal (12 years)*, entries dated 23 May 1916, 20 April 1917, 16 January 1919, and 4 November 1919.

¹⁴¹ *Faculty Journal (12 years)*, entry dated 5 November 1922.

¹⁴² *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 15 March 1923.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, entry dated 4 November 1924.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, entry dated 6 April 1926.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, entry dated 14 January 1930.

¹⁴⁶ *Handbook (1937)*, 27.

for the faculty meeting of May 27, 1935, as recorded in the faculty meeting minutes book, indicated that Brenau disciplined six young ladies for “night-riding.” The girls received very strict punishments, but were not expelled.¹⁴⁷ Likewise, in February, 1937, the faculty asked another girl to withdraw for night riding (in fact, her second offense), but did not expel her.¹⁴⁸

Again in 1945, Brenau’s student handbook expressed that night riding was an offense that might make a student “liable to expulsion.”¹⁴⁹ However, importantly, night riding is now actually defined in such a way that would be more tolerable for students. The handbook indicated that “Night riding is considered any riding which is not directly to and from a destination.”¹⁵⁰ In other words, girls could now use the cars of young men to get from place to place, such as from campus to a restaurant or to the theatre; they simply could not *linger* in the cars of young men or cruise around. This simple distinction vastly altered the character of the offense. By 1955, Brenau’s student handbook indicated that this rule had been softened even further. There was a section dedicated to riding, which essentially permitted students to ride around town (and not just directly to and from destinations) during daylight hours, providing parental permission was on file. Additionally, the college permitted students who obtained “standing permission” from home to ride with boys in the evening. However, another regulation declared, “Parking while exercising night privileges is absolutely prohibited except in [the] driveway on front campus.”¹⁵¹ Said driveway would have been well-illuminated and quite visible from campus to discourage indiscreet behavior.

Just as students enjoyed the gradual relaxation of rules concerning “night riding” over the years, they also enjoyed the relaxation of rules regarding gentleman callers. By 1945, Brenau

¹⁴⁷ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 27 May 1935.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, entry dated 2 February 1937.

¹⁴⁹ *Handbook* (1945), 22.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ *Handbook* (1955), 23.

permitted full-blown student dating. The handbook for that year published the following “dating hours” and locations:

Friday—7:00 P.M.—10:00 P.M. (moving dates, not Yonah)

Saturday—2:30 P.M.—5:30 P.M. Yonah; Houses the afternoon of Open House and Cotillion.

7:00 P.M. — 10:00 P.M., Movies.

8:00 P.M. — 10:00 P. M., Yonah.

Sunday—2:00 P.M.—6:00 P.M. Houses or Yonah.

8:00 P.M. —10:00 P.M. Yonah only.¹⁵²

The hours were strictly enforced. A faculty member at Brenau from 1943 to 1946 recalled, “On Sundays, you couldn’t meet your date until 1:30 or 2 o’clock. They weren’t allowed on campus or at least not in Yonah Hall. Miss Winfield [Brenau’s Dean of Women or Lady Principal] would stand out front and wave the boys away if they showed up too early.”¹⁵³

In addition to publishing hours permitted for dating, the 1945 student handbook published several dating rules. They were:

1. All date slips for dates in Yonah are received from the Counselor’s office before the date arrives on Saturday and Sunday evenings.
2. Students may have dates in town during the day, but must be on campus by 6:30 P.M.
3. Students must remain on campus after 6:30 P.M. on evenings of Open House.
4. Guests from distant places may be allowed to visit in sorority houses when passing through Gainesville for a short time, providing the house chaperon is present. If they remain for more than thirty minutes the visit continues in Yonah Lounge.
5. Students are not to receive callers at the homes of friends in town.
6. Students are not to smoke when entertaining gentlemen friends. Gentlemen may smoke, except at Open House or other social functions.

¹⁵² *Handbook* (1945), 27.

¹⁵³ Mrs. J. Allen Webster, Brenau professor (1943-1946), interviewer unknown, typed transcript, date unknown. Available in Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia, p. 2.

7. On Sunday afternoons dates may walk on campus to and from sorority houses and Yonah until 6:00 P.M. No walking with dates in the Park or at the Lakes.
8. Dates may call for girls living in the Sorority houses after 6:30 P.M. for movie dates, but they must not linger.
9. Dates may call for girls at Yonah during recreation hours (3:30 to 6:30 P.M.) and at night for movie dates, during the weekend on Sunday mornings for Church.
10. Seniors, Juniors, and Sophomores may walk to the drugstore on Sunday afternoons with dates for one hour.¹⁵⁴

Specific rules also existed regarding dining out, which Brenau permitted students to do on Sundays, providing they signed in and out.

Conditions for dating had improved immensely for students at the college by 1945. The October 23, 1945, edition of the *Alchemist* for that year published an article that described the new “Rec room” where students entertained dates. The article declared, “It’s a perfect place to entertain and very soon [will be] fully equipped with card tables, ping pong tables, a shuffleboard, and many other games. And if you can furnish the ingredients, there is a place to make fudge for that special date sometime.”¹⁵⁵ Additionally, the article read that “One of the most wonderful assets is the radio victrola which made its appearance—so bring your records and come over!”¹⁵⁶

The 1955 student handbook rules regarding dating reflected the still-changing times. Brenau permitted seniors to go out with dates “on any night but not every night” during the week.¹⁵⁷ Juniors could date on weekends and two other nights a week while sophomores and freshman could date on weekends and one other night per week. Students could have dates in town during the day, but had to be back on campus by 7 p.m. On Saturdays and Sundays, girls

¹⁵⁴ *Handbook* (1945), 28.

¹⁵⁵ Barbara Stockton, “‘Y’ Lights,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XXXII, no. 3 (23 October 1945), p. 3.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Handbook* (1955), 31.

could stay out until 10:55 p.m., providing they signed in and out properly with their dorm or house director. As in previous years, Brenau only permitted students to linger with their dates in cars parked on the campus driveway, which was still the most visible spot on the campus.¹⁵⁸

According to the 1965 student handbook, Brenau girls were staying out later on dates and going out more often. Curfew had been moved to 11:30 p.m. Also, something called “Late Permissions” had been created. Providing she indicated so on her dating sign-out card, a student could have an additional thirty minutes of time for her date any day but Sunday. Seniors could exercise this privilege six times per year, juniors five times, sophomores four times, and freshman, after their first six weeks at Brenau, three times. Juniors and sophomores could also date one other night per week than their 1950s counterparts. Additionally, students who obtained parental permission to do so could visit Atlanta or Athens with dates during the day, providing they returned to campus by curfew.¹⁵⁹

By 1974, the student handbook indicated that dormitory and sorority house residents who signed in and out properly could stay out until midnight during the week and until 2 a.m. on weekends for dating or for any other reason. These were the hours at which Brenau locked its campus residences. All students, irrespective of class, could request to stay out until 1 a.m. seven times per quarter. Seniors could stay out all hours on Friday and Saturday nights. The 1974 handbook mentioned no other regulations touching on dating.¹⁶⁰ The student handbook of 1984 said even less on the subject. “Permission Status” had replaced curfews. With parental permission, “C” or better students living on-campus could stay out until 1 a.m. during the week or 2 a.m. on weekends. Struggling students were to be in by midnight during the week. Other than freshmen, Brenau permitted students “unlimited off-campus overnights, unless prohibited

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ *Handbook* (1965), 44-48.

¹⁶⁰ *Handbook* (1974), 21-22.

by parental permission.”¹⁶¹ By 1984, the college no longer even required that students sign in and out, though students were asked to leave information about their whereabouts for emergency needs.

This was a very far cry from how Brenau had once been. One of the college’s rules in 1904 stated that, “Pupils are not allowed to leave the grounds without express permission, nor to appear on the streets unchaperoned.”¹⁶² In the 1920s, Brenau reserved the right to expel girls for “leaving the College without the knowledge of the Authorities” and for attending “an out-of-town dance and ball-game without being chaperoned.”¹⁶³ This practice continued into the 1930s and 1940s. On December 6, 1932, the faculty asked three students to withdraw from Brenau for seeking to get out of the city without permission. The faculty pressured three more girls to leave the college on February 1, 1944, “because of their leaving the College without permission, and because of other conduct which, in the judgment of the Committee, makes them too great a liability for the College to carry.”¹⁶⁴

By 1974, leaving the college and dating were no longer “liabilities” to Brenau. Indeed, by this year, no section on “dating” in specific even existed in the student handbook. The student handbooks of the 1980s, the 1990s, and later did not speak to dating at all, either. Finally, roughly 100 years after the institution’s founding, Brenau students had negotiated for the ability to fully manage their own relationship affairs. Precisely what won the faculty over is not clear. However, it is conceivable that the faculty might have assented for recruiting reasons. By the 1970s, Brenau competed with many private and state-owned coeducational colleges for

¹⁶¹ *Handbook* (1984), 15.

¹⁶² “‘Self-Governed Girls’ is the Plan at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

¹⁶³ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entries dated 4 December 1923 and 15 December 1923

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, entry dated 1 February 1944.

students. Most of these institutions would not have been strict about student dating. Brenau may have had to relax its posture so students would enroll.

At times throughout its history, Brenau even frowned upon the most societally sanctioned of affairs between the sexes: marriage—or, more precisely, marriage of enrolled students. Like other women’s colleges during much of the twentieth century, Brenau strove to turn out educated wives for upper and upper middle class men. Consequently, the institution wholeheartedly supported the marriage of its graduates. The same was not true for marriage of its current students, however. The 1965 student handbook indicated that “secret” marriages would not be tolerated at the college.¹⁶⁵ Four decades earlier, marriage of any variety led to expulsion. The faculty meeting minutes book entry for December 7, 1926, read, “That, in the case of Miss Hattie Picher, a motion be made to the effect that she is now married, and that her name is dropped from the list of students.”¹⁶⁶ The minutes book indicated that the faculty expelled another girl in 1932 when she left the college without permission and “arrived at home with a husband.”¹⁶⁷ Indeed, on at least one occasion, a Brenau official went to great lengths to thwart a marriage from occurring. In 1913, the *Atlanta Constitution* told the story in its society pages about a Brenau student who had recently fled the college to get married. The newspaper reported that as soon as Brenau president Dr. H. J. Pearce heard about the speedy departure of the girl, he acted.

The paper reported that Pearce:

caught the next train and hurried to this city. For hours he searched for the runaway student. He finally found her and her fiancé in the Terminal station. Taking charge of Miss Ramsey, he notified her parents and ordered West [Ramsey’s fiancé] to wait until their arrival from their home in Washington, Ga.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ *Handbook* (1965), 59.

¹⁶⁶ *Faculty Journal* (25 years), entry dated 7 December 1926.

¹⁶⁷ *Faculty Journal* (25 years), entry dated 4 October 1932.

¹⁶⁸ “Pretty Brenau College Girl Accepts Telephone Proposal And Marries Football Star,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 February 1913, p. 1.

The paper did not report whether or not the couple lived happily ever after. However, it is likely that the article went a very long way to reassuring parents that their girls' honor would be well-safeguarded by Brenau officials.

Over time, Brenau would eventually come to support marriage of even enrolled students. By 1974, married women did more than merely attend the college; they sought to form their own sorority on campus. The student handbook for that year related that, "Mu Rho Sigma [note the initials: M.R.S.], a sorority for women who are married or have been married, was founded at Brenau in May of 1974. Its members attempt to establish a common bond through which they can share mutual experiences and provide special services to the college."¹⁶⁹ By now, Brenau not only tolerated marriage, it encouraged the development of institutions and organizations on campus to support women in such relationships.

Also in regard to relationships, Brenau rules had, at times, dealt specifically with that mainstay of American dating, going to the movies. The entry for February 1, 1916, in the Brenau faculty meeting minutes book indicated that the "seniors again request permission to see picture shows."¹⁷⁰ The faculty granted their request, but only for shows on Fridays and "with the understanding that the teachers will ascertain in advance the character of the picture to be shown, and will cancel the permission whenever they deem it expedient to do so."¹⁷¹ The same year, Brenau showed the "photo-play" entitled "The Birth of a Nation" at its commencement. The 1926 handbook decreed that, other than seniors, "Students are not allowed to attend the moving picture theatre in town at *any time*," let alone with a date.¹⁷² The minutes book of the Brenau College faculty meetings indicated that this privilege would be extended to the junior class in

¹⁶⁹ *Handbook* (1974), 70.

¹⁷⁰ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 1 February 1916.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Handbook* (1925), 15.

1926, but still eluded freshmen and sophomores.¹⁷³ By 1937, Brenau permitted seniors “to go to the show any afternoon with gentlemen friends without filing,” to see evening shows “in groups of two unchaperoned and be back on the campus by 10:30,” and to “attend the show in the evening with gentlemen friends, three times a week” by filing with the house chaperone.¹⁷⁴ Juniors and sophomores could see matinee shows by themselves during the week. Also, juniors could attend the picture show with gentlemen friends on Friday and Saturday nights or on other evenings providing they went in groups of at least two. Sophomores could attend the show with a male friend on Saturdays evenings or on other evenings providing they went in the company of seniors or members of Brenau’s Executive Council. Brenau permitted freshmen to see a show one night a week in the company of a junior or senior member of the executive council and to see a show on Saturday afternoon (but not Saturday evening) with a gentleman friend, providing the student double-dated with another couple.¹⁷⁵

Rules such as these operated into the mid-nineteen forties, as upperclassmen enjoyed more lenient movie-going privileges than did lower classmen. The 1945 handbook also indicated that, “Students may not attend the State Theater on Friday and Saturday nights,” presumably because this theater served alcohol and created an environment unsuitable for young ladies.¹⁷⁶ By 1955, students had negotiated the elimination of such class distinctions regarding the movies. The only regulation that dealt with the movies published in that year’s edition of the student handbook was a hold-over from the 1940s that stated, “No Brenau student may sit in the balconies of Gainesville theaters.”¹⁷⁷ Presumably, this rule existed to prevent Brenau girls from sitting in a section of the theater with the notorious reputation of being a good place to “make

¹⁷³ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 2 March 1926.

¹⁷⁴ *Handbook (1937)*, 30.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 30-34.

¹⁷⁶ *Handbook (1945)*, 28.

¹⁷⁷ *Handbook (1955)*, 23.

out” with dates. Also, the balconies of small-town theaters were generally the only parts of theaters in the Jim Crow South where blacks could sit. Barring Brenau students from balconies therefore worked to minimize contact with other races.

By 1965, the only regulation regarding movies published in the student handbook was one that permitted students to stay and see the ending of a movie even if it ran a “little over” the regulation dating hours.¹⁷⁸ Over these decades, movies evolved from being new-fangled and suspect forms of entertainment to become thoroughly commonplace—so much so that they no longer merited regulatory mention by the college. By 1974, the college’s student handbook was silent on the subject of movies, let alone students’ conduct at the movies.

What did merit comment by 1974 was the use of mind-altering substances. No doubt as a result of the public fall-out over the “Psychedelic ‘60s,” the college had a drug policy in place by this year. The policy essentially condemned the abuse of prescription drugs and reminded students of the illegality of such drugs as marijuana and hallucinogens.¹⁷⁹ A 1970 edition of the *Alchemist* indicted that Brenau brought speakers to campus to discuss drug abuse with students.¹⁸⁰ Brenau also published policies regarding alcoholic beverages by 1974. In essence, the college permitted responsible drinking on-campus at special functions and at special places. Historically speaking, this was quite a departure for Brenau. Drinking had simply not been tolerated by the college since at least the 1920s. Even as late as 1966, various Brenau materials indicated that drinking could lead to summary expulsion.

Interestingly, the minutes books for the Brenau faculty meetings mention only a single incident of rule-breaking involving alcohol—and, curiously, this incident also involved a

¹⁷⁸ *Handbook* (1965), 37.

¹⁷⁹ *Handbook* (1974), 26.

¹⁸⁰ “Drug Committee to Lecture,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. LCI, no. 7 (23 February 1970), p. 8.

member of the Brenau faculty. The entry of March 21, 1927, indicated that several girls “while visiting Lake Burton, on March 20th, were guilty—according to their own confession—of handling recklessly (though not maliciously) another person’s automobile, of smoking cigarettes, and of partaking, to some extent, at least, of whiskey that happened to have been left by unknown persons near the place where the students were camped.”¹⁸¹ Moreover, “a member of the Faculty—viz., Miss Louise Howarth—was with this party of young ladies, in the capacity of chaperone, and that her conduct on the occasion was... indiscreet and unprofessional.”¹⁸² The faculty (in a “spirit of tolerance and Christian forbearance”) voted to leave disciplining Ms. Howarth up to Brenau’s president, Dr. Pearce.¹⁸³ The minutes do not indicate what discipline Dr. Pearce meted out, but he may have been less spirited than his faculty; Ms. Howarth was not listed as a member of the faculty by the time the college published its 1930 catalog.

Brenau’s rules and regulations and its honor code also dealt with academic conduct as well as student conduct generally. As early as 1925, Brenau’s student handbooks indicated that cheating could lead to expulsion.¹⁸⁴ Over the years, Brenau students have abided by the tenets of the code closely. The minutes of the faculty meetings for the first half of the twentieth century revealed that only two grave violations occurred. In 1935, the college suspended a girl for cheating on a French examination.¹⁸⁵ Brenau asked another student to withdraw for cheating in 1942.¹⁸⁶ The second half of the twentieth century had similarly few violations. Even with the advent and rise of the Internet starting in the mid-1990s, with its seemingly unlimited supply of

¹⁸¹ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 21 March 1927.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Handbook (1925)*, 17.

¹⁸⁵ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 27 May 1935.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, entry dated 3 March 1942.

papers for purchase and un-cited text for copying, Brenau students as a whole have apparently remained honest in their academic work.

Over time, most rules and regulations at Brenau have dealt with specific themes like night riding, cutting class, and cheating. However, not all rules did so. Indeed, what might be considered Brenau's "golden rule" was unwritten—yet vigorously and harshly enforced. The gist of that rule was that Brenau expected its students, in thought and deed, to live up to the ideals and standards of the college. Expulsion or forced-withdrawal was the consequence of not doing so. The minutes book of the faculty meetings for the first half of the twentieth century contain several entries that attest to the seriousness of this rule at Brenau and the tough consequences for violators. On March 1, 1927, Brenau placed two girls under restrictions for "unbecoming conduct and violation of college regulations."¹⁸⁷ Brenau expelled three girls on May 6, 1930, "on the ground that the attitude and conduct of these students showed them to be wholly out of place" at the college.¹⁸⁸ Three other girls, "for the same general reasons" were asked to withdraw, which they did.¹⁸⁹ The college asked another girl to withdraw on April 5, 1932, "for conduct out of harmony with the ideals and regulations of the College."¹⁹⁰ Two more girls were asked to withdraw on April 3, 1934, as "the attitude and conduct of the two students...have not been such as to render them desirable campus citizens."¹⁹¹ Roughly three years later, Brenau sternly disciplined two students and forced another to withdraw from the college for being "guilty of certain irregular and objectionable conduct during a visit to Atlanta."¹⁹² Finally, Brenau requested that two girls leave the college on November 7, 1939, and

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., entry dated 1 March 1927.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., entry dated 6 May 1930.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., entry dated 5 April 1932.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., entry dated 3 April 1934

¹⁹² Ibid., entry dated 2 February 1937.

disciplined five students on May 5, 1942, for each having committed a “serious breach of...discipline.”¹⁹³

As important as the golden rule was, like virtually all of the rules and regulations at Brenau, it would eventually disappear. Student agency hastened their demise. Brenau’s student handbooks indicate that by the mid-1960s, the college still retained rules about such non-academic things as dress, chapel attendance, smoking, dating, and night riding. Still, these rules were, as a whole, much less strict and particular than Brenau’s rules had been in decades past. This is a testament to the success of the students in negotiating for their desired college experience. Even so, student victory was not yet complete since even modest rules still existed. Smack in the middle of perhaps the most libertine decade of the twentieth century, with its counterculture movements and social revolutions, Brenau still maintained some rules that sought to prescribe aspects of proper student behavior. However, only a decade later, as evidenced by the student handbook of 1974 – 1975, virtually all such rules were gone. Other than a few lines regarding a dress code, the only rules reprinted in the 1974 handbook dealt with academics. To paraphrase McCandless, Brenau was no longer making rules for the purpose of making “ladies.”

Throughout much of its history, Brenau may have made rules to make ladies, but some Brenau students clearly believed that Brenau made rules for breaking. In an advice column published in a 1935 edition of the *Alchemist*, an anonymous author named “Freshman” lamented:

I have been here for nearly nine months, and I am still wondering. I have had the rules thoroughly drilled into me, and I try to obey them, but I do not see why I should deny myself the pleasure of night riding, clandestine meetings with men, smoking in town, and staying off the campus until ten-forty-five. Others do these things [sic], for I’ve a friend in town who’s not a member of the student body, who is well acquainted with its members, and she tells me she often sees girls breaking these rules, and apparently nothing ever happens to them. I hadn’t heard of special privileges on the campus, but evidently some persons do have them.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹³ Ibid., entries dated 7 November 1939 and 5 May 1942.

¹⁹⁴ “Doris Dean,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XXI, no. 9 (14 May 1935), p. 3.

The advice columnist, Doris Dean, replied:

The reasons that these students are not reported, is because if any one sees them, she, too, is probably breaking the same rule, or because they are “friends!” It would be just a case of the “pot calling the kettle black.” Therefore, what happens? Nothing.¹⁹⁵

Indeed, rule-breaking was apparently nearly as old as rule-making. The 1901 edition of the *Bubbles*, in fact only the second edition of the college year book, published the following playful exchange between two students:

Miss New Girl: Pray tell me what’s the good of being on the self-governed list?
Miss Old Girl: Why, you see, it gives the Faculty the satisfaction of thinking that you won’t break the rules. Do you catch?¹⁹⁶

What is most interesting about these sources is that they prove that Brenau students, since very early-on, were willing to push back against institutional rules. This would have been the very first step in negotiating for changes to the rules that would have helped make Brenau the kind of negotiated space the students sought. The women who took this first step did more than merely break rules. They pushed social boundaries and explored their independence. Their behavior could be seen to be as much pioneering as bad. The first Brenau girl who smoked, or wore shorts, or rode clandestinely at night, whether she knew it or not, was taking an important first step in a process that would culminate with the eventual emancipation of her sisters from rules barring such conduct. To paraphrase Professor Van Hoose when he spoke over a hundred years ago, through the efforts of these pioneering women, Brenau college girls were eventually relieved of the many arbitrary restrictions which in the old times interfered with the liberty of the student.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA; Brenau College, 1901), 57.

Oddly, the fact that rule-breaking occurred may even be a testament to the success of Brenau's efforts to educate young women. After all, as a liberal arts college, Brenau aimed to develop the intellectual capacities of its students and to broaden their minds. Perhaps Brenau opened the minds of its students to such an extent that they sought to challenge and, in some cases, redefine the regulations of the very institution that empowered them.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHYSICAL CULTURE AT BRENAU

In speaking of the historical development of sports at college, John R. Thelin asserted that, “Although historians of higher education have often overlooked the fact, athletics were central to the campus culture.”¹ While doubtlessly true for most men’s colleges as far back as the mid-nineteenth century, Thelin’s generalization fails with early women’s colleges. At these institutions, “athletics” in the conventional sense (i.e., competitive activities and sporting contests “that require physical skill and stamina”) developed slowly.² This was especially true at southern women’s colleges like Brenau. At such institutions, until well into the twentieth century, students generally came up short in negotiations with faculty for athletics at their college. The conservative and paternalistic mindsets of southern educators denied women athletics and instead promoted “physical culture.” This really amounted to little more than demure activities like gymnastic exercise and calisthenics. Brenau embraced this, in essence thinking that women needed coddling and protection from over-exertion. This mindset would not change until at least the 1920s when students began negotiating successfully for sporting contests and intercollegiate athletics at their college. Yet, even well after the 1920s, vestiges of Brenau’s anti-athletic mindset existed for decades—a testament to the college’s paternalism.

To place things into context at Brenau requires some background knowledge about the history of college athletics generally. Athletics occupies such a prominent position in the

¹ Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*, 181.

² Dictionary.com, “athletics”; available from <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/athletics>; Internet; accessed 16 October 2007.

modern college experience that it is perhaps difficult to envision college without it. Despite its centrality, historians have generally overlooked college sport. There are few scholarly studies of the development of sports and athletics in higher education. The field of sport history is mainly dominated by popular studies and trade books. Still, these works can provide some needed insight.

Prior to about 1850, most colleges enrolled only men and simply did not emphasize athletics of any variety since they saw themselves as places for mental, not physical, exercise. Beginning around the second half of the nineteenth century, this began to change, albeit slowly. Inter-class contests that were often quite violent games of something resembling modern American football appeared at colleges throughout the country. Almost invariably in these contests, freshmen battled sophomores while juniors played seniors. Male college students also took up baseball and, later, basketball in the mid- to late-1800s. Other activities like track, tennis, and ice hockey came along later. Rules for all of these sports would be revised and refined over time. Games also evolved from being competitions between classes at a single college to become competitions between colleges. Harvard and Yale held the first intercollegiate contest (a regatta) in 1852 while Williams and Amherst played the first intercollegiate baseball game in 1859. As more colleges adopted more and different sports, competition increased and eventually became an accepted—even expected—part of the collegiate way of life.³

But it was largely a man’s way of life. Athletics (even of the “demure activities” variety) were initially slow in coming to college women. As late as the nineteenth century, many

³ For an overview of scholarly materials pertaining to athletics, see Steven A. Riess, “The Historiography of American Sport,” *OAH Magazine of History*, 7 (Summer 1992); available from <http://www.oah.org/pubs/magazine/sport/riess.html>; Internet; accessed 15 October 2007. For more about the history of athletics in college, see James Michener, *Sports in America* (New York, NY: Random House, 1976); Wells Twombly, *200 Years of Sports in America: A Pageant of a Nation at Play* (New York, NY: McGraw Hill, 1976); Douglas A. Noverr and Lawrence Ziewacz, *The Games They Played: Sports in American History, 1865-1980* (Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall, 1983); and Betty Spears and Richard A. Swanson, *History of Sport and Physical Education in the United States. 3rd ed.* (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown, 1988).

members of society—including many physicians—voiced objections against physical exertion for women. In their book entitled *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America*, John and Robin Haller documented how the nineteenth-century scientific community depicted women as being physically inferior to men and afflicted with nervous disorders and conditions like “neurasthenia.”⁴ Frances B. Cogan echoed this finding. In *All-American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America*, she wrote that:

According to popular tradition from earlier decades and from abroad, as well as “professional” medical opinion, women had a much more delicate nervous system than did men because of the peculiar function of their reproductive organs. Because of this, and a greater “natural” sensitivity, their fragile nervous systems were likely to be overstimulated or irritated, with disastrous results.⁵

This female condition precluded much physical exertion. Since many physicians deemed exercise unsuitable for women, competitive sports were out of the question. “Experts” voiced two primary concerns about sport for girls: “(1) competitive sport would damage the childbearing function, and (2) competitive sport would masculinize girls and women.”⁶ These mindsets retarded the development of women’s college athletics in any sense for many years.

Like the development of competitive athletics, physical education for women college students evolved slowly. June A. Kennard, an historian of women in sport, observed that, “In the early and middle nineteenth century, Catharine Beecher had argued for the inclusion of physical training at all levels of education, but it was not until the 1870s and 1880s that this became a partial reality.”⁷ When exercise finally caught on for college women, Kennard indicated that it was “the expensive, private women’s colleges” that were “leaders in incorporating physical

⁴ See “Chapter One: The Nervous Century” in John S. Haller and Robin M. Haller, *The Physician and Sexuality in Victorian America* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1974).

⁵ Frances B. Cogan, *All-American Girl: The Ideal of Real Womanhood in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 29.

⁶ June A. Kennard, “Review Essay: The History of Physical Education,” *Signs: Journal of Women*, vol. 2, no. 4 (summer, 1977): 841.

⁷ *Ibid.*

education into the curriculum.”⁸ Nancy Theriot, a scholar of women’s studies, observed that, “The first physical education for women involved gymnastics and calisthenics” because “it was easy to argue that these were within the limits of properly womanly activity.”⁹ Not so much physical fitness but rather “gracefulness and ease of carriage, as well as better health, were the promised rewards of physical education for women before 1900.”¹⁰

In *Able-Bodied Womanhood: Personal Health and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Boston*, Martha H. Verbrugge documented the development of physical education at one private women’s college (Boston’s Wellesley College) from 1875 to 1900. Concerned for student health, Verbrugge wrote that Wellesley outfitted a small gymnasium and required students to exercise daily. Early on, Wellesley prescribed “light calisthenics” for students, which consisted of “free movements and exercises performed by individuals or pairs, with simple apparatus, such as wands, dumbbells, and rings.”¹¹ Over time, Wellesley adopted a somewhat more rigorous system of “Swedish gymnastics,” which “involved both free movements and work on ropes, ladders, and portable floor apparatus.”¹² Eventually, “Outdoor exercise quickly became a part of physical education at the college, and soon prospered in the form of organized athletics.”¹³ Beginning in the 1880s, Wellesley girls played tennis, baseball, basketball, and engaged in rowing, among other sports, and actively sought to make themselves “able-bodied.”¹⁴

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Nancy Theriot, “Towards a New Sporting Ideal: The Women’s Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation,” *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, vol. 3, no. 1 (spring, 1978): 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Martha H. Verbrugge, *Able-Bodied Womanhood: Personal Health and Social Change in Nineteenth-Century Boston* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1988), 149.

¹² Ibid., 151.

¹³ Ibid., 155.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Barbara Miller Solomon asserted that “several factors explain the surge in popularity of sports among students” at women’s colleges like Wellesley.¹⁵ Images in popular magazines depicted more athletic women favorably, which impressed college girls. Also, Solomon contended that, “for female collegians, physical exercise became a symbol of ‘emancipated womanhood.’”¹⁶ Watching and playing sports, therefore, became liberating activities for students at some women’s colleges in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

But this was not so much the case at women’s colleges in the South. There, the conservative mindsets and paternalism of educators restricted women to only certain forms of “appropriate” physical activity for decades after northern college women were already playing full-fledged sports. Still, early advertisements for Brenau and its predecessor the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary did stress health, if not physicality. This was done with an eye to reassuring parents that their girls would remain well at Brenau. One advertisement reported of the college that, “Its location is practically perfect, being situated in a beautiful grove with ample grounds for out-door recreation.”¹⁷ Another indicated, “Gainesville, Ga., has been a noted health resort for years. Its water is as pure and clear as crystal; there is absolutely no malaria in its atmosphere; it has a splendid system of electric street cars; it has just put in a complete system of sewerage; it has an altitude of nearly 1,500 feet.”¹⁸ The advertisement trumpeted that, “Brenau College is located in this beautiful and healthful city; it has steam heat, electric lights, [and] an abundance of hot and cold water baths on every floor...”¹⁹

Early newspaper advertisements for Brenau indicated that even if—somehow—this perfect environment could not stave off illness, Brenau was prepared to treat any ailments that

¹⁵ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 103.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 104.

¹⁷ Display Advertisement—No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 July 1904, p. 12.

¹⁸ “The Location of a School,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 26 July 1904, p. 2.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

might appear. Brenau published promotional materials in the *Atlanta Constitution* that indicated, “Dr. James W. Bailey, of Gainesville, who is one of the most distinguished physicians in the United States, is president of the board of advisers and one of the best friends of Brenau college.”²⁰ Brenau asserted that:

Dr. Bailey is the great specialist in the treatment of diseases of children and thousands of little sufferers from all over the south have made pilgrimages to Gainesville to receive the benefit of his skill. He is the physician to Brenau and it is a rare privilege for the students of a school to be in the care of one so able in his profession and so eminent and so universally beloved. Dr. Bailey has made many large gifts to Brenau and he is warmly devoted to the institution.²¹

Such assertions would have gone a long way to convincing parents that Brenau was a healthy place to which they could entrust their daughters.

Indeed, parents would have been right to have been concerned. The late 1800s and early 1900s saw recurring epidemics of typhus, typhoid, scarlet fever, influenza, and yellow fever sicken thousands of people—children especially—throughout the country.²² Georgia and her colleges were not exempt from outbreaks and so health was of interest. A turn of the century advertisement in the *Atlanta Constitution* for Wesleyan College in Macon, Georgia, acknowledged that disease impacted education. The advertisement read, “Students detained by quarantine will be specially tutored as far as necessary” and claimed that “Present health conditions at Macon and Wesleyan are better than ever,” which intimated that conditions had once suffered.²³ Brenau, too, had to deal with illness. For its 1905 opening, the college indicated that “A few places are being held for students who are detained by quarantine restrictions. Two young ladies from Mississippi were not allowed to leave the train at

²⁰ “Health is Well Cared For,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 5.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² For more about diseases in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see Gerald N. Grob, *The Deadly Truth: A History of Disease in America* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002).

²³ Display Advertisement—No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 12 September 1905, p. 5.

Gainesville by the state quarantine officials, but were carried to Seneca, S.C. and are compelled to remain there for ten days before being allowed to reenter Georgia.”²⁴

Brenau did not simply rely upon quarantine policy, a pleasant climate, and its top-notch physician to keep its students healthy. Christine Anne Farnham observed that very early concerns for health made most southern women’s colleges require for students some form of light physical activity, most commonly walking. Brenau College was no exception. Many early Brenau catalogs and informational materials described girls walking around campus in pairs of two, at least, if not in lines by class, or taking in the invigorating air of the Appalachian Mountain foothills near Gainesville, Georgia, on excursions from campus. Walking was not, however, true “physical education” since students required no instruction in walking. Neither was walking a thoroughly “athletic” activity inasmuch as Brenau did not expect girls to truly exert themselves. Rather, Brenau girls took a daily constitutional because the faculty and administration believed walking promoted health while not overtaxing students.

Brenau eventually replaced mere walking with actual exercise, albeit of a very demure variety. The Baptist Female Seminary and, later, the college instituted a program of “Physical Culture” for its students. The college bulletin of 1900 described the earliest components of this as being:

Physical Training; Its Relation to Health and Expression. Development of Nervous Force. Exercises in Relation to the Nervous System. Poise, Personality, Psycho-Physical Culture. Development of Sympathy and Unity. Endurance. Refinement of the Entire Physical Person. Exercises to Overcome Defects. Marching. Repose, Strength, Dignity, Grace of Motion and Bearing in the Parlor, on the Street, or Platform.²⁵

²⁴ “Brenau Enrolls Many Students,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 September 1905, p. 2.

²⁵ *Catalog* (1900), 60 – 61.

Brenau asserted that, “The education of the physical being has become a necessity. Every pupil in the school is required to participate in the Physical Culture Exercises, that by this training the body may become the true outward expression of the soul within.”²⁶

While such a statement of philosophy might seem to be somewhat forward-thinking, the reality was different. In promoting “physical culture,” Brenau promoted light *exercise*, not “athletics” as the term is generally taken to mean. Brenau’s faculty clearly preferred that students engage in such safe activities as “marching” and developing “grace of motion” over such more physical pastimes as running and ball-playing. Moreover, exercises were not to be undertaken at Brenau for the purpose of developing better, stronger, more physically-able bodies. Rather, up until at least the 1920s, Brenau’s faculty and administration believed that light exercise was simply a proper way to tap into a woman’s “soul within.”

A wealth of evidence supports the notion that Brenau’s faculty and administration retarded the emergence of athleticism at the college. Among the oldest evidence relates to Brenau’s athletic facilities. At first blush, these seemed opulent. An article in the June 25, 1896, edition of the *Atlanta Constitution* focused on the growth and prosperity of the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary. In particular, much of the article described “the magnificent new building” of the seminary that was partly funded by a \$10,000.00 gift from the people of Gainesville. This new building housed a large auditorium and expanded music instruction facilities. The new building also contained Brenau’s facilities for physical education. The article indicated, “Over the stage we find the gymnasium, a large room, fitted with modern appliances, and to be presided over by a teacher competent to instruct in their uses. Passing down a flight of stairs from the gymnasium we find ourselves in the large natatorium,” which the article described as “a pool

²⁶ Ibid., 61.

about four feet deep and 40 x 25 in size.”²⁷ The pool was “surrounded by convenient dressing rooms and shower baths” and the pool water, as well as the room, was to be “heated in winter by means of steam pipes.”²⁸ The article reported that, “This room will also be in charge of a teacher, who will see that no excess or imprudence will be indulged in.”²⁹ Besides the pool, the gymnasium even had “a splendid bowling alley” adjoining the natatorium.³⁰

Taken at face value, this article seems to describe facilities that might have rivaled the gymnasia of some much larger, male-dominated, state institutions of the day. However, a closer read of the article belies this. Despite impressions to the contrary, the Baptist Female Seminary’s facilities were not designed to empower women athletically. Rather, the facilities only reinforced the institution’s limited view about the scope of women’s fitness. Descriptions of athletic facilities at major male institutions would have emphasized strenuous exercise and a good deal of space for competitive athletics. Brenau’s gymnasium with its “modern appliances” referred to a place with dumbbells, hoops, wands, and other paraphernalia that constituted the standard fare of exercise in women’s institutions. Also, the natatorium was hardly built for strenuous swimming. At only four feet deep, it had to have been designed for standing rather than swimming, for engaging in something more akin to modern “water aerobics” than diving or logging laps. Similarly, women using the bowling alley would have been unlikely to strain themselves in that activity. Finally, note that all student activity was overseen by an instructor whose job it was to ensure that “no excess or imprudence” would be indulged in. This was not a personal trainer encouraging the Brenau girls to fitness by working harder; rather, this was a matron to ensure that the girls did not work too hard.

²⁷ “Georgia Female Seminary,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 June 1896, p. 9

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

More evidence about the faculty's reticence toward athletics appeared in the early twentieth century. An advertisement in 1904 in the *Atlanta Constitution* read:

So, on the tennis court or on the grounds for basket ball or in the classic shades of the campus, if a Brenau girl wishes to make the welkin ring [i.e., a very loud noise] with her happy voice or merry peals of laughter there is no solemn personage to look shocked, for the management knows that the girl's lungs are being expanded with every shout; that she is drinking in great draughts of the pure health-giving atmosphere; that the warm blood is pulsing to her finger tips and building her into a woman to whom existence will not be a burden. Under the same idea, Recreation Hall is all that its name implies. This hall is in the home building or dormitory. It is really a 'rotunda' . . . and is fully as large. It is the heart and center of the dormitory and adjoins the large parlor, the dining room, the president's office, reception room, etc.³¹

While at first glance this advertisement might make Brenau appear to be progressive, this was not the case. The college supported the sports it did (namely tennis and basketball) because these were acceptable and appropriate forms of activity for women. Brenau officials carefully asserted that, "There is an athletic association at Brenau, but no feminine imitations of masculine sports are allowed. The girls play tennis and basket ball and never overstep the bounds of propriety in their games."³² This reassurance would have been welcomed by many parents who would not have wanted their daughters' behavior to deviate wildly from how society expected young women to behave in 1904. Also, note that Brenau supported exercise only to ease a woman's existence. A more progressive institution might have sought to make its students able-bodied enough to live robust, active lives and not merely unburdened lives. Finally, note that the advertisement lauds Recreation Hall and not Brenau's gymnasium. The effect is to de-emphasize the availability of access to what athletic equipment Brenau did possess.

The job of limiting the activity of Brenau students fell to Brenau faculty. As early as 1904, Florence M. Overton of the Emerson School, Boston, came to Brenau and served as both

³¹ "Campus Rings with Shout and Laughter," *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 5.

³² *Ibid.*

“Assistant in the School of Oratory” and “Director of Athletics.”³³ Rose Allen of the Brenau School of Oratory assisted Overton and oversaw athletic activities at the college’s “Chautauqua Gymnasium” (an outdoor tent gymnasium erected at summer camps held at Brenau).³⁴ The director’s job was to “see that students of Brenau have an abundance of out-of-door exercise” since “Tennis, Basket Ball, Gymnastic Exercises, Boating and other games tend to develop the girl into a perfect physical woman.”³⁵ By 1906, Brenau boasted that it was, “one of the few institutions of the south that... employs a trained physical director, whose sole duty it is to see that its student do not overtax themselves in any way, taking care at the same time to see that all have enough work of the right kind to keep busy.”³⁶ The college also assured parents that, “Every student is carefully examined at the opening of the school term and if she has any physical defect it is carefully noted, and her work is governed accordingly.”³⁷ These quotations from 1904 and 1906 talked about developing “the girl into a perfect physical woman” and of ensuring that students “do not overtax themselves in any way.” Additionally, the faculty permitted Brenau girls to only engage in certain prescribed activities, all of which were demure. This language indicates that Brenau was worried about its students becoming too physical.

Other evidence attests to this. Prior to 1910, Brenau students would continue to play basketball and tennis. They would also play at more sports, but still only of the demure variety. The “Brenau Notes” revealed that, “The students in the fencing class are enthusiastic over their work, under the direction of Miss Jane Mitchell, who was teacher of Fencing at Emerson College last year.”³⁸ Also, by 1908, a “riding club” had been “formed by a number of the students, with

³³ “A Day at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Display Advertisement—No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 August 1904, p. 7.

³⁶ Display Advertisement—No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 12 July 1906, p. 8.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 9 December 1906, sec. G, p. 5.

Miss Brown and Miss Rohr as chaperones, and two afternoons in each week are spent in delightful and health-giving exercise.”³⁹ The 1909 edition of the *Bubbles* elaborated on this club by relating that its colors were “black and blue” and that its motto was “Hol’ on! Don’ go so fast,” clear indicators that only modestly physical riding went on.⁴⁰ This same edition of the yearbook included photographs of the athletic club with around three dozen members and the tennis club with fourteen photographed members wearing long-sleeved, ankle-length, white dresses and hats. There were also two club basket ball teams at Brenau that year, the “Tigers” and the “Trojans.”⁴¹ Each boasted only five members.

In 1910, the *Thirty-second Annual Catalogue of Brenau College-Conservatory* made no mention of formal course work in physical education. Instead, the catalog continued to emphasize demure exercise. The catalog mentioned a wooded park and a lake near the campus and emphasized that these environs would be excellent venues for hiking and rowing.⁴² Additionally, the catalog mentioned the athletic club that all students were encouraged to join and had this to say about physical culture:

Nothing is more important in the education of a young girl than her *physical* development. Brenau has always stressed this feature of its work, but during the coming year it proposes to lay greater emphasis than ever upon it.

Each student is given a thorough physical examination by the director of the gymnasium, and she prescribes for her the kind of exercise which her physical condition indicates that she needs.⁴³

No mention was made of when or how often the faculty expected girls to exercise, but the catalog did indicate that, “No one is excused from these exercises except upon the advice of a

³⁹ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 1 November 1908, sec. A, p. 3.

⁴⁰ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA; Brenau College, 1909), n.p.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Catalog* (1910), 59 – 60.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 63.

physician or the director of the gymnasium.”⁴⁴ Still, it is worth noting that Brenau did not sanction more than activities such as walking and rowing, relatively low-impact forms of exercise, and that Brenau only sanctioned these exercises after a thorough physical. Brenau clearly gave women little credit for having sturdy constitutions.

Curricular changes would come after 1910 that would illustrate that Brenau made more effort to include physical education in the curriculum. And, clearly, this came at the behest of the college itself since Brenau hired faculty devoted to physical education. Still, this does not signal a grand change in mindset for the college. It should be emphasized that much institutional concern was still on things like graceful carriage, refined movement, and good posture—markers of genteel social class. Brenau, in early post-Victorian fashion, still wanted to produce graceful women.

Demure activities were still largely the norm at Brenau in the 1920s with walking and rowing remaining king among these. From the institution’s inception, regular outings in North Georgia had occurred every year as much of the student body went to places like Tallulah Falls in the spring and to Dahlonega in the fall.⁴⁵ A 1924 edition of the *Alchemist* reported that, “A very happy party of students and several members of the faculty spent the week-end at Lake Burton. Fishing, possum-hunting and hiking whiled away the hours.”⁴⁶ Another lake nearby Brenau also afforded chances for recreation. An article in the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that, “It is the intention of Brenau to have its own boats for its students on this beautiful sheet of water and to give its girls the benefit of the healthful and delightful exercise of rowing. A regatta is already planned for next spring.”⁴⁷ Demure on-campus opportunities for recreation also

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Campus Rings with Shout and Laughter,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 5.

⁴⁶ “Athletics,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. 12, no. 6 (3 December 1924), p. 3.

⁴⁷ “A Day at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 July 1904, sec. C, p. 4.

abounded at Brenau by the nineteen-twenties. The December 3, 1924, edition of the *Alchemist* reported that Brenau's Physical Education Club presented a "Gymnastic Exhibition." The older club members planned and made costumes for each segment of the event and taught younger girls their movements. The presentation consisted of an "Indian Club drill," "German Gymnasium tactics," an "English Folk dance," a "Swedish gymnastic lesson," and an "apparatus number."⁴⁸ The emphasis of such outdoor activities as hiking and rowing and the events of the gymnastics exhibition attest to a limited, turn-of-the-century view of women's athletics.

An emphasis on "Play Days" or "Field Days" at Brenau also attests to this view. Editions of Brenau's student newspaper, the *Alchemist*, indicated that these took place at the college. In these events, women's colleges like Brenau expected students to engage in friendly, low-key competition with one another. The aim of these activities was not to make women physically stronger or to prepare them for the competitive business world. Rather, women's colleges expected their students to get some exercise and to further bond with classmates while honing feminine virtues like supporting others and cooperating. Amy Thompson McCandless concluded that, "In sports as in other social activities, women were to be ladies."⁴⁹

Some of the best evidence for Brenau's desire to produce graceful ladies and not athletes comes from its dress code. Since the college's inception, there was always a "required costume" for gym class. Conservative dress that was not particularly conducive to vigorous athletic activities was the order of the day. Brenau's official catalog of 1930 described the gym uniform simply as a "white middie, black bloomers, black tie, black hose, white or black rubber soled

⁴⁸ "Athletics," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. 12, no. 6 (3 December 1924), p. 3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 148.

shoes.”⁵⁰ However, the 1937 – 1938 edition of the *Brenau Girl* student handbook elaborated a great deal more on the proper dress for athletes. The handbook read:

The proper costume for the various activities in which the Brenau students engage is as follows:

Gymnasium costume for fall and winter is white middie, blue bloomers, blue socks and rubber soled shoes. For going to and from the gym in gym or swimming costume, a long coat or slicker (but not a transparent slicker), must be worn. Shoes and hose must be worn to and from gym when going swimming. Girls from Lanier, Van Hoose, Oglesby and the Phi Mu and Delta Zeta House need not wear coats providing they go the back way and not along the street. No girl should appear on the street with gym suits or bathing suits unless long coat is worn. This is a campus offense. Every girl entering the pool must take a shower and wear a cap.

Tennis may be played in sport dresses with full skirts. Track pants are not to be worn on tennis courts or anywhere, except on athletic fields or in gym, only as specified by a Physical Education teacher or team captain.

Horseback riders should dress in habits, and hat and boots, or in low heeled shoes, wool hose, not silk, knickers, shirts, coats, or coat-sweaters, not slip-on sweaters, and hats. Every rider must have a ticket for each ride. These are purchased from the bursar and presented to the superintendent before the ride.

Hikers to New Holland or anywhere on the streets must wear skirts. Hikers in the woods may wear knickers, but not track pants. Playground and Public School teachers of Physical Education may wear knickers and a long coat, or sport dress, with full skirt. Low heels must be worn during playground and public school teaching.⁵¹

Clearly, fitness took a back seat to fashion. Brenau expected its students to dress conservatively, like proper ladies, no matter what the circumstances, even if doing so might inhibit one’s range of motion.

In 1910, Reta Terrell of the *Chicago Record-Herald*, a journalist of some note during her day, toured several southern women’s colleges. When asked to compare and contrast northern and southern institutions, she noted, “Another thing I notice in the northern schools, which still does not seem to be featured so much in the southern school, is physical culture. Every girl must

⁵⁰ *Catalog* (1929), 81.

⁵¹ *Handbook* (1937), 45-46.

take physical culture in the northern school, and they do not seem to indicate an overdevelopment in too large muscles or any other effects opposed to feminine beauty.”⁵² Terrell could easily have been speaking of Brenau in describing a southern school that lagged behind its northern counterparts in developing anything like a robust athletic program. Moreover, her assessment would have remained accurate for at least a decade. It is only in the 1920s that students were able to negotiate from the faculty something akin to “athletics” at the college as the term is conventionally understood to mean. Brenau faculty would not relax their overprotective stance regarding women’s athletics and physical education until decades after northern colleges had dispensed with demure exercise in favor of real sport.

⁵² “Georgia Woman is Doing Important Newspaper Work,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 10 April 1910, sec. E, p. 4.

CHAPTER SIX

“ATHLETICS” AT BRENAU

During the first decades of the twentieth century, nothing truly approaching “athletics” (as the term is conventionally given to mean) really existed at Brenau College. Rather, the institution only supported “physical culture” for its students. This consisted strictly of demure exercises, like gymnastics, walking, or rowing—activities that Brenau’s faculty and administration deemed “suitable” for women. But beginning in the 1920s, Brenau students began to prevail in their negotiations with faculty over things physical. Students gained the ability to participate in on-campus and intercollegiate sporting events and enjoyed more physical education in the college curriculum. Still, despite student efforts in negotiating for activities, it would be many decades before Brenau supported athletics to a robust degree.

Since the college’s founding, many Brenau students and some faculty members were apparently enthusiastic for athletics. Brenau girls frequently cheered on local men’s sports teams. An early edition of the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that on one November day in 1904, “Over 1,500 people witnessed the game of football this afternoon at Chattahoochee park between the North Georgia Agricultural college team from Dahlonega and the Stone Mountain team. Brenau college witnessed the game in force and added great beauty to the assemblage.”¹ Dr. Pearce also offered the use of Brenau’s grounds to a Gainesville amateur baseball team.² Brenau girls frequently cheered on athletes at Gainesville’s Riverside Military Academy as well. In one

¹ “Game was Tied at Gainesville,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 25 November 1904, p. 9.

² “Gainesville Nine Should Be Good,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 12 February 1911, sec. A, p. 2.

case, “Brenau was represented by quite a number of the fair sex” at a football game one rainy September afternoon in 1912 when Riverside defeated Boys’ High School.³ Also in 1912, several Brenau Girls took a train ride to Athens, Georgia, to watch sporting events at the University of Georgia.⁴

But some Brenau girls did more than merely watch and cheer. In November of 1903, the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that “Every afternoon the grounds surrounding the college present a lively scene when the basket ball team are playing in one place, the baseball game going on in another and the tennis court is alive with enthusiastic players.”⁵ One student author at Brenau described the college’s early athletic facilities (such as they were) in positively reverent tones in a passage published in the 1908 edition of the *Bubbles*, Brenau’s student yearbook. The passage read:

Our gymnasium is located at the topmost part of Brenau. We’re the highest birds on the whole roost. We’re first in everything. When the sun appears over the hills of Habersham the tennis courts are dotted with rosy girls carrying rackets ready for the fight. Over the athletic field fence a basketball comes flying bringing a message of industry from the other side. The gymnasium room is the seat of all good times, of feasts and dances, after the teachers are safely in their rooms. What stories could the old room tell if words were possible. Apparatus lines its walls. Rings knock your head invitingly as you march beneath them. Our horse is a rival to the Kentucky thoroughbreds. It can beat any horse—standing still. We grow tall by work on ladders. Some girl is continually hanging and praying to grow tall. If you are too large Gym will make you small.⁶

The glowing passage concluded, “A remedy for all evils is here. Here, too, is found the fountain of eternal youth with Miss Lansing as the goddess who guards the sacred ‘spring.’”⁷

This passage bespoke both student enthusiasm for athletics and the Brenau faculty’s continuing preoccupation with exercise in moderation, as opposed to athletics, for students. In

³ “Riverside Beats Boys High School,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 29 September 1912, sec. A, p. 15.

⁴ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 31 March 1912, sec. D, p. 15.

⁵ “Brenau College Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 November 1903, sec. C, p. 5.

⁶ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA; Brenau College, 1908), n.p.

⁷ *Ibid.*

the passage, students march and use rings, ladders, and a tumbling horse—in other words, they satisfy the faculty’s preference and engage in moderate calisthenics as opposed to vigorous exercise. Yet, at the same time, the passage indicated that the students were negotiating their own version of athletic space. Girls enthusiastically played tennis and basketball instead of performing calisthenics. Moreover, Brenau girls even made use of the gymnasium when the teachers were out of sight, no doubt so that they could engage in precisely the “excess or imprudence” the faculty decried.

Of course, playing tennis and basketball entailed competition. While this was once frowned upon by women’s colleges, attitudes would change. Nancy Theriot noted that:

While the idea of women’s athletics began to spread to most women’s colleges and to co-educational institutions, the program itself was changing. Before World War I, games had replaced gym exercise as the focus of physical education for women. The instructors justified the switch by pointing out all the virtues women would learn through games—sportsmanship, courage, team spirit—which were seen as being previously inaccessible to them. The gym teachers argued that these were human, not male, characteristics and that women should be trained in them.⁸

Helen Horowitz noted that a few games, particularly basketball, captivated students at the New England women’s colleges in the early twentieth century. Then, women’s intercollegiate athletics were uncommon, but intra-school competition emerged at most women’s colleges. This was true at Brenau. A 1906 edition of the “Brenau Notes” column in the *Atlanta Constitution* reported that, “A match game of basket ball was played Monday afternoon between the Brenau School of Oratory team and the Brenau Athletic Club team. The score was 15 to 13, in favor of the Oratory team.”⁹ The winning team “was tendered an oyster supper by the Brenau School of Oratory” and later in the week both teams were “entertained by Miss Nellie White, the instructor

⁸ Theriot, “Towards a New Sporting Ideal,” 2.

⁹ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 2 December 1906, sec. E, p. 8.

in gymnastics.”¹⁰ Though it was hardly “March Madness,” humble games like this still signaled the emergence of competitive athletics at Brenau in the conventional sense.

By the next decade, various photographs in the student yearbook indicated that Brenau sported volleyball teams and “Base-ball” teams for the several classes, which competed with each other on campus.¹¹ There was also a “Track and Field Day” held at the college. A 1908 edition of the “Brenau Notes” indicated that the Tigers and the Trojans were still going strong: “Two basketball teams have been organized by the Athletic Club and on last Monday afternoon a match game was played between the ‘Tigers’ and the ‘Trojans,’ the ‘Tigers’ gaining the victory.”¹² Other basketball players were, apparently, less enthusiastic about the game. Brenau’s student newspaper, the *Alchemist*, reported in 1919 that “Some complaints have been made by the authorities in charge of the Senior Basketball [team] to the effect that the Senior’s time for practice rolls around every week...but no actors or only a few ever turn up.”¹³ Apparently, this problem was not unique to the senior class. In an effort to increase participation, the *Alchemist* staff wrote, “This failure to report for practice applies also to other classes. Everybody fall in and show us what you can do.”¹⁴

By 1920, Brenau supplemented these extra-curricular athletic activities with more formalized instruction in physical education. The college had two professors of “Physical Training” who were both graduates of the New Haven Normal School of Gymnastics.¹⁵ There was also an “Elementary Course” and an “Advanced Course” in Physical Training for students to enroll in. The former focused on outdoor games like basketball, baseball, and volleyball, as well

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1918).

¹² “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 November 1908, sec. D, p. 7.

¹³ “Athletic—Seniors,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. 7, no. 3 (8 November 1919), p. 1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ *Catalog* (1920), 67.

as hikes and indoor games like gymnastics. The latter included what the elementary course did as well as track and field activities like running, the shot-put, and pole-vaulting and the use of “apparatus work” in gymnastics. Horseback riding as well as private work in tennis and swimming were available for a fee.¹⁶ Students in Brenau’s School of Oratory had more physical training options than students in the literary department. This was likely because being part of dramatic productions, which is what oratory students studied to do, could be a very physical task and so required physical preparation. In addition to the material in the elementary and advanced courses, oratory students played at hockey, fencing, and heavy apparatus work in gymnastics. Oratory students also underwent “Expressive Physical Training,” which included work on posture and gesturing, and studied pantomime.¹⁷

While mere movement as a means to improve health still existed in the formal curriculum in the 1920s, more athletic activities surfaced outside of the formal curriculum. This is evidenced by an expanded role for Brenau’s Athletic Association. The 1925 student handbook indicated, “Any student is a member of the Athletic Association upon payment of \$1.00 which must be paid at the regular pay day. This entitles her to the use of the tennis courts, basket ball field, all A. A. property (balls, etc.) and to the right to receive honors and emblems awarded by A. A.”¹⁸ The association largely had students as governors. The Athletic Council consisted of “the Director of Physical Education, the officers of the Association, and four other students to be chosen by the Association.”¹⁹

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 99-100.

¹⁸ *Handbook* (1925), 23.

¹⁹ Ibid.

By 1925 – 1926, Brenau’s student handbook indicated that the association encouraged outright competition among students. The handbook listed the following athletic contests at Brenau:

Basket Ball—For class championship.

Tennis—Doubles and singles for class championship.

Swimming Meet—Interclass meet in fall and spring.

Volley Ball—Interclass tournament in the fall.

Base-ball—For class championship.²⁰

Top athletes could earn the coveted varsity letter. At men’s colleges, this was typically done by playing on an intercollegiate team sport. Lacking as they largely did intercollegiate athletics, women’s colleges like Brenau devised different schemes to reward their best athletes. The handbook indicated that:

The members of the championship basket ball team and such members of the scrub [i.e., non-champions] as have played in four halves of a victorious interclass game receive their B’s.

The tennis champions in singles and doubles receive the B. Also the winners of the standard track events receive a B. To each member of the winning team in the volley ball a B is awarded.

In swimming the B shall be awarded for the highest number of credits, based on a chart including dives, strokes for form, and speed.²¹

The handbook also cautioned students that, “The wearing of all insignia and letters are strictly limited to those earned in athletics.”²² Accompanying individual honors were class honors. The handbook read that, “To the class winning the greatest number of points during the year a loving cup is presented.”²³

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 24.

²³ Ibid.

Tangible evidence of Brenau's growing openness to women's athletics is also revealed by, of all things, the college swimming pool. Brenau was now letting women get in over their heads. The once shallow pool had been replaced by one deep enough to dive in and long enough to swim laps in. The 1925 student handbook indicated that Brenau's Athletic Association recognized three grades of swimmers. "Elementary" swimmers received an "An orange felt shield" providing they could:

Swim forty yards, or once up and down the pool, any stroke. Do one front dive in good form—standing, running or shallow dive. Do the life-saving kick on the back with arms folded.²⁴

"Proficient" swimmers received a bar decoration for their shield and were those who could:

Swim twice up and down the pool, or forty yard any two strokes. Do three dives as follows: Two front dives, and a choice of any dive, not of the above. Stay up in the water five minutes, without touching the sides or bottom of the pool. Dive from the surface of water and touch bottom of pool.²⁵

"Expert" swimmers could:

Swim one hundred and sixty yards, or eight times the length of the pool, any four strokes. Do ten to fifteen plain and fancy dives to show ability. Stand up in water ten minutes without touching sides or bottom of pool. Dive from surface of water and bring up an object weighing at least eight pounds. Knowledge of all breaks and carries in life-saving. Plunging, at least a knowledge of "how to plunge." Undress in seven feet of water and swim ashore. Swim length of pool under water.²⁶

Expert swimmers received a varsity letter "B" in recognition of their accomplishments. Like other women's colleges, Brenau stressed swimming as much as it did because society saw the sport as being both feminine and practical. However, at the same time, Brenau's rigorous expert swimmer requirements prove that the college acknowledged that at least some women could perform exceptional athletic feats.

²⁴ Ibid., 23.

²⁵ Ibid., 24.

²⁶ Ibid.

By the nineteen-twenties, Brenau's most capable athletes desired to perform their feats against rival colleges. This decade saw the first mention of intercollegiate athletics at Brenau. The college had adopted the trappings of an intercollegiate competitor many years early as it acquired various fight songs, school colors (black and gold), and a school mascot (the "Golden Tiger"). However, Brenau had never competed in an intercollegiate contest, something it would first contemplate doing during this decade.

In this respect, Brenau did not really stand out from other southern women's colleges of its day. Theriot wrote that:

With the introduction of games into physical education departments, women began to compete against each other in basketball, tennis, field hockey, and rowing. Intercollegiate competition was not well organized, however, and usually existed only between traditional rivals or schools of close proximity. Even in colleges where such competition took place, however, intramural games were always the dominant activity in women's physical education programs.²⁷

Other historians have gone so far as to say that intercollegiate competition between women was actually discouraged outright. McCandless observed that, "by the twenties, physicians began to worry that the aggressive nature of athletic events might pose a threat to the feminine physique and psyche" while others "noted that competitive sports created belligerent behaviors."²⁸ Many women's college officials, therefore, generally shunned the aggression, commercialism, and exclusivity that characterized men's college sports. Instead of encouraging the development of women's intercollegiate athletics, McCandless wrote that women's colleges "were discouraged from seeking publicity, going on road trips, and rewarding talented individuals at the expense of less athletic participants."²⁹

²⁷ Theriot, "Towards a New Sporting Ideal," 2.

²⁸ McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 146-147.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

Brenau certainly created its share of on-campus athletic activities in lieu of intercollegiate match-ups. However, by the 1920s, students had convinced the faculty to accommodate intercollegiate competition where many contemporary “experts” elsewhere would not. To some degree, this bucked a national trend and made Brenau a trailblazing institution, at least by southern standards. The *Faculty Journal for Twenty-five Years*, which was the minute book of the Brenau faculty meetings from about 1920 to 1945, contains this entry from February 5, 1924:

The Student Union submits a paper informing the faculty of its unanimous approval of intercollegiate athletics, and implying that the Student Body would be glad to have the faculty commit itself, in principle, to the athletic program which the students have in mind. A motion to this effect is carried (by a vote of 15 to 9), but with the distinct understanding that this action on the part of the Faculty does not carry with it permission for Brenau students to accept any specific challenge until the matter has been passed upon by the Executive Dept. or by a Faculty committee.³⁰

About a month later, Brenau had booked its first game. The *Faculty Journal* reported:

March 3, 1925: On motion, specific consent is given for Howard College basket ball team to come to our home grounds and play an intercollegiate game—the date to be determined later and the details to be subject to the approval of our Discipline Committee.³¹

The game apparently never took place. It would be another two years before Brenau scheduled another intercollegiate sporting event.

The February 11, 1927, edition of the *Atlanta Constitution* covered Brenau’s first actual intercollegiate game. The article read:

Brenau college will enter a new era in her athletic career with the basket ball game against the co-eds of of [sic] N.G.A.C. [North Georgia Agricultural College] at Dahlonga, Ga. This will mark the first intercollegiate game that a

³⁰ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 5 February 1924.

³¹ *Ibid.*, entry dated 3 March 1925. Howard College was founded in Marion, Alabama in 1842. It moved to Birmingham in 1887 and later become Samford University. Samford University, “History of Samford University”; available from <http://www.samford.edu/history/index.html>; Internet; accessed 29 June 2008. According to an article on page four of the March 26, 1872, edition of the *Atlanta Constitution*, there were 130 pupils at Howard in 1872. More recent enrollment figures were not evident. Subsequent articles in the *Constitution* indicated that Howard became both co-educational and, for a time, a big enough school to play the likes of Auburn and Georgia Tech in football.

girls' college in Georgia has ever played. The two teams will meet Saturday afternoon, February 12, at 2:30 o'clock at Dahlonega. A return game will be played at Gainesville February 26.³²

The article continued, addressing the propriety of the game. It stated, "The question of intercollegiate athletics has been before the administrators of the colleges for women for many years, but before this time it was dismissed as inadvisable."³³ To this, Brenau's president Pearce responded:

It is a moot question whether there should be intercollegiate athletics for women. By allowing Brenau to meet N.G.A.C. in a basketball contest, I am not presuming to settle the question. It is an experiment, the outcome of which will be of interest to all southerners engaged in education for women.³⁴

The experiment would be witnessed by "The Physical Education club, members of the athletic association, representatives from the faculty and a group of interested Gainesville people," who would accompany the Brenau team to Dahlonega.³⁵ The article indicated that Brenau took the contest very seriously as "with the able direction of Miss Louise Howarth, director in physical education, and the coaching of Rhett Turnipseed, athletic director for the Pacolet mill at New Holland, first and second string squads have been selected and carefully drilled."³⁶

The preparation paid off. The *Constitution* reported that Brenau's varsity basketball team "defeated the Co-Eds of N.G.A.C. by a score of 14 to 9" in the first game.³⁷ The margin of victory in the return game played at Gainesville was even larger. The *Constitution* reported that, "the Brenau varsity had the lead through the game, and soon ran up a large score which at the end of the game stood 56 to 7."³⁸ Brenau was gracious in victory, however, and a good host.

The *Constitution* reported that, "Following the game, a reception was given for the visitors in the

³² "Brenau College To Meet N.G.A.C. Basketball Team," *Atlanta Constitution*, 11 February 1927, p. 11.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ "Brenau Notes," *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 February 1927, sec. D, p. 2.

³⁸ "Brenau Notes," *Atlanta Constitution*, 6 March 1927, sec. D, p. 7.

Physical Education club room, where sandwiches and punch were served. Prior to the game they were guests of the college at a luncheon.”³⁹

Whether Brenau considered the experiment a success is unclear. What is clear is that Brenau’s faculty members were not all behind intercollegiate competition in the first place. The vote to permit such competition was hardly unanimous. Also, Dr. Pearce’s “experimental” words were anything but a solid endorsement of intercollegiate competition. Still, several editions of the *Bubbles* indicated that the college had a varsity basketball team through the early 1930s, which would seem to indicate the Brenau administration’s willingness to continue intercollegiate play at student urging.⁴⁰ Also, photographs in various editions of the *Bubbles* yearbook indicated that the college also had a pair of cheerleaders in the early 1930s as well. While not iron-clad evidence that Brenau supported the idea of intercollegiate competition, cheerleaders were something a college would probably not need unless it competed against other schools. However, nothing else about intercollegiate sports—including information like schedules or win/loss records—appears in either the college yearbooks, the faculty minutes, college correspondence, or in the few existing editions of the *Alchemist* that remain from this decade. In other words, there is no evidence that Brenau’s varsity basketball team actually *played* anybody after their games against North Georgia. Moreover, by 1937, the *Bubbles* no longer featured the varsity basketball squad. Instead, when it came to athletics, photographic spreads describing inter-class competition predominated. Each class in 1937 had a volleyball team and a basketball team. Also, several girls played tennis and there was even a six woman

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1932), 123.

swimming club—but no more varsity basketball team.⁴¹ Several decades would pass before Brenau’s materials again mentioned intercollegiate athletics.

Exactly why intercollegiate athletics died out at Brenau during the 1930s is something of a mystery. Given their hesitancy, it is conceivable that Brenau officials might have caved in to negative sentiment regarding women’s athletics and scrapped the program. Alternatively, intercollegiate athletics might have failed because there was a dearth of female opponents for Brenau athletes to play. Outside of the North Georgia Agricultural College in Dahlonega, no other co-educational colleges of any size were really close enough to Gainesville to be easily traveled to. A logical opponent for Brenau might have been all-women’s Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, which was only about fifty miles away from Gainesville. However, Agnes Scott was not as experimental as Brenau. A December 17, 1922, article in the *Atlanta Constitution* indicated that “Agnes Scott...in basketball, as in hockey, has class teams only.”⁴² Perhaps an even more plausible explanation for the elimination of intercollegiate sports at Brenau was a monetary one. Like colleges everywhere, Brenau was hit hard by the Great Depression. It is conceivable that Brenau simply could not afford to expend time, money, and energy on intercollegiate athletics during a difficult economy.

The 1928 *Bubbles* indicated that, while intercollegiate competition may have been starting to falter, competition between Brenau students was as alive as ever. By the late 1920s, athletic competition went on between some of the state clubs at Brenau and saw girls from Georgia playing various games against girls from Virginia, the Carolinas, the Northeast, and elsewhere. Also, photographs in the *Bubbles* yearbooks indicated that Brenau girls were playing new sports. Soccer had arrived to campus by now as the juniors were champions in that sport.

⁴¹ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1937).

⁴² Olive Hall, “Agnes Scott Has Brilliant Basketball Season in View,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 17 December 1922, sec. A, p. 4.

Field hockey, too, was being played. There was also a chapter of Delta Psi Kappa, the “National Honorary and Professional Physical Education” society, which had organized at the college. The establishment of such an honorary society further indicated Brenau’s deepening commitment to athletics. Finally, faculty, too, were joining in athletic fun. A section in the 1928 *Bubbles* called “Some Famous Dates at Brenau 1927-1928” related that a faculty basketball team had played against some of Brenau’s club and class teams on a few occasions.⁴³

By 1930, health-conscious Brenau officials required students upon entry “to present a physician’s certificate showing that the applicant is not afflicted with any communicable disease and that she is physically able to undertake the duties of a college course.”⁴⁴ Also by 1930, Brenau had five physical education instructors on its faculty. The department required all students to take four years of P.E., which consisted of two hours of instruction and two hours of outdoor activity each week. The catalog indicated, however, that “this work is not counted for college credit.”⁴⁵ Students could, however, also earn a certificate in physical education along with their A.B. degree by spending many hours beyond the minimum P.E. requirements engaged in physical activity.⁴⁶ Juniors and seniors could have somewhat reduced P.E. requirements than underclassmen, providing they kept their studies up. There were also several theoretical P.E. courses (like kinesiology and anatomy) as well as several activity courses on offer, including dancing, canoeing, and even camping at Camp Takeda in Gainesville, a large campground in Gainesville which the college owned.

By the 1930s, Brenau required membership in its Athletic Association for all students.⁴⁷ Also, a point system had been devised for the purposes of earning athletic honors and prizes. For

⁴³ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1928).

⁴⁴ *Catalog* (1929), 30.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 46.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁷ *Handbook* (1937), 43.

example, a girl could earn 50 points for making a class baseball team, 50 points for being a part of a class canoe crew (a sport which had also made its appearance at Brenau by now), and 100 points for being a class' team captain in any sport. Girls could also earn 25 points for simply trying out for a sport, which encouraged even modestly athletic girls to give sport a chance.⁴⁸ Two-thousand points earned a "large Brenau 'B'."⁴⁹ Opportunities to earn athletic points abounded throughout the decade. Of course, class competitions in many sports occurred annually. Also, the April 16, 1930, edition of the *Alchemist* reported on a very spirited annual individual tennis tournament that was held at the college.⁵⁰ Other individual competitions would eventually develop in badminton and archery, but such competitions were rare. The aim of athletics at the college was clearly not to give students the chance to garner individual glory, but rather to learn how to be part of a winning team.

By 1940, physical education at Brenau could be seen to have advanced in some ways as it had declined in others. Brenau required juniors and seniors to take only a single hour of P.E. per week, which was a marked reduction from the requirements of the previous decade.⁵¹ However, by 1940, students could actually major in P.E. and earn a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education degree at Brenau.⁵² Also, at the February 4, 1941, faculty meeting, Brenau's dean announced that "college credit will be given for approved work in Physical Education," which meant that P.E. courses could now count as electives in the regular curriculum.⁵³ This was something relatively few colleges were yet doing.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 44.

⁵⁰ "Sport-O-Graphs," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XVI, no. 26 (16 April 1930), p. 4.

⁵¹ *Catalog* (1939), 108.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ *Faculty Journal (25 years)*, entry dated 4 February 1941.

Various photographs in the 1940 *Bubbles* indicated that Brenau girls were remaining active in time-honored sports at the college while, at the same time, several new sports had made an appearance at Brenau as well. The *Bubbles* showed women riding horses, playing soccer, playing baseball, attending badminton class, dueling in fencing, practicing archery, and playing ping-pong. The yearbook also depicted girls canoeing and brandishing field-hockey sticks in 1940 while the 1943 edition of the *Bubbles* proved through photographs that golf had made it to campus.⁵⁴ In addition, by 1940, Brenau had a synchronized swimming team called the “Aquacade.” The 1940 *Bubbles* also indicated how a girl would “letter” at Brenau. To get her “B”, a girl would have to accumulate 1000 points, which were earned on the basis of participation in various athletic events.

Brenau admissions officials continued to require a physical for attending students in the nineteen-forties.⁵⁵ In addition, the college also had an infirmary in the charge of two registered nurses by 1940.⁵⁶ By 1945, athletic dress requirements had relaxed somewhat. Brenau required gym shoes and tennis shoes for activities and prohibited backless tennis outfits. Of course, long coats were still the order of the day when going to and from the pool, but other than these rules, strictures were relatively non-specific.⁵⁷

Intra-campus sports were still the norm at Brenau by 1940. An edition of the *Alchemist* for that year reported on a spirited basketball game between the juniors and freshmen. The juniors won the game for the third year in a row, thanks to “hard work, constant operation, experience, and a spirit equaled by none.”⁵⁸ It also helped that the juniors “exhibited the ‘three-

⁵⁴ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1943), 107.

⁵⁵ *Catalog* (1939), 27.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Handbook* (1945), 42.

⁵⁸ Mary Gresham, “Through the Sporthole,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XXVI, no. 12 (19 March 1940), p. 3.

man' defense at its best" and had superstar Kit Wharton on their team, who scored twenty-two points in the game.⁵⁹

Despite the increasing competition on campus in events like the basketball tournament, Brenau still clung to demure sports at late as the 1940s. The same edition of the student newspaper that described the spirited basketball game also described a "P.E. Exhibition" at the college. For this, P.E. majors and faculty members joined with students from the folk dancing and fencing classes. Students put on demonstrations of several kinds of dances, fencing and tennis displays, and maneuvers on several types of gymnastics apparatuses.⁶⁰

Indeed, the 1940s witnessed something of a turn-around for Brenau. While up until now the students had made much progress in negotiating for true athletics to come to campus, the faculty set them back in this decade. Besides endorsing the demure sports of the P.E. exhibition, the 1945 student handbook seemed to indicate that the college was deemphasizing athletics to a degree. For example, the handbook made no mention of how a girl could earn a varsity letter. It said only that, "We also try to arouse interest in sports by having class competition in soccer, volley ball, basketball, and softball."⁶¹ Also, by this year, the athletic association was in the business of sponsoring non-athletic events. The handbook reported that the association sponsored an annual "Miss Brenau" beauty contest, an annual scavenger hunt, and a "Miss Posture" contest using a "Silhouette-O-Graph," which could be "used to aid correction of posture."⁶²

A further erosion of female athleticism at Brenau would seem to be apparent in the decade of the 1950s. In the 1951 edition of the *Bubbles*, although shuffleboard was in

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ "P.E. Exhibition Presented Friday," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XXVI, no. 12 (19 March 1940), p. 4.

⁶¹ *Handbook* (1945), 43.

⁶² Ibid.

appearance as a new activity, there were only two pages devoted to photographs of athletes engaged in sport. By 1955, the *Bubbles* contained not a single photograph devoted to physical education or sports at all. The 1955 – 1956 student handbook also indicated that the term “Athletic” had been dropped from the name of the college’s sport controlling body. The “Brenau Recreation Association” stood in its place. Its purpose was:

To endeavor to promote good sportsmanship and team cooperation.
To keep in good condition the equipment of the association and to purchase new equipment when needed.
To award all cups and letters won by students in direct keeping with the point system.⁶³

No part of the association’s purpose seemed overly “physical.” The B.R.A. board grew its membership in a remarkable fashion. The handbook indicated that:

The Recreation Board will choose at various times during the year girls from the student body whose interest and participation in the activities of the Association merits recognition of a lesser degree than permanent membership in the Board. These girls will be called “Termites” and will work in cooperation with the Board in all its activities with permanent election as their ultimate goal. To be eligible for membership in the Board a “Termite” must have earned a minimum of 25 points in the Recreational Point System from September to March of that year. In March of each year the Recreation Board will tap several from this club for permanent membership in the Board.⁶⁴

Sadly, no indication is given as to why the name “Termite” was selected for sub-board members.

Despite the de-emphasis of athletics in the 1950s, student did not completely lose in their negotiation with faculty for sports. According to the student handbooks, the recreational point system of the 1950s typically gave Termites points for coming in first or second place in college-wide contests in a good number of sports, which proved that physical activities were actually still taking place at the college. These included archery, badminton, basketball, hockey, tumbling, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, and volleyball—more sports that had ever been offered at the

⁶³ *Handbook* (1955), 45.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

college before. In addition, points could be earned for assisting with association events (like the Miss Brenau contest) and for dancing. A woman would earn a letter by earning 100 points. Classes still competed in team sports and were awarded trophies for excellence, but no individual awards existed except in archery, badminton, tennis, and swimming.⁶⁵ For the 1950s, the “sports costumes” regulations were unchanged since the 1940s.

By 1961, Brenau had diminished athletic offerings even a bit further. Brenau required only freshmen and sophomores to take P.E. and to earn four credit hours of activity work. For this, students had to earn one credit in swimming, at least one credit in an individual sport (such as tennis, golf, or archery) or recreational sports, and at least one credit in a team sport or in dance (including tap, folk, ballet, etc.). P.E. majors took substantially more sporting coursework than non-majors and Brenau required all students to buy a P.E. uniform.⁶⁶ The 1965 – 1966 student handbook devoted several pages to reprinting the recreation association’s constitution. However, despite this, little had evidently changed regarding college athletics in a decade. Recreation Association Board membership was now tied to brains as well as brawn as girls had to maintain a “C” average to stay on the board or to become a Termite.⁶⁷ Also, by 1965, Brenau had revived the dormant practice of holding a college “Field Day” in which sororities, residence halls, and honorary societies competed against each other in a variety of games and contests.⁶⁸ In addition, hockey, tumbling, and soccer were no longer being played at the college while bowling had been taken up again for the first time in decades. An April, 1965, edition of the *Alchemist* indicated that Brenau exposed students to esoteric as well as mainstream sports. The

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶⁶ *Brenau College Annual Catalogue, 1961-1962, v. LIII, n.1* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1961), 64; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Catalog* (1961).”

⁶⁷ *Handbook* (1965), 74.

⁶⁸ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1965), 19.

paper reported that a “karate expert” gave a demonstration at the college, which was both interesting and well-attended.⁶⁹ A 1960 edition of the *Alchemist* bespoke the continued popularity of on-campus, intra-collegiate athletic contests in the sixties and described in great detail the college’s softball tournament for that year.⁷⁰

Brenau reaffirmed its commitment to athletics in its 1970 catalog. At the same time, it acknowledged a gendered difference in college sports. The college’s position was that, “Although women’s colleges emphasize Physical Education less than the men’s colleges, the modern women’s college is eager to help every student gain health and the recreation, team spirit, and love of sports that can be so happily acquired in the games and contests of the campus.”⁷¹ To facilitate this, the 1970 – 1971 Brenau catalog essentially reiterated the physical education requirements laid out in the catalog of a decade earlier. The only significant change was that the college added credit hours in “Body Mechanics” and in “Stunts and Tumbling” to the physical education activity requirements.⁷² Brenau required each student to take two hours of physical education per week during her freshman and sophomore years to accrue four credits of activity courses. The college still required a physician to complete a health certificate for enrolled students and still required all entering students to take a swim test to determine an appropriate level of instruction.⁷³

In 1970, inter-class sport competitions were still very popular at the college. The *Alchemist* reported that the Alpha Delta Pi team beat the Alpha Gamma Delta team to win the college basketball tournament. A mixed-gender faculty team challenged the winners to a game

⁶⁹ Robbie Warner and Nevin Lenhardt, “Karate Expert Gives Demonstration,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), 29 April 1965, p. 7.

⁷⁰ “Seniors Down Freshmen to Walk Off With Softball Champion [sic],” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XLVI, no. 7 (12 April 1960), p. 5.

⁷¹ *Catalog* (1970), 13.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 102.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 30, 38.

and went on to win the close match by 15 to 13.⁷⁴ The same edition of the paper published an article that described how four students received specialized instruction in golf.⁷⁵ In addition, this edition of the *Alchemist* published an article lauding jogging as “an excellent exercise to take up.”⁷⁶

By the 1970s, a student could rest assured that the physical education she received at Brenau would be of good quality, personalized for her needs—and hard to avoid. The college bulletin asserted that:

This work is done under the direction of thoroughly trained physical educators in a modernly equipped gymnasium, swimming pool, health and exercise room, and recently enlarged athletic fields. Each girl is advised on her selection of activity courses so that she may have an opportunity to participate in a balanced variety of skill classes and team and individual sports. Remedial training is given when needed. Excuses from work in the gymnasium may be given only by the college physician or the Physical Education instructor.⁷⁷

The catalog of this year also offered a rationale explaining the physical education requirement. It read:

The intent of the requirement...is to help each student develop proficiency in a variety of recreation pursuits of physical orientation. Students, therefore, are required to have skill, knowledge, and understanding in dance, swimming and sports.⁷⁸

To facilitate this development, Brenau offered a plethora of physical education activity courses ranging from archery to fencing to square dancing to synchronized swimming.⁷⁹

While activity course offerings rebounded in numbers from earlier years, by 1975, Brenau had dropped more sports from its recreational program. The Brenau College student handbook of that year indicated that students could earn points toward board membership only

⁷⁴ “ADPI’s Win Tourney,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. LCI, no. 7 (23 February 1970), p. 7.

⁷⁵ “FORE!!,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. LCI, no. 7 (23 February 1970), p. 1.

⁷⁶ “Accessories,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. LCI, no. 7 (23 February 1970), p. 3.

⁷⁷ *Catalog* (1970), 13.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 104-105.

for playing volleyball, basketball, softball, and for bowling.⁸⁰ Otherwise, Termites could earn points by dancing, serving as scorekeepers and timekeepers at sporting events, and by working to organize tournaments and events like the Miss Brenau pageant. Also, by the mid-1970s, the student handbook no longer reprinted rules for proper gym attire, but instead said only that gym uniforms would be sold in the fall.⁸¹

The nineteen-eighties saw big changes in athletics at Brenau. Brenau built a large physical education building and upgraded a new natatorium that workers completed in 1974, which contained a large pool and other exercise and steam rooms. In speaking of this facility, the 1980 undergraduate bulletin declared, “When coupled with the other physical education and recreation resources, the combined physical plant provides Brenau College with one of the finest small college educational facilities found in the nation.”⁸² Brenau shared these facilities with the community. Beginning in the 1980s and continuing over the next several decades, the *Gainesville Times* and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* ran occasional announcements for high school athletic camps being offered at Brenau. The college hosted several such camps, including softball for girls and wrestling for boys, and held several swim meets in its Olympic-caliber pool.

Brenau had also revised its physical education requirements by 1980. The college required students to take two or three “classroom offerings” of physical education courses and three or four hours of activity courses for a total of six hours.⁸³ Students could choose from six classroom courses that dealt with such themes as nutrition, first aid, drug abuse, and sex

⁸⁰ *Handbook* (1974), 51.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁸² *Brenau College 1980-81 Undergraduate Bulletin* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1980), 19; available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Hereafter, references to this source are indicated as “*Catalog* (1980).”

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 134.

education. Activity course offerings remained as robust as ever and even included courses that accommodated students with physical disabilities.⁸⁴

As in previous decades, in the 1980s, intra-collegiate athletic competitions still remained important. The fall quarter, 1980, edition of the *Alchemist* devoted a section of the paper to “Sports.” It indicated that field day, with its several races and games, was still a festive event at the college. Also, this edition of the student newspaper reported the results of a “Kick-Ball Tourney” held on campus, which the Tri-Delta sorority won.⁸⁵

As it entered the 1980s, Brenau finally added *bone fide* intercollegiate athletics. The 1980 undergraduate bulletin indicated, “Brenau College has two teams that participate in intercollegiate athletics in the areas of swimming and tennis. Both teams play regular schedules with intrastate and southeastern colleges and universities.”⁸⁶ Brenau had also dabbled with forming a basketball program in 1979. The March edition of the *Alchemist* for that year reported:

Mr. Alex Taylor of the Brenau College Criminal Justice Department is coaching a women’s basketball team at Brenau. The team had its first game...against Gainesville Junior College. Unfortunately, the first game was not a win, but there are high expectations for the second game. It is scheduled...against Agnes Scott College.⁸⁷

Despite the optimism, the basketball team folded and would not be revived until 2006.

The intercollegiate athletic teams that did exist at the college were modest. The 1975 edition of the *Bubbles* displayed photographic spreads of the swimming and tennis teams. Four students played on Brenau’s tennis team in 1975 and five students swam for the college.⁸⁸ Half a

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁸⁵ “Tri-Delta Tops Zetas In Kick-Ball Tourney,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), Fall Quarter 1980, p. 5.

⁸⁶ *Catalog* (1980), 26.

⁸⁷ “A New Team on Campus,” *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), March, 1979, p. 7.

⁸⁸ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1975), 135, 139

decade later, the tennis team still remained small but Brenau's swim team had doubled in size. The 1980 *Bubbles* also related that Brenau's swim team competed against several much larger National Collegiate Athletic Association (N.C.A.A.) Division I universities, including Clemson University, the University of Georgia, and Florida State University.⁸⁹ Brenau took the sports very seriously as evidenced by the fact that it offered both athletic scholarships to prospective athletes and had a Director of Intercollegiate Athletics on staff.⁹⁰ Besides tennis and swimming, the 1980 *Bubbles* revealed that fencing had made a comeback as a club sport at Brenau.⁹¹ Four young women participated in this club sport which had not been mentioned in relation to the college since the early 1900s.

Despite the fact that Brenau's intercollegiate athletic teams were among the newest and the smallest in the country in the 1980s and 1990s, they were also among the best. Brenau became a member of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (N.A.I.A.) and the Southern States Athletic Conference. Under the leadership of coach Bill Rogers, the 1998 and 1999 N.A.I.A. coach of the year, the Golden Tigers tennis squad dominated its competition during the 1990s. Rogers came to Brenau in 1992. He inherited a solid program, which had been ranked in the top 25 of the N.A.I.A. in 1988.⁹² By 1993, the once-small tennis team had grown to ten members and continued to garner laurels.⁹³ The 1994 edition of the *Bubbles* indicated that, "At the end of the 1992-1993 season, Brenau was ranked tenth in the nation and won the N.A.I.A. District 25 Championship."⁹⁴ From 1995 until 1999, Brenau finished its seasons ranked in the top five teams in the country in the N.A.I.A. About 150 colleges and

⁸⁹ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1980), 76-77.

⁹⁰ *Catalog* (1980), 26.

⁹¹ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1980), 75.

⁹² *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1988), 156.

⁹³ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1993), 57.

⁹⁴ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1994), n.p.

universities competed in N.A.I.A. women's tennis then. It was a very competitive division, especially in Georgia, where Brenau played other nationally-ranked teams like Shorter College and Berry College.

Articles in the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in the late 1990s routinely reported that Brenau's tennis players routed players from other much larger schools, like the University of Georgia or Georgia State University. In 1998, Brenau finished third in the N.A.I.A. tournament. In 1999, Brenau held the number one ranking in the country for much of its season and had a roster that included "six singles players ranked in the top 36 in the country, and three doubles team among the top 15."⁹⁵ That same year, Brenau's tennis team won the school's first national championship title in any sport.

The *Gainesville Times* reported that, "The Golden Tigers shared the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) title with Auburn-Montgomery Sunday in Boca Raton, Fla. Each team finished [the N.A.I.A. tournament] with 37 points."⁹⁶ Also in 1999, "the NAIA selected six Golden Tigers as first-team All-Americans."⁹⁷ Brenau's best player, sophomore Leyla Ogan, was the runner-up for the 1999 individual title after losing in straight sets to a member of the 1996 Chinese Olympic tennis team who was playing at an American college. Ogan managed this feat despite having a cancerous growth removed from her knee the previous summer and undergoing months of rehabilitation.⁹⁸ Several other Brenau players also finished the year with high rankings.

⁹⁵ Bud Ellis, "Brenau Swinging for Title," *Times* (Gainesville, GA), 20 May 1999, sec. B, p. 1.

⁹⁶ Ryan Smith, "Brenau Basks in Glow of NAIA Tennis Title," *Times* (Gainesville, GA), 3 June 1999, sec. B, p. 1.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Bud Ellis, "Brenau Swinging for Title," *Times* (Gainesville, GA), 20 May 1999, sec. B, p. 1.

The secret to Brenau's success in tennis was international recruiting. Besides Ogan, who was from England, Brenau fielded young players from France, Brazil, Japan, and Malaysia.⁹⁹ International players actually kept Brenau on top for several years. Brenau went to the N.A.I.A. finals in 2000 and again in 2001, but came up short both times. In 2001, the Golden Tigers appeared again in the N.A.I.A. finals against Auburn-Montgomery, but lost 5 to 2.¹⁰⁰

But in 2002, Brenau again won the national championship. A writer for the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* quipped that, "If Brenau University women's tennis coach Bill Rogers had to summon the players who recently won the NAIA championship, he'd have to initiate a global search."¹⁰¹ The article continued, saying that:

Shortly after the Tigers from Gainesville, Ga., won the national title at the Peachtree City [Georgia] Tennis Center, they headed home. Junior Antonina Grib, the No. 1 singles player on a team that finished 25-0, flew to Belarus. Sophomore Katrina Mihaere is from New Zealand, freshman Vilijana Dimouska from Australia, junior Irina Yarikova from Russia and seniors Katrina Franjic and Shan Liew from Germany and Malaysia, respectively.¹⁰²

In another article, the *AJC* indicated that, "Because most top American players choose NCAA Division I schools," smaller colleges like Brenau had to recruit internationally.¹⁰³ Coach Rogers put it more colorfully. Speaking of coaches at smaller colleges, he said, "the rest of us scurry around trying to get players from wherever in the world we can."¹⁰⁴

Brenau's tennis players continued to perform well into the twenty-first century. The team finished ninth in the N.A.I.A. in 2003 and 2004 and was ranked as high as number three in

⁹⁹ Earnest Reese, "Recruiting abroad helps small schools compete," *Atlanta Journal/Atlanta Constitution*, 22 May 1999, sec. D, p. 8.

¹⁰⁰ Todd Holcomb, "Women's Tennis," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 26 May 2001, sec. H, p. 10.

¹⁰¹ Earnest Reese, "Brenau Goes Global for Win," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 1 June 2002, sec. C, p. 7.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Larry Hartstein, "International Pipeline Key to Brenau's Title Run," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 23 May 2002, sec. JJ, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

2005.¹⁰⁵ The Golden Tigers routinely had individual players and doubles teams ranked among the top twenty-five in the nation. Many Brenau players became All-Americans. As late as 2005, the team retained its international flavor with many players and a new coach, Gordon Leslie, coming from abroad.

In addition to tennis, a swimming and diving team represented Brenau in intercollegiate competition in the 1970s. In 1978, a special section in the *Gainesville Times* written to commemorate Brenau's one-hundredth anniversary indicated that the team excelled. The *Times* reported that, "In 1977, Brenau's swimmers were ranked third in the nation after the national finals in Pennsylvania, and had nine swimmers named to U.S. All-American ranks."¹⁰⁶ In 1985, Brenau's swimmers competed against such very large schools as Auburn University, Florida State University, and the University of Georgia in the Southern Intercollegiate Championships and swam their home matches in a very nice aquatics center on campus.¹⁰⁷ However, despite the early accolades garnered by Brenau swimmers and the apparent strength of the team, Brenau's swimming program went under in 1986, an apparent victim of tightening purse strings at the college. Despite having no team itself, several articles in the *Gainesville Times* and the *Atlanta Constitution* indicated that Brenau continued to host swim meets on campus for youth teams well into the twenty-first century. Then, in 2006, Brenau revived its swimming program. To do so, the university brought aboard James D. ("Jim") Young, who had over 40 years of experience

¹⁰⁵ College Tennis Online, "Brenau University (Ga.) Women Past Rankings"; available from <http://www.collegetennisonline.com/view/pastrankings.asp?prtcpId=3343&ptype=T>; Internet; accessed 21 August 2007.

¹⁰⁶ "The first 100 years," *Times* (Gainesville, GA), 11 September 1977, Brenau College Centennial Commemorative Section, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Darrell Simmons, "Sportsbeat," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 7 February 1985, sec. D, p. 2.

coaching swimmers.¹⁰⁸ He brought in several talented freshman athletes and the young program showed great promise as it began to mature.

For a time, Brenau supported another water sport—fishing. The 1984 – 1985 edition of the student handbook described the “Brenau College Fishing Team” in colorful detail. The handbook related that, “As a true innovation in women’s intercollegiate sports, the Brenau College Fishing Team was formed during Spring of 1981.”¹⁰⁹ Brenau’s close proximity to Georgia’s Lake Sidney Lanier, a 38,000-acre, fresh-water reservoir with over 692 miles of shoreline, provided a perfect location for the team to fish. The handbook boasted that in the same year of its founding the team “won its first intercollegiate meet...against men’s teams!”¹¹⁰ Team membership was open to all female students who successfully tried out. Apparently, however, the fishing team was short-lived; no more mention of it is made in Brenau’s publications after only a couple of years.

Intercollegiate soccer began at Brenau in 1988. The *Bubbles* of that year indicated that:

The Brenau soccer team kicked off their first season last fall. The team, coached by Dr. Calvin Hanrahan, played a four game season against [all-women’s] Agnes Scott and Wesleyan Colleges. The soccer team was formed through the Organization of Club Sports by the Athletic Department.¹¹¹

The program matured slowly, apparently enduring some hard seasons for a handful of years.

The September 14, 1996, edition of the *Atlanta Journal* reported that soccer powerhouse Oglethorpe University blanked the Golden Tigers 9 – 0 in their opening match in 1996.¹¹² By 1997, photographs in the *Bubbles* revealed that soccer remained small, apparently with just

¹⁰⁸ Brenau University, “James D. (Jim) Young”; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/athletics/swimming/coach.cfm>; Internet; accessed 23 August 2007.

¹⁰⁹ *Handbook* (1984), 81.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹¹ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1988), 143.

¹¹² “College Soccer,” *Atlanta Journal/Atlanta Constitution*, 14 September 1996, sec. J, p. 9.

enough women to field a team.¹¹³ The 1998 yearbook indicated, “Soccer...which started out at the club level began competing intercollegiately in the fall. They play their home games at nearly Lakeview Academy,” a private, college-preparatory day school also located in Gainesville.¹¹⁴ During its first real intercollegiate soccer season, Brenau’s team racked up two wins and eleven losses.¹¹⁵ The 1998 photographic spread for the soccer team showed thirteen players and two coaches, which was still not much depth for a college program. By 2000, Brenau’s young program showed some improvement by winning four regular season games.¹¹⁶ Brenau continued to play their home games at Lakeview until 2001 when the city of Gainesville opened the Allen Creek Soccer Complex.¹¹⁷ Brenau moved its soccer program to the new facility.

Along with getting a new home field, Brenau’s soccer program got a new coach. In 2002, Mike Lochstampf came to Brenau to coach soccer. Lochstampf had played soccer himself both in college and at the semi-professional level for many years before beginning a career as a college coach.¹¹⁸ He coached several winning teams in Texas and in Georgia, most recently at Oglethorpe University, before moving to Brenau. In just two short years, Lochstampf coached the Brenau team to the Southern States Athletic Conference tournament for the first time in many years. In 2005 – 2006, Brenau had one all-region, three all-conference, and seven academic all-conference players on the soccer team.¹¹⁹ A year later, the team still

¹¹³ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1997), 88.

¹¹⁴ *Aurum* (formerly *Bubbles*) (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1998), 60.

¹¹⁵ *Aurum* (formerly *Bubbles*) (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 2000), 92.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ Gainesville Parks and Recreation Division, “Allen Creek Soccer Complex”; available from http://www.gainesville.org/recreation.asp?contentscreen_id=allencreeksoccercomplex; Internet; accessed 26 August 2007.

¹¹⁸ Brenau University, “Coach’s Page”; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/athletics/soccer/coach.cfm>; Internet; accessed 26 August 2007.

¹¹⁹ Brenau University, “Adding Value to Our Community”; available from <http://alum.brenau.edu/development/value.cfm>; Internet; accessed 22 August 2007.

improved on the pitch. Brenau's athletic department reported that, "The Golden Tigers closed out their 2006 soccer season with a 10-7-1 record," the most successful year in the young program's history. Also in 2006, two Brenau soccer players were named to all-conference teams.¹²⁰ In 2007, Brenau's schedule included matches against several nationally-ranked N.A.I.A. soccer teams, including those of Oglethorpe University and Berry College.¹²¹ The team's outlook was none-the-less promising, however, since several talented players returned to the lineup to be joined by a strong incoming crop of freshman and transfer student recruits.

Students founded a crew program at Brenau in the mid-1990s. The program developed as something of an offshoot of the Lake Lanier Rowing Club, which rowing enthusiasts formed in 1993 to make use of an excellent rowing venue created for the 1996 Summer Olympic Games that were held in Atlanta. Personnel from the L.L.R.C. helped several colleges in northeast Georgia, including Brenau, establish rowing programs.¹²² Brenau's program was the only one to thrive. The 1995 edition of the *Bubbles* depicted the rowers as very dedicated by saying that the eight-woman team "has practice everyday, except Wednesday and Sunday, at the crack of dawn."¹²³

In 2000, the Brenau yearbook reported that the crew team welcomed M. J. McNamara as a new head coach and participated in seven regattas.¹²⁴ In 2004, Brenau rowers participated in the prestigious "Head of the Hooch" regatta on November 6 and 7 of that year. Brenau fielded a single novice boat that rowed respectably against over two-dozen clubs from much larger

¹²⁰ Coach Mike Lochstampfor for Hometownhall.com, "Brenau Tigers Soccer season wrap up...," 23 December 2006; available from <http://www.hometownhall.com/sports/college/brenau-tigers-soccer-seas.shtml>; Internet; last accessed 30 August 2007.

¹²¹ Brenau University, "Soccer Schedule and Scores"; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/athletics/soccer/schedule.cfm>; Internet; accessed 27 August 2007.

¹²² Joe Drape, "Update '94: Two Years and Counting Annual Olympics Report," *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 18 September 1994, sec. G, p. 15.

¹²³ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1995), 127.

¹²⁴ *Aurum* (formerly *Bubbles*) (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 2000), 96.

colleges and universities, such as Georgia Tech, Emory University, the University of Texas, Duke University, the University of Florida, and North Carolina State University.¹²⁵ By 2006, crew was a varsity sport at Brenau engaged in by over a dozen young women that seemed to have a promising future.¹²⁶

In 1995, the same year the college founded its rowing program, Brenau began a volleyball program as well. The team would struggle for several years. By 1997, the team consisted of nine players, which provided only a modest reserve to support six first-string players.¹²⁷ The yearbook indicated that, in 2000, the “volleyball team had their best season yet with a 14 – 12 finish” when Scott Hanley joined the program as a new coach.¹²⁸ The volleyball team’s next winningest season came in 2002 when the team went 15 -16.¹²⁹ The somewhat lackluster results did not diminish support for the team, however. In a 2001 interview published in the *Gainesville Times*, one player praised the Brenau community by saying, “The students are really supportive, and the professors are supportive.”¹³⁰ In 2006, the volleyball team finished the season at 11 – 21.¹³¹

In 1997, Brenau’s cross country team made its debut. Nine women ran for the college team, which Glenn Bryant coached.¹³² Team wins were elusive, but Brenau’s runners remained competitive for the next decade. Lila Harste, a veteran runner of the Atlanta Track Club, coached the team from 2002 until 2006 when Susan McIntyre took over. McIntyre was also an

¹²⁵ St. Louis Rowing Club, “Results--2004 Head of the Hooch, November 6-7, 2004”; available from <http://www.slrc.net/regattas/2004%20Hooch%20Results.htm>; Internet; accessed 23 August 2007.

¹²⁶ Brenau University, “Brenau Crew”; available from <http://news.brenau.edu/athletics/crew/team.cfm>; Internet; accessed 16 October 2007.

¹²⁷ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1997), 84-85.

¹²⁸ *Aurum* (formerly *Bubbles*) (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 2000), 96.

¹²⁹ Brenau University, “2007 Volleyball Team Review”; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/Athletics/volleyball/results.cfm>; Internet; accessed 23 August 2007.

¹³⁰ Dan Washburn, “Two ex-Trojans give Brenau a needed spark,” *Times* (Gainesville, GA), 28 October 2001, sec. E, p. 1.

¹³¹ Brenau University, “2007 Volleyball Team Review”; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/Athletics/volleyball/results.cfm>; Internet; accessed 23 August 2007.

¹³² *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1997), 86.

experienced runner and bicyclist with an impressive record of coaching at the high school level.¹³³

With the addition of so many sports teams, it was perhaps only natural that Brenau would need a cheerleading squad to animate fans. The 1999 yearbook published several photographs of a “Pep Rally” held at the college. Featured at the rally was “the newly formed team of Brenau Cheerleaders, accompanied by one very energetic mascot.”¹³⁴ While the Golden Tiger wore her stripes, Brenau’s dozen-or-so cheerleaders wore a simple uniform that consisted of a t-shirt and gym shorts.

In 2004, Brenau’s cheerleaders acquired a new team to support. That year, Brenau’s softball team played its inaugural season. Devon Thomas, an award-winning member of the Georgia Athletics Coaches Association for several years, coached the team to solid seasons. Within only four years of founding the program, Thomas’ teams “achieved national rankings in 2006 and 2007” and “produced 13 All Conference players and 8 All Conference freshman players.”¹³⁵

The newest sport at Brenau came in 2006 when the college’s basketball program took to the court amid much fanfare. For the occasion, Brenau refurbished its gymnasium and maintained a “countdown” clock on the university Web site for months in advance. Gary Bays, a former women’s basketball coach for Warner Southern College in central Florida who was selected as an N.A.I.A. Regional Athletic Director of the Year in 2005, was Brenau’s first coach.¹³⁶ The Golden Tigers won their inaugural first game against Tennessee Wesleyan

¹³³ Brenau University, “Coach’s Page”; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/athletics/soccer/coach.cfm>; Internet; accessed 28 August 2007.

¹³⁴ *Aurum* (formerly *Bubbles*) (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1999), 122.

¹³⁵ Brenau University, “Brenau University 2007 Golden Tigers Softball Camp”; available from <http://www.brenau.edu/athletics/softballbrochure.pdf>; Internet; accessed 22 August 2007.

¹³⁶ Gordon Leslie, “Bays to Spearhead Brenau’s New Women’s Basketball Program”; *S.S.A.C. Sports*, 24 August 2005; available from <http://www.ssacsports.com/article/493.php>; Internet; accessed 22 August 2007.

University before proceeding to have a rocky—though respectable—first season.¹³⁷ The team finished the year with ten wins and twenty losses and a conference record of 3 – 17.¹³⁸

The creation of the basketball program at the university was part of a “sports program expansion plan” undertaken by Brenau. This plan was designed to ultimately leave the University with intercollegiate varsity programs in “basketball, crew, cross country, golf, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis and volleyball.”¹³⁹ As of 2007, Brenau had largely realized its goals. The university lacked only a golf team—though even this was slated for creation in the spring of the academic year.

Clearly, athletics enjoy a prominent place at Brenau in the twenty-first century. A plethora of competitive—or, in many cases, even nationally-ranked—intercollegiate sport teams, a vigorous intramural program, and a curriculum that emphasizes physical fitness complements the institution’s rich academic programs. This result was not accidental. Rather, it was the product of student negotiation with faculty for athletics at the college for well over a century. In the face of conservative views about the limited physical ability of women long-held by the faculty and administration, students clamored for actual sports instead of mere demure exercises. At first covertly (as they snuck into the campus gym after hours) and, later, overtly, Brenau’s women pursued physical activity. They proved themselves capable of athleticism and brought about the expansion of physical activities at Brenau. While students of different generations pursued negotiations for athletics with the faculty to differing degrees and with differing degrees of success, the general trajectory of athletic development at Brenau was always positive. That

¹³⁷ Hometownhall.com, “Golden Tigers Basketball opens with a Bang,” 13 November 2006; available from <http://www.hometownhall.com/sports/college/golden-tigers-basketball-.shtml>; Internet; accessed 24 August 2007.

¹³⁸ DAKstats.com, “Brenau University NAIA Women’s Basketball 2006 Schedule and Results”; available from http://www.dakstats.com/WebSync/Pages/Team/TeamSchedule.aspx?association=10&sg=WBB&conference=NAIWBB1_SSAC&division=NAIWBB1&team=6877; Internet; accessed 28 August 2007.

¹³⁹ Gordon Leslie, “Bays to Spearhead Brenau's New Women's Basketball Program”; *S.S.A.C. Sports*, 24 August 2005; available from <http://www.ssacsports.com/article/493.php>; Internet; accessed 22 August 2007.

development eventually culminated in recent years with the refinement of an institutional culture that prizes athletics today as much as it avoided athletics a century ago.

CHAPTER SEVEN

STUDENT SPACE AND SECRET SOCIETIES AT BRENAU

History suggests that in the ongoing negotiation between students and faculty to refine the character of Brenau College, the students often came up short. We have seen that students had very little input in the development of the college's curriculum. Likewise, the administration made policy decisions on matters like admissions and integration absent student contributions. Students enjoyed some success in shaping rules of conduct Brenau and in negotiating to bring athletics to campus, but even those developments were closely overseen and controlled by faculty. Ultimately, in the many contests between Brenau students and faculty members to create what each group perceived as an ideal college, students enjoyed the most success in Brenau's secret societies, its sororities and secret student clubs. Because of their clandestine nature, these groups operated largely beyond the reach of the influence of Brenau's faculty and administration and afforded students great autonomy to create within these spheres their preferred version of collegiate space.

Since the institution's inception, several secret societies have existed at Brenau at one time or another. These were particularly popular during the early twentieth century. Such groups have been similar to sororities in that both secret clubs and societies and Brenau's sororities did much behind closed doors. However, Brenau's secret clubs simply never styled themselves as sororities nor did they publicize activities such as formal dances or socials as did

sororities. Put another way, sororities maintained a public face that secret groups and clubs largely eschewed.

In a memorandum dated November 27, 1973, John E. Sites, a former dean at Brenau, addressed the college's secret clubs. He described the Tri-Kappas, the group we have seen that maintained trappings that bore a resemblance to those of the Ku Klux Klan.¹ Sites also indicated that another group called only "G.S.G." operated at Brenau in 1912, but that it left behind only a single strange photograph in the *Bubbles* yearbook to mark its existence.² Sites wrote that in 1914, the "Sphinx" society formed at Brenau. It lasted over ten years, he indicated, and never had more than around a dozen members. Sites wrote, "The dress of the organization was long embroidered white robes with every part of the body covered except for the eyes. They included a long pair of black beads, and if that were not strange enough, it was noted that the song of the group was 'The Old Oaken Bucket.'"³ In 1915, another group, the "Mercurites," came to Brenau and stayed briefly. Then, in 1919 two societies established themselves at Brenau, the "Skulls" and the "Stabs." The *Bubbles* of 1919 indicated that the latter group's motto was a "dark secret" and that their symbol was a knife and skull (see Figure 7.1). A 1919 edition of the *Alchemist* described the Stabs' rivals, the Skulls. It reported that:

A new feature has been added to the several other organizations of social clubs, the name of which is "Skulls." The organizers held their initial meeting Sunday evening....At this meeting, the members decided upon the secret proceedings and mystic operations as are customary to make its followers realize the honor and seriousness of the entrance into such a club. Each "Skull" was sworn in by a flowery oath of allegiance and made to realize more keenly that each Sunday evening at an appointed hour and place, she is required to hang out a smile and banish all thoughts of the outer world from regions supposed to be inhabited by the brain.⁴

¹ Memorandum dated November 27, 1973, written by Brenau Dean John E. Sites, published in Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*, 66.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ "'Skulls' – We Scalp 'Em," *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. 7, no. 3 (8 November 1919), p. 3.

The Skulls ended their meeting by discussing “matters of grave importance” until their hostess served refreshments that consisted of “a lovely ice course.”⁵

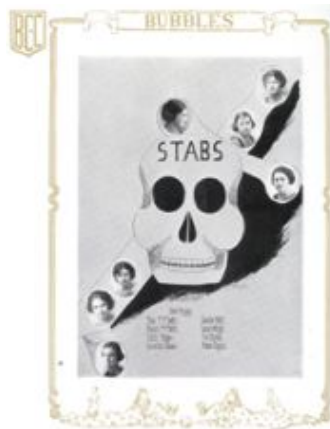


Figure 7.1: The Stabs as Depicted in the *Bubbles*⁶

The college yearbooks revealed that the Skulls, the Stabs, and Brenau’s other secret societies generally shared several common traits. All groups typically adopted particular costumes, created secret passwords and rituals, and had their own songs, flowers, and slogans. These features would have served to foster cohesion within the group while, at the same time, distinguishing the club from outsiders. Additionally, none of Brenau’s various secret clubs had many members. Yearbook photographs consistently revealed just a handful of girls (seldom more than ten) in any club. Smaller numbers would have made for more intimacy, which would also have brought the group closer together. Finally, examining many years worth of the *Bubbles* revealed that secret clubs tended to be very short-lived. Few lasted more than a decade.

⁵ Ibid. Regrettably, there is little secondary literature on colleges’ secret societies that would help to contextualize these organizations and their appearance at this particular point in time.

⁶ Candice Dyer, “Calling Agnes,” *Gainesville Times*, 31 October 2004; available from <http://www.gainesvilletimes.com/news/stories/20041031/localnews/48393.shtml>; Internet; accessed 7 October 2007.

Most came and went in only one or two years, probably because student interests turned to other pastimes.

Only one secret society at Brenau has enjoyed any longevity. According to a description published annually in the *Bubbles* yearbooks during the late 1930s and 1940s, “The H.G.H. Senior Society exists to promote the interests of Brenau College, and to serve the welfare of the college student body as a whole, without regard to personal, social, class or political affiliations.”⁷ Dean Sites wrote that the organization formed in 1935. The initials are believed to stand for “Highest Given Honor,” though nothing available in the Brenau archives can precisely substantiate this. The *Bubbles* declared that, “In May of each year the Society will select seven new members from the Junior class of the college, who in turn will select, at the proper time, their own successors. Thus, it is proposed that the H.G.H. Society will continue to serve the college so long as the college shall endure.”⁸

Only Brenau’s best could earn membership in H.G.H. The *Bubbles* reported that:

Election to membership in H.G.H. is based on merit and merit alone. Everything a student does from her entrance into the college, to serve the college, in the class room, in the debate forum, on the concert stage, in dramatic productions, in contributing to and administering college publications, in the Y. W. C. A., in athletics, or any other constructive curricula or extra curricula activity, will bring her that much nearer the goal of H.G.H.⁹

Dean Sites indicated that initiates were to be “the most outstanding seven members of the Junior Class [sic]” and that “membership in the Society has traditionally been the highest honor the school can offer, as it gives recognition to the achievements of the previous three years of the student’s college life.”¹⁰ Merit alone determined selection. The *Bubbles* asserted that, “Merit is

⁷ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1945), n.p.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Memorandum dated November 27, 1973, written by Brenau Dean John E. Sites, published in Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*, 68.

so emphasized that a girl may secure election if she deserves it, even if she has personal enemies in the Society” and that “neither politics nor fraternal considerations play any part in the election of H.G.H.”¹¹ Election to the group was a stamp that “indicates character and achievement” and girls were coveted who “are leaders in large public affairs, who are marked by such qualities as courage, generosity, kindness and high moral character.”¹² According to the *Bubbles*, the society would admit “only students whose loyalty to Brenau College is proved and beyond question.”¹³ Dean Sites reiterated this point and wrote that, “It was said of this group, in the time of their founding, that no service, task, or calling would be too great nor too demanding for the members of this group to perform.”¹⁴

Specifically what the group has done for Brenau is unknown since H.G.H. operates mostly in secret. One former Brenau student described the slim extent to which the society operated in public. She wrote:

There is one secret society at Brenau University, and it’s highly regarded on campus and taken very serious [sic]. They’re called “Horses” – it’s seven women in the senior class who are without a doubt dedicated to Brenau. Nobody knows what they do (though we know that they somehow “contribute” to the campus and we know who they are because they wear circular pins...and if you yell out “HORSE!” they have to stop whatever they’re doing and bow their heads for seven seconds, etc.), but it’s a huge thing here....When they tap their seven “ponies” for the next year, everybody waits in the cold to see it, they bless the houses at the beginning of each year, etc.¹⁵

The student concluded by saying that H.G.H. did “have a skull and bones on their pins” and that “in their picture in the yearbook (where they’re dressed in their black robes, sitting on the steps

¹¹ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1945), n.p.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Memorandum dated November 27, 1973, written by Brenau Dean John E. Sites, published in Rigney, *Brenau College 1878-1978*, 68.

¹⁵ GreekChat.com, “Secret Societies” Forum; available from <http://www.greekchat.com/gcforums/archive/index.php/t-13261.html>; Internet; accessed 18 May 2008.

of Bailey [Hall] facing left...), they have a skull and bones banner in front of them.”¹⁶

Examining several editions of the *Bubbles* revealed that the group’s yearbook portrait is indeed consistently as the student described from year to year. Other photographs reveal that at initiation, the members apply what appears to be electrical tape to their faces, forming a capital letter “H” on each cheek and a capital letter “G” on the forehead (See Figure 7.2).



Figure 7.2: Initiation into the H.G.H. Society¹⁷

Additionally, for the *Bubbles*, the seven members of the group are always photographed at night sitting in a lambda shape facing to their right on the steps of Bailey Hall. Regarding the equine association with the society, it is not clear from the archives why society members are called “horses.” Perhaps the inductees are regarded as the “workhorses” of the college. We can only speculate.

What is clear about H.G.H. and Brenau’s other secret societies is that they operated largely beyond the reach of the college faculty and administration in many respects. To borrow a

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Image from Webshots.com; available from <http://good-times.webshots.com/album/131004345TtkTrc>; Internet; accessed 18 May 2008.

reference from Sherlock Holmes, this is best evidenced by the dog that did not bark. There is nothing in the Brenau archives that suggests that Brenau's governors exercised much control at all over these secretive groups. While various pieces of correspondence or entries in the faculty meeting minutes books indicated that Brenau's faculty and administration had power over other groups on campus, nothing exists to suggest that secret societies were similarly controlled.

Secret groups like H.G.H. have not been the only student organizations at Brenau to operate beyond the reach of the faculty. Social sororities have also long existed at Brenau and have, for the most part, operated independently from the college's faculty and administration. The establishment of sororities at Brenau College continued a centuries-old tradition of fraternity life in America. Student Greek-letter societies had existed in the country since the founding of Phi Beta Kappa at the College of William and Mary in 1776.¹⁸ However, prior to the mid-nineteenth century, such societies existed for and admitted only men. Then, in 1851 and 1852, women at Georgia's Wesleyan Female College in Macon founded Alpha Delta Pi and Phi Mu from two existing literary societies and, in so doing, gave birth to women's sororities.¹⁹

In her book *The Education of the Southern Belle*, Christie Anne Farnham described the origin of sororities at early southern women's colleges. Farnham analyzed student letters and journals and determined that many girls at antebellum women's colleges in the South were profoundly homesick. In the absence of relatives and loved ones from back home, students forged very close ties of friendship with schoolmates. Opportunities to do this abounded since girls actually socialized a great deal at their colleges. Farnham posited that as groups of girls formed networked friendships, cliques emerged at their colleges as girls were included and

¹⁸ For more information about college fraternities and sororities, see Jack L. Anson and Robert F. Marchesani, eds., *Baird's Manual of American College Fraternities* (Menasha, WI: G. Banta Co., 1991).

¹⁹ Wesleyan College, "History of the College"; available from <http://www.wesleyancollege.edu/About/HistoryoftheCollege/tabid/134/Default.aspx>; Internet; accessed 30 June 2008.

excluded by their peer groups. Farnham asserted that, “Through these practices of inclusion and exclusion, young women constructed their position in the social world of the school.”²⁰

Literary clubs modeled after those at men’s colleges grew out of this process of construction. Typically, southern women’s colleges had two such societies that would hold debates (or at least lively conversations) with each other. Over time, these clubs often developed into secret societies and adopted Greek letters. These early societies competed fiercely for new members, at times literally rushing down to the train station to begin combing through the ranks of new students for suitable recruits. Farnham revealed that social background and personality mattered more in selection for membership to these nascent sororities than anything else, which suited the class-conscious antebellum South perfectly. She concluded, “It is not surprising that the first sorority would begin in the slave South, where hierarchy was an integral part of the social fabric and distancing oneself from social inferiors was an imperative of the lady of chivalry.”²¹

Historian Diana Turk picked up about where Farnham left off in examining sororities in her book entitled *Bound by a Mighty Vow: Sisterhood and Women's Fraternities, 1870-1920*. She used the Kappa Alpha Theta sorority as a case study for her analysis, which was not confined solely to the South. Turk argued that the first women to attend college, who were also the founders of the first sororities in the 1800s, were out to prove themselves to be the equals of men. Taking men’s fraternities as their model, sorority founders created secret rules and rituals for their groups. These women emphasized intellectual achievement, chose careers over marriage, and asserted a new role for their gender, one that stretched beyond “the old

²⁰ Farnham, *Education of the Southern Belle*, 148.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 154.

occupations of home-making and teaching.”²² In so doing, Turk claimed that early sororities, “effectively redefined for themselves the feminine ideal, broadening it to include intellectual capacity along with the more socially accepted traits of morality and social grace.”²³

The second generation of sorority women, Turk wrote, was, by contrast, already accepted on college campuses. Having nothing to prove academically, these women focused on the social aspects of Greek life and concentrated on such things as “banquets, spreads, and cozies.”²⁴

Sorority membership grew rapidly and sororities became image conscious, national organizations. Also, because sorority women were mostly white, middle-class, and Protestant, they felt threatened by “others,” and so discriminated against Jews, Catholics, and blacks seeking membership. Resenting Greek “practices of exclusivity and elitism,” many colleges banned sororities.²⁵ Sororities responded by trying to improve their image and to come across as being responsible, scholarly groups. Turk asserted that the campaign often worked and gained wider acceptance for sororities. By the 1920s, sororities were “permanent features of American campus life.”²⁶ They were likewise permanent features at Brenau.

The first widespread public mention of sororities at Brenau came in 1904, when the “Brenau Notes” section of the *Atlanta Constitution* related, “It is rumored that one or two well-known Sororities are to organize chapters here during the present term.”²⁷ The first mention of a Greek organization by name in the paper came a half a year later when the *Constitution* reported that, “The Misses Knight entertained the Phi Mu Gamma Sorority Friday evening.”²⁸ The

²² Diana B. Turk, *Bound by a Mighty Vow: Sisterhood and Women's Fraternities, 1870-1920* (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2004), 23.

²³ *Ibid.*, 35.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 48.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 161.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁷ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 9 October 1904, sec. C, p. 6.

²⁸ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 7 May 1905, sec. D, p. 8.

“Notes” would continue to mention Brenau “sorority” and “fraternity” (the terms were used interchangeably) happenings for years.

In fact, Greek societies had apparently existed at Brenau for some time prior to their making the society pages. In 1932, Brenau’s annual student yearbook, the *Bubbles*, related the history of the Greek system at Brenau in the following passage:

The early beginning of the sorority movement on the campus of Brenau may be seen as far back as 1900. In this year appeared the first organization bearing the Greek letter[s, the] Phi Gamma Alpha Club—which was a “society for the advancement of the mathematical science.”

Phi Mu Gamma was organized in 1902. This was the first sorority on the campus. In 1903 appeared the Alpha Beta Tau which on April 14, 1910 was granted the charter of Alpha Delta Pi. This sorority was the first A. national sorority to appear on the campus. Beta Sigma Omicron appeared in 1907 and in 1909 came Alpha Sigma Alpha. In 1914 these two joined forces with members of Phi Mu Gamma and were granted the charter of Delta Delta Delta. The other members of Phi Mu Gamma preferred to retain their status as a B. national. Pi Gamma Theta appeared in 1907 and on January 1, 1911 became Zeta Tau Alpha. In 1908 the Greeks were joined by the Kappa Alpha Phis and in 1910 by the Sigma Iota Chis. These two sororities were B. nationals and as such gave away to the A. national which were [sic] being installed. These were disbanded in the year 1913 and their members became affiliated with the other groups on the campus. On October 8, 1910 Phi Mu was established through the colonization of several Phi Mus from their Alpha chapter of Wesleyan college. In 1910 was also the beginning of Alpha Chi Omega as the local Eta Upsilon Gamma. It was granted the charter of that national on November 24, 1911. In 1913 appeared Nu Sigma which became in the same year Alpha Gamma Delta. In 1918 was organized the local of Lambda Beta Psi which in 1921 became the Theta Upsilon sorority of today. Next came Beta Beta whose petition for Delta Zeta was granted on May 13, 1924. Delta Phi Epsilon joined the Greeks on November 28, 1926. In 1926 appeared the local Pi Gamma Theta which developed into Alpha Xi Delta, May 1927. The Athenians were further augmented by the Delta Phi Sigmas who were petitioning Alpha Delta Theta. Their petition was granted in May of 1929.²⁹

²⁹ *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau University, 1932), 145. While the months and years of the founding dates of all of the sorority chapters at Brenau are not in dispute, some conflicting information exists regarding the precise days upon which some chapters were founded. For example, the national organization Web site for Zeta Tau Alpha (<http://www.zetataualpha.org/default.aspx?action=Content&ContentId=43>; Internet; accessed 18 May 2008) lists January 14, 1911, as the founding date for the Brenau chapter and not January 1 as the *Bubbles* proclaimed.

Size of membership and national scope of presence apparently distinguished an “A” national sorority from a “B” national. The groups the *Bubbles* identified as “A” level had several chapters spread throughout the nation by the early twentieth century; the “B” level groups had expanded not nearly so far.³⁰

All in all, by the 1930s, Brenau claimed eleven sororities. Eight of these were or would become widespread, national organizations and six of these would go on to continually exist at Brenau into the twenty-first century. These six were Alpha Chi Omega, Alpha Delta Pi, Alpha Gamma Delta, Delta Delta Delta, Phi Mu, and Zeta Tau Alpha. Brenau’s sororities have always been very active within their respective national organizations and Brenau has for many years hosted large meetings of the regional and national organizations of some of the sororities.³¹ The other three national sorority organizations that established chapters at Brenau were Delta Zeta, Chi Omega, and Alpha Xi Delta. Delta Zeta folded at Brenau during the 1950s but was revived in 1962. That same year, Chi Omega established a chapter at Brenau. Delta Zeta went on to fold again at Brenau in 1978. Likewise, Chi Omega shut down its Brenau chapter in 2003. Brenau’s chapter of Alpha Xi Delta, today a large national organization, had folded by 1941. Brenau’s other sororities (such as Theta Upsilon and Delta Phi Epsilon) were relatively short-lived, local organizations. These local sorority chapters upon occasion sought out national chapters to affiliate with, as the passage from the *Bubbles* indicated and as was the case in 1910 when the “Brenau Notes” reported that, “The Kappa Alpha Phi Sorority has nationalized and now affiliates with the Sigma Iota Chi.”³² Phi Mu came to Brenau in the same way in 1910 when the Wesleyan sisters affiliated with a local sorority chapter.³³ Zeta Tau Alpha followed suit in 1911.³⁴ All in

³⁰ See Anson and Marchesani, eds., *Baird’s Manual*, for information about the spread of sororities.

³¹ The earliest of these dates as far back as 1910. “To Sorority Delegates,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 4 June 1910, p. 8.

³² “Many Visitors at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 20 May 1910, p. 6.

³³ “Phi Mu at Brenau,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 12 October 1910, sec. B, p. 6.

all, throughout its history, Brenau has possessed a remarkable number of sororities for an institution of its modest size and all-female character. Indeed, only two other all-women's colleges (Spelman College in Atlanta and Stephens College in Columbia, Missouri) have chapters of nationally recognized sororities.

Exactly why Brenau, as a small women's college, has such a vibrant Greek life is a matter of conjecture. Mabel Newcomer, in *A Century of Higher Education for American Women*, concluded that schools like Brenau should not have needed sororities. She wrote that, "The women's colleges more often than the others [coeducational colleges] have managed without sororities or other societies with limited memberships."³⁵ She attributed this to two things. First was the "very adequate dormitory facilities" of women's colleges.³⁶ Sororities popped up at co-educational campuses, Newcomer claimed, to satisfy housing needs of female students when colleges failed to offer women room and board options. Secondly, Newcomer claimed that sororities often existed to confer social prestige on members and that this was simply not needed at women's colleges because merely attending these colleges conferred, by itself, all the social prestige a girl could need.³⁷

Regarding Brenau, Newcomer was wrong on both accounts. During the early twentieth century (the period when Brenau girls founded most of their sororities), housing at Brenau was frequently somewhat tight. Multiple promotional materials, advertisements, and articles about Brenau in early editions of the *Atlanta Constitution* constantly reiterated the point that Brenau was experiencing explosive growth and operating at or very near capacity. These materials also intimated that dormitory space was precious. In addition, it is no coincidence that all of Brenau's

³⁴ "Zeta Tau Alpha Enters Brenau," *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 January 1911, sec. A, p. 5.

³⁵ Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women*, 123.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 124.

³⁷ Newcomer, *A Century of Higher Education for American Women*.

sororities very quickly acquired a chapter house or bungalow after organizing. This sorority housing would have been welcomed by Brenau's administration to ease pressure on the college and so sororities themselves would have been welcomed at Brenau.³⁸

Just as Brenau would have welcomed sororities because of housing considerations, students at Brenau and other women's colleges would have welcomed the coming of sororities for social reasons. Newcomer contended that sororities did not flourish at schools like Brenau because students at such places were not concerned with getting more social prestige than that they got simply by attending their well-respected schools. However, historians researching and writing after Newcomer have debunked this explanation of why sororities did not emerge at women's colleges. These historians have learned that social cliques and concern over family background and social status *did* strongly exist at women's colleges. From reading women's college student literature of the time, Helen Horowitz concluded that students in the northeastern women's colleges "divided themselves into sets, or cliques, which formed a hierarchical scale."³⁹ Pretty, popular girls from wealthy families, who had the right clothes, friends, and contacts, were on top and referred to as "swells." The girls who were different, quiet, too studious, and from modest economic backgrounds were on the bottom. In between were "all-around girls," often direct and forceful women, fiercely loyal to their classes and colleges, who "dominated campus organizations" by holding meetings, handling club money, and the like.⁴⁰ The swells and all-around girls at these schools probably would not at all have minded if additional organizations (like sororities) had existed to help sort-out social position or to further college ends.

³⁸ Examining several early editions of the *Bubbles* revealed that sororities all had houses and that they had obtained them very soon after coming into existence at Brenau.

³⁹ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 152.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 156.

However, administrative officials at these and other women's institutions apparently did mind. Barbara Miller Solomon wrote that, "Some educators and students opposed sororities because their presence promoted exclusivity."⁴¹ Amy Thompson McCandless observed that, "Despite the idealism expressed in sorority mottos, constitutions, and oaths, these organizations were often viewed suspiciously by the uninitiated. In the early decades of the twentieth century, many public colleges in the South opposed the introduction of exclusive organizations of any sort."⁴² Public colleges were not alone in their disdain for Greek societies. McCandless continued, writing that, "Antifraternity feeling also led to the banning of sororities at private institutions" in the South.⁴³ Sweet Briar College, Hollins College, Salem College, and even Wesleyan itself, the mother of the first collegiate Greek-letter organizations for women, banned sororities for life.⁴⁴

Indeed, at women's colleges across the country, officials eliminated existing sororities and prevented new sororities from colonizing in an effort to prevent Greek-fostered exclusivity from developing on campuses. The administration at Brenau also discouraged exclusivity. From early-on, Brenau's administration claimed that "a perfectly democratic spirit prevails in the institution."⁴⁵ College rules that prohibited practices like extravagant dress existed at Brenau since its inception and were meant to foster this "democratic spirit."

However, try as they might, Brenau officials could not eliminate social distinctiveness entirely from their institution. Instead, they had to acknowledge that the college was "fortunate in having a large patronage among the wealthier classes of the South, who demand for their

⁴¹ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 107.

⁴² McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 142.

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Catalog* (1910), 76.

daughters the conveniences of life to which they have been accustomed at home.”⁴⁶ Such girls as these would have been akin to the “swells” of the New England women’s colleges. It is probable that they would not have objected to the presence of sororities at Brenau since they would have been among the most coveted members of such groups. In the running negotiation with students over the character of the college, Brenau officials ultimately assented to the existence of sororities on campus in part out of deference to these student attitudes.⁴⁷

But sororities did not merely exist at Brenau. Rather, they thrived and enjoyed great acceptance on campus. Indeed, an article that appeared in the *Atlanta Constitution* declared that, “At Brenau the sorority life has fine expression.”⁴⁸ The article went on to tell a story that typified the value of sorority life on the campus. It read:

Of the students in the completion of their sorority houses, the story is told that last year a member of the faculty noticed a young woman washing windows in the little club house and doing other work not generally pursued by a girl of college age. “Why, my dear,” she was asked, “why are you doing that?”

“Because we must save every cent to fix up our little home, and we have each of us resolved to do our part of the housework.”

These sorority club houses stand as an expression of cooperation. The student members of the chapter reside in them, and each house is presided over by a member of the faculty. Through these sororities, a social system along the most approved plan is established and the spirit of it lives with the students after they leave school. At present there are chapter houses representing the Phi Mu Gamma, the Sigma Phi Epsilon [sic], the Alpha Beta Tau, the Beta Sigma Omicron, added to the beauty of Brenau college, Gainesville.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Some evidence suggests that it was this wealthier class of girls that joined sororities at Brenau. In an interview about life at Brenau in the late 1920s, Mrs. Lil Robinson indicated that, “The day students were not included in a whole lot of activities. If they were included they were never elected to an office that I remember. ... Of course, if you were in a sorority you did enjoy activities there and you were close enough to take part. But so many of the town girls were not in sororities.” Typed transcript of an interview with Mrs. Lil Robinson and Mrs. Mary Foote Paris conducted by Andrea Davis on February 15, 1995, p. 2. Available in Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Since “town girls” did not join, sororities must have been made up mostly of out-of-town girls. These girls would probably have come from wealthier families since maintaining a daughter at an out-of-town college would have been expensive and beyond the reach of many families.

⁴⁸ “A Word About the Social Organization,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 2 August 1908, sec. A, p. 5.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

The article went on to say that, “Besides the sororities, there are literary, dramatic and social organizations of the lighter vein, while in both colleges, the one in Gainesville and in Eufaula, Alabama [a short-lived branch campus of Brenau] there are well organized departments of the Young Women’s Christian association.”⁵⁰ However, the article clearly sought to convey the message that Brenau valued sororities. Indeed, the college actively encouraged their establishment and growth as indicated by a line in the 1910 catalog that read, “Any group of students who desire to do so may organize themselves into a sorority.”⁵¹ In advertising, as well, Brenau’s administration supported its sororities. One promotional piece in the *Atlanta Constitution* read:

One of the most modern essentials to the happiness of the school girl these days is the sorority. There are several of the best known national sororities at Brenau. Chapter houses, beautifully furnished, are provided, in which these sororities can give entertainments, etc.⁵²

Brenau proactively supported sororities at a time when other southern women’s colleges were going so far as to outright outlaw them.

Why the disparity? McCandless wrote that students and administrators at larger schools valued sororities because they “promoted a sense of sisterhood and recalled the family life that students left behind” when they left home to attend college.⁵³ This might have been true at Brenau as well, despite its more modest size, because Brenau students were often very far from home. In 1907, for example, the “Brenau Notes” column mentioned that Brenau claimed students from as far away as Iowa and Massachusetts. The college boasted, “While there are some state institutions that have a larger attendance than Brenau, there is no institution in this

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ *Catalog* (1910), 65.

⁵² Display Advertisement—No Title, *Atlanta Constitution*, 15 December 1912, sec. A, p. 13.

⁵³ McCandless, *Past in the Present*, 143.

section, at least, that draws its patronage from such a wide area.”⁵⁴ Presumably, some of these girls who were very far from home would have been unable to see their families with any frequency owing to distance and so could have become very homesick. Sorority ties might have substituted for family ties to salve this homesickness and, in so doing, have earned the respect of the administration.

Besides helping girls develop friendships, the administration believed that the sororities taught lessons of responsibility. Certainly, college officials would have been impressed by the sorority women above who had “resolved to do our part of the housework” on the little cottage they acquired. But sorority houses required members to do more than just housework. One edition of the “Brenau Notes” related:

The members of the Beta Sigma Omicron Society of Brenau have just completed what is probably the first clubhouse to be built by the students of any southern college for girls. The pretty little cottage has just been completed and when the grounds around it have been beautified, it will be one of the most attractive spots connected with Brenau Conservatory. The girls raised the money themselves for this building and have superintended its construction. It is beautifully furnished, and the members of the society are exceedingly proud of their new home.⁵⁵

The sisters of BSO had their sorority experience to thank for learning lessons in nothing less than finance and building construction. College officials also appreciated how the sororities could develop leadership capabilities in girls, a view expressed in the 1910 college catalog.⁵⁶ In addition, some sororities went so far as to donate money to Brenau. For example, the “Phi Mu Gamma society (Gamma chapter at Brenau)” donated an annual scholarship to Brenau on behalf of the Atlanta Woman’s Club.⁵⁷ Finally, sororities supported good scholarship among their

⁵⁴ “Brenau Opens Soon,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 7 September 1907, p. 12.

⁵⁵ “Pretty Club House Built by Brenau College Girls,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 19 April 1908, sec. A, p. 7.

⁵⁶ *Catalog* (1910), 65.

⁵⁷ “Members of Brenau Sorority to Give Annual Scholarship,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 21 March 1909, p. 10.

members. Several years of the Brenau student handbooks indicated that girls had to maintain good grades to live in a sorority house or to participate in rush.

Brenau's administrators may also have appreciated the chance to use the sororities for their own ends in their negotiations with students. Solomon wrote that, "Administrators, early wary of the political power of these societies as a competing authority, at first tried to halt their development. In time, though, they found it useful to enlist sorority leaders along with those of student government, to control social behavior on campus."⁵⁸ Early editions of Brenau's yearbook, the *Bubbles*, did very often depict the leaders in sororities occupying other influential positions in organizations on campus. By enlisting the support of those leaders, Brenau administrators would have gained powerful allies in implementing social control on campus. Officials actually acknowledged this outright by asserting that "These organizations...under wise control can be made helpful in the disciplinary management of the institution."⁵⁹

Later in the twentieth century, Brenau's administrators expressed other reasons for appreciating the sororities. In an address given to the Brenau College Board of Trustees in 1964, President Josiah Crudup related that, "Through our plan of seeking cooperation and financial support from national sororities, we have received financial aid from Chi Omega, Tri Delta, Phi Mu and Delta Zeta during the past twelve months."⁶⁰ In other words, Brenau liked sororities because it received funds from the national sorority organizations.

In a similar address given two years before, Dr. Crudup explained the arrangement that Brenau enjoyed with its sororities. He began by telling the Board of Brenau's long Greek history and of its unique relationship with sororities regarding housing. Crudup said:

⁵⁸ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 107.

⁵⁹ *Catalog* (1910), 65.

⁶⁰ Crudup, "Report to the Board (May 29, 1964)," p. 4.

One characteristic which makes Brenau College rather distinctive among the small women's colleges of America is the presence of national sororities on our campus. This has been a fact existing since the past century and some of the oldest sorority chapters in America are located on this college campus. The fact that Brenau owns and controls all of the sorority houses at Brenau College makes our situation even more unusual. The sorority house at Brenau College have the same status as dormitories and they are owned by the College, but we give the right of occupancy only to the sorority members of each particular sorority.⁶¹

Brenau benefited greatly from this arrangement. It essentially got to house many students for

half-price. Crudup continued:

The administrative attitude at Brenau College has been that we will match funds with national sororities in making such improvements and additions to their houses as they desire. Brenau College then gives to that particular sorority the right of occupancy of that building as long as the chapter exists in good standing. All pay the same rate of board and room whether living in dormitories or sorority houses. In recent years, much improvement has been made in sorority houses here on this campus by working out plans with sorority national headquarters to match money with the College in financing these improvements.⁶²

Crudup provided an example of this arrangement in action. He told the Trustees:

Recently, Delta Zeta Sorority has returned to the campus under this kind of plan and occupies the new building at 214 Prior Street. This sorority house has come into existence through a gift from the Citizens Bank and a contribution from Delta Zeta National headquarters. This brings the total to seven national sororities on campus now.⁶³

This arrangement attracted other comers as well and Dr. Crudup indicated that Brenau had

“turned to these other sources of financial aid in making progress.”⁶⁴ Crudup related that, “This

spring Brenau College has been approached by two other sororities wishing to establish chapters

on this campus. These sororities are Sigma Kappa and Chi Omega, who have promised to

contribute \$10,000 each to the establishment of sorority houses for their chapters here.”⁶⁵ In

1965, Dr. Crudup indicated to the Trustees that Brenau had received an “Alpha Delta Pi gift

⁶¹ Crudup, “Report to the Board (June 1, 1962),” p. 10.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

(pledge) of 10,000.00” to apply toward the renovations of its sorority house on Brenau’s campus.⁶⁶ Dr. Crudup reported that, “Through cooperation with our Alpha Delta Pi National, plans have been made to add a wing onto the west side of [the] Alpha Delta Pi House which will provide for four additional bedrooms, a communal bathroom, an additional club room, a terrace and a new front porch. These plans also provide for the renovation of all old bathrooms into modern design with tile floors and walls.”⁶⁷ Dr. Crudup indicated that the projected cost of the expansion and renovation would be \$42,560.00—a hefty figure for the day—and intimated that the sorority’s support was much appreciated.⁶⁸

Despite the advantages the presence of the sororities at the college conferred upon Brenau, there were disadvantages as well. For example, Brenau’s experience indicates that institutional fears about sororities being too exclusive may have been well-founded. In examining the experience of women students at college, Solomon observed that, “Some students discovered that whatever talents or skills they possessed, their religious, ethnic, or racial identities either kept them on the fringes or barred them from particular activities.”⁶⁹ At Brenau, religion was one such bar to entry to a sorority for a very long time.

No one less than Brenau’s president substantiated this. In 1964, Dr. Crudup received a letter from a Mrs. Doris D. Smith, who was a member of the Brenau class of 1963. Mrs. Smith wrote to Dr. Crudup to inquire about whether or not a young Jewish friend of hers and a prospective Brenau student, Freda Rosner, might be able to join a sorority. Dr. Crudup replied:

I have been pleased to receive your letter today letting me know ...about Freda Rosner who will enroll in Brenau College this fall and asking me to give you information concerning the eligibility of Jewish girls for sorority membership here on the campus.

⁶⁶ Crudup, “Report to the Board (June 4, 1965),” p. 7.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ Solomon, *In the Company of Educated Women*, 107.

I wish it were possible for me to give you accurate information concerning this matter, but this is one phase of sorority life in which I do not have accurate information. Since the rules and rituals of the sororities are closely held secrets within the sorority and these secrets seem to vary from one sorority to another, this information is not available. However, it has been my observation that most of the sororities do not extend bids to Jewish girls, though they seem to extend a very warm friendship, though not membership, as in the case of Myrna Sheftal.

About 18 years ago, I recall a very fine Jewish girl from Texas, Lita Bernstein, who was very popular and elected Vice President of the Student Government Association, but she was not a member of one of the sororities on the campus.⁷⁰

Dr. Crudup closed his letter by writing, "I believe it would be of doubtful value and even hurtful to Freda if she receives encouragement with the idea that she will receive a bid from a sorority. I believe it will be much more helpful to point out to her that about half of the students do not join sororities and find a very happy life among many friends here on the campus."⁷¹

Up until the last decades of the twentieth century, Brenau's sororities were Christian (indeed, mostly protestant) bastions. They were also all white. As an institution, Brenau did not racially integrate until the mid-1970s. Roughly two more decades would pass before even a single African-American woman is depicted by the *Bubbles* as being a member of any national Panhellenic sorority. In the 1994 edition of the yearbook, a photograph shows that an African American young woman was a member of the Alpha Gamma Delta sorority.⁷² Even the passing of another decade would not substantially integrate Brenau's sororities. By 2006, only one other sorority (Alpha Chi Omega) had apparently extended membership to a black woman. The rest of

⁷⁰ Letter to Mrs. Doris D. Smith, August 29, 1964 from Josiah Crudup. Dr. Crudup Files, Box 29 of 40, Folder 4, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia. Mrs. Smith was a member of the class of 1963 who wrote to Dr. Crudup on this matter. She referenced Myrna Sheftal: "I have told Freda that if she makes herself desirable that perhaps she can at least be socially affiliated like Myrna Sheftal was in ZTA."

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Brenau University, *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA; Brenau College, 1994), 99.

Brenau's older sororities have always been all-white, despite the fact that African American students have comprised about 25% of Brenau's student body for over a decade.

Perhaps because of this, black students at Brenau have, over time, sought to form their own Greek organizations. Indeed, the 1980 edition of the *Bubbles* revealed that the college's African American women sought to forge ties of sisterhood almost as soon as Brenau integrated. The yearbook indicated that four young black women were members of Alpha Psi Theta, "a colony struggling to become national" that "was started in November of 1977."⁷³ Despite these early efforts, it would not be until 1994 that an historically black sorority finally came to campus. In May of that year, a chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority came on-line at Brenau.⁷⁴ Six years later, students established the Tau Eta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. at Brenau.⁷⁵ These organizations remain small at Brenau as compared to other sororities, though they do provide a strong sense of sisterhood among minority students.

Brenau's sororities also apparently discriminated at one time for more esoteric reasons. Evidently, marriage was a bar to sorority membership to such an extent that married women at Brenau who desired to go Greek formed their own sorority. The 1974 – 1975 student handbook read, "Mu Rho Sigma, a sorority for women who are married or have been married, was founded at Brenau in May of 1974."⁷⁶ Very little information exists about the group and it was not mentioned anywhere on the college Web site as of July, 2007. However, the organization was apparently still active on campus as late as 1985, according to the Brenau College *Student Handbook* published for that year.

⁷³ Brenau University, *Bubbles* (Gainesville, GA; Brenau College, 1980), 100.

⁷⁴ The chapter would go on to become inactive during the 2002-2003 school year, but was revived in the following year. Brenau University, "Rho Eta History"; available from <http://studentdevelopment.brenau.edu/greek/AKA/RhoEtaHistory.htm>; Internet; accessed 19 May 2008.

⁷⁵ Brenau University, "Delta Sigma Theta Sorority (Brenau Chapter)"; available from <http://studentdevelopment.brenau.edu/greek/DST/AboutDST.htm>; Internet; accessed 19 May 2008.

⁷⁶ *Handbook* (1974), 70.

Another unusual factor Brenau sororities apparently considered for a time when selecting members was smoking preference. A letter sent by an anonymous “Brenau Alumna” to President Crudup in 1964 called his attention to “the serious problem of the smoking of cigarettes at the college” and indicated that:

At present, for a Brenau girl to be considered at all by any of the sororities for membership she must smoke, or be willing to start smoking in order to be “one of the girls.”⁷⁷

Nothing suggests that Dr. Crudup pursued the matter, but it is interesting that a young woman went to the trouble to raise the issue at all.

The women who were granted entry into a Brenau sorority comprised a membership that has varied in number over time. Sorority membership in the early 1900s was relatively small. College yearbook photographic spreads seldom depicted more than ten or twelve girls in any chapter. By the 1930s, membership had grown. The 1932 *Bubbles* revealed that all the social sororities had relatively robust memberships, the smallest being Theta Upsilon and Alpha Chi Omega with 18 and 17 members, respectively. At the same time, Alpha Delta Pi had upwards of 30 young ladies as sisters. All had well-appointed residential chapter houses or club houses that were used for meetings. These were formerly private residences adjacent to campus.

By the 1960s, thirty (or thereabouts) women per chapter was the norm and the chapters occupied dorm-like residences on campus. This make-up would persist into the twenty-first century. At any given time since about the 1930s, roughly one-third to as much as one-half of Brenau’s student body went Greek. A survey of one-hundred years of the *Bubbles* indicated that Brenau’s sororities enjoyed their most robust periods in terms of membership in the late 1950s and early 1960s and again in the early 1980s. By contrast, membership dipped somewhat in the

⁷⁷ Letter written anonymously by a “Brenau Alumna” dated June 18, 1964 to Dr. Josiah Crudup, President. Dr. Crudup Files, Box 29 of 40, Folder 4, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

late 1960s and again slightly in recent years. Currently, about 30% of Brenau women are Greek.⁷⁸ Given that Brenau's sororities present attractive social and housing options to students, it is likely that Brenau's Greek system will remain vibrant for some time to come.

Despite this vibrancy, there have been and are alternatives to going Greek at Brenau. By 1965, Brenau women who were not Greek had the opportunity to join the "Independents Organization." Regarding this group, the 1974-1975 *Student Handbook* said simply that, "Any student who lives on campus, is not a sorority member, and who wishes to support the activities of the Independents Organization shall be considered a member of the organization."⁷⁹ Language in the 1984 – 1985 *Handbook* might seem to be actually reactive against the Greek system at the college. Part of the organization's purpose was, "to encourage members' individualism as well as their active participation in campus and community events."⁸⁰ Moreover, the *Handbook* indicated that "During the week of Rush, the Brenau Independents Organization representatives shall be available to confer with incoming students."⁸¹ Photographs of this group in the *Bubbles* in the 1970s did, indeed, present a stark contrast to group pictures of Brenau's sororities. Several African American women and a blind young woman were pictured as being members of the B.I.O., which contrasted starkly against the college's all-white sorority group photographs.

Since the founding of sororities at the college, members of Brenau's Greek system have been very active in many respects. In the early 1900s, many of the activities of the sororities were considered newsworthy and were included in the "Brenau Notes" section of the *Atlanta*

⁷⁸ GA College 411.com, "Brenau University-Women's College profile"; available from http://www.gacollege411.org/campustour/undergraduate/521/Brenau_University_Womens_College/Brenau_University_Womens_College5.html; Internet; accessed 19 May 2008.

⁷⁹ *Handbook* (1974), 66.

⁸⁰ *Handbook* (1984), 73.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

Constitution. One edition of the “Notes” indicated that, “The Phi Mu Gamma Sorority entertained the Alpha Beta Taus Saturday evening. The hall was beautifully decorated with palms and cut flowers. A delicious salad course...was served.”⁸² This same edition of the “Notes” also mentioned another here-to-fore unpublished Greek group in the *Constitution*, the Sigma Phi Epsilons, who had just elected new officers.⁸³ By February, 1906, Brenau had another Greek sorority (Sigma Theta Phi) on campus, which was actively reported on.⁸⁴ Beginning in about 1910, virtually all of the “Brenau Notes” become dominated by information regarding the sororities as parties given by the Greeks were referred to, their guests were acknowledged, etc.

Besides entertaining others, Brenau’s early sororities were apparently themselves entertained upon occasion. Curiously, like the “Misses Knight” mentioned above, genuine sisters or pairs of girls often seemed to be entertaining sorority sisters. The “Brenau Notes” reported in one instance that, “Misses Lucy and Bessie Parker entertained the Sigma Phi Epsilon sorority on Monday afternoon with a tallyho ride. Their souvenirs were unique, being substantial lunch baskets with tin cups tied to them with a bow of red and white ribbon. The Misses Parker filled them with picnic dainties.”⁸⁵ A subsequent edition of the “Brenau Notes” revealed that “Miss Villa Rhodes and Miss Bessie Burnett entertained the Sigma Theta Phi’s” with another tally-ho party only a few weeks later.⁸⁶ (A “tally-ho ride,” incidentally, was essentially an opportunity for several young women to don their finest clothes and be ridden around town in an opulently decorated carriage.) It appears that entertaining a sorority at functions like these might have served as a segue way to becoming a member of that sorority. The practice did not persist

⁸² “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 16 October 1905, p. 5.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 11 February 1906, sec. D, p. 8.

⁸⁵ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 18 March 1906, sec. B, p. 5.

⁸⁶ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 8 April 1906, sec. D, p. 9.

much into the 1900s, however. Only a few years into the twentieth century, the size of Brenau's sorority chapters had grown too large to make entertaining in this fashion feasible.

Other than students did the entertaining as well. Faculty were associated with the early sororities at Brenau, either as entertainers at events or, apparently, as outright members. The "Brenau Notes" reported in one instance that, "Monday night Mrs. H. J. Pearce entertained the Sigma Theta Phi Society at a Japanese tea. All the girls wore Japanese costumes and all the decorations and refreshments carried the same idea."⁸⁷ In another instance, the "Notes" reported that, "Mrs. Mary Craft Ward, of Hartwell, has composed a two-step and dedicated it to the Alpha Tau Beta Society, of Brenau College. Mrs. Ward is a popular piano instructor at Brenau and a member of the Sorority."⁸⁸

Faculty and/or staff would, in fact, be associated with the sororities in one way or another throughout their existences up through the 1980s. Beginning in about the 1930s, every house had a hostess or house director that played a role in maintaining the chapter residence. Also, sorority houses were left in the care of a matron or a married couple for summer months when students left school to return home.⁸⁹ It should be noted, however, that the responsibilities of these staff members appear to have been limited. Dedications in several editions of the *Bubbles* indicated that sororities generally thought very highly of their matrons. However, nothing indicated that these sentiments truly translated into ceding total authority to house mothers. These staff members mainly performed tasks like monitoring guest visits or supervising house maids. While the faculty and administration might have enjoyed having one of their own in a position of great power over a sorority, this never materialized.

⁸⁷ "Brenau Notes," *Atlanta Constitution*, 24 March 1907, sec. A, p. 2.

⁸⁸ "Brenau Notes," *Atlanta Constitution*, 14 July 1907, sec. C, p. 8.

⁸⁹ "Brenau Notes," *Atlanta Constitution*, 18 August 1912, sec. D, p. 10.

Unlike the faculty and staff, sorority alumnae did play large and important parts in the life of chapters. Many editions of the *Brenau Girl* and the *Student Handbooks* contemplated that alumnae would be connected to rush events and cautioned sororities to make sure that their alumnae knew the rules. Also, over time, it is evident that several rushees were “legacies,” which meant that their mothers and, in some cases, even their grandmothers, were members of a sorority at Brenau. Additionally, several editions of the “Brenau Notes” related that various alumnae of the early sororities would often come back to visit their chapters from time to time. Invariably, the “Notes” mention that the visitor was pleasantly entertained.

The involvement of alumnae in sorority life actually buttresses the idea that Brenau’s sororities operated at arm’s length from the faculty and administration. The support given by alumnae to sororities came in many forms. Brenau sorority women would have been able to look to their alumnae for guidance or resources. In the absence of this source of support, Brenau sororities may have been forced to negotiate with other sources for support. The most logical other source would have been the college faculty and administration. Consequently, the presence of sorority alumnae meant that Brenau sororities might have used their alumnae as surrogates for the faculty and administration, which would have let the sororities keep college officials at more distance.

Sorority entertainment and activity continued well into the twentieth century. The “Brenau Notes” section of the *Atlanta Constitution* and, later, the *Alchemist*, Brenau’s student newspaper, reported on this on a myriad of occasions. Sororities held teas and socials around mid-century and, later, dances and fund-raising drives for various causes. Some of the events of the early part of the century seemed to be the most colorful. For example, the Brenau *Alchemist* described one Phi Mu Rush Party in November of 1924 this way:

The guests were seated at small tables of four and the informal was rendered cabaret fashion during the course of the turkey dinner.

Repeated encores were elicited for Miss Clarke's interpretations of a balloon and Oriental dance, while Misses Jeraldine Ellis and Charlotte Simpson gave a very delightful costume-portrayal of the tango.

An appropriate violin selection by Miss Dorothy Lawrence, followed by Mrs. Corinne Turnipseed's exquisite rendition of "Smilin' Through" contributed a marked feature to the evening's enjoyment.

At intervals during the dinner, Miss Katherine Redwine, dressed as a cigarette girl, distributed many interesting little favors to the group of diners.

Music for the dancing was furnished by the Brenau Busters.⁹⁰

This same edition of the *Alchemist* also described a Delta Zeta rush party, which was likewise a very colorful and entertaining dinner-dance.⁹¹ In 1930, the *Alchemist* reported that the Alpha Chi Omegas "entertained the lady members of the faculty at a bridge party" while the Alpha Xi Deltas celebrated their Founder's Day with a banquet at Gainesville's posh Dixie-Hunt hotel.⁹²

Socials with visiting men were also popular with Brenau's sororities in the 1930s. Mary Helen Hosch was a member of Tri-Delta sorority then and recalled:

We had a formal dance every month and the boys came from all the colleges around [sic]—UGA, Emory, TEch [sic], Clemson, Mercer, Atlanta Dental School,—[sic] just all around. We wore evening dresses and just had a wonderful time. ... The dances were held in the sorority houses and, see, if the boys knew girls in more than one sorority house, they could go where they knew another girl for awhile, and some of the local boys went to all of the sorority houses!⁹³

Elizabeth Wheeler Thurmond was a member of Zeta Tau Alpha in the early 1930s and had similar recollections. Of her experiences in a sorority, she said:

We had little things going like volunteer to help children, kindergartens and stuff. We really didn't have enough time to do too much. On Saturdays they didn't all leave campus like they do now. Saturdays are just closed down practically, aren't they? Then they stayed around. We had a lot of fun; I don't know that we did so

⁹⁰ *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XII, no. 6 (3 December 1924), p. 3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁹² *Alchemist* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College), vol. XVI, no. 26 (16 April 1930), p. 4.

⁹³ Typed transcript of an interview with Mary Helen Hosch conducted by Andrea Davis on Friday, February 27, 1995, p. 1-2. Available in Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

much. And we used to have dances in our houses, sorority houses. We'd be so excited. Boys from Georgia, Tech, Emory would come. Everybody was looking out and seeing how this house was doing, how many were over at the other house—they just sort of hopped around. That was a big deal.⁹⁴

Interestingly, this tradition that was so popular at Brenau in the 1930s was unknown to the college in just the previous decade. Mrs. Lil Robinson and Mrs. Mary Foote Paris, who both started Brenau in 1926 and who both graduated in 1930 and were members of Zeta Tau Alpha and Alpha Chi Omega, respectively, were interviewed for the Brenau archives in 1995. When asked about the activities “back then,” Mrs. Robinson recalled, “Well, they didn’t have the bashes the sororities have now. We never sponsored a dance—did your sorority?” Mrs. Robinson directed the question at Mrs. Paris, who replied, “Just within their own group. But not with boys to the house, no. The girls could have dates on weekends [and] all the dates were in the parlor over at Yonah hall with a chaperone. You didn’t go out, you stayed there with your date.”⁹⁵ Along with dancing and dating, even the work in a sorority was fun. Elizabeth Wheeler Thurmond also recalled that, “I was president of Zeta House a couple of years, so that is why I stayed over there so much and some nights I’d just sleep on the sofa and not go home when we’d been through late, late meetings. Always during Rush, we stayed up until 2 and 3 o’clock in the morning. It was fun and I enjoyed every minute of it.”⁹⁶

Sororities at Brenau have historically competed against one another in academic achievement, athletics, and at events such as Field Day. This competition and relations generally between Brenau’s sororities appear to have been largely amicable. This seems to have been the

⁹⁴ Typed transcript of an interview with Elizabeth Wheeler (Lib) Thurmond, p. 4. Interviewer unknown. Date unknown. Available in Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

⁹⁵ Typed transcript of an interview with Mrs. Lil Robinson and Mrs. Mary Foote Paris conducted by Andrea Davis on February 15, 1995, p. 1. Available in Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

⁹⁶ Typed transcript of an interview with Elizabeth Wheeler (Lib) Thurmond, p. 5. Interviewer unknown. Date unknown. Available in Dean of Women Files, Box 1 of 1, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

case right from the start. Several early editions of the “Brenau Notes” described functions similar to the social mentioned above between the Phi Mu Gammas and the Alpha Beta Taus. Friendly competition and congenial association appear to have been the norm for subsequent decades as well. This was due in large part to the existence of a “Pan-Hellenic Association,” which had been established at Brenau around May of 1911.⁹⁷ The Association served to “foster a spirit of mutual helpfulness among the sororities.”⁹⁸ The Pan-Hellenic Association actually required amity among Greeks. Portions of Brenau’s early student handbooks dealt with Greek relations promulgated by the association and had rules against bad conduct. For example, a portion of the 1925 – 26 edition of the handbook (which would be repeated in subsequent years) read:

No member of any sorority shall make a disparaging remark about any other sorority having at chapter in Brenau. It shall be the duty of every delegate to report to Pan-Hellenic any rumor or disparaging remark about any chapter at the first meeting after hearing the same, insisting upon investigation, that the chapter involved may be cleared, or proved guilty.⁹⁹

While a rule such as this probably helped to promote amity between sororities, it did not guarantee friendship. At times, competition between sororities could apparently become heated.

Perhaps the best example of this heated competition involved sorority rush.¹⁰⁰ Every edition of the *Brenau Girl* published at least some pages of surprisingly technical rules about how sororities could grow their membership by courting new students. Indeed, these rules generally became more complicated over time, at least until the 1970s. The apparent aim of the rules was to place each chapter on a level playing field when it came to recruiting new members

⁹⁷ “Brenau Notes,” *Atlanta Constitution*, 14 May 1911, sec. E, p. 11.

⁹⁸ *Handbook* (1937), 46.

⁹⁹ *Handbook* (1925), 29.

¹⁰⁰ While the origins of the term “sorority rush” are not settled, one scholar has asserted that its use is probably related “to the slang for courting a girl by heaping insistent and numerous favors upon her.” C. S. Johnson, *Fraternities in Our Colleges* (New York, NY: National Interfraternity Foundation, 1972), 254.

while giving new girls time to settle in to college. The 1925 – 1926 rules required, for example, that no sorority member wear her pin or so much as discuss her sorority with new girls for six weeks. Also, official Pan-Hellenic-approved invitations had to be used to invite a girl to join a sorority. Additionally, no “non-fraternity girl” could spend the night in any sorority house.¹⁰¹

About a decade later, rules had been added to limit expenses of certain rush events and these rules required sororities to submit an itemized account of expenses to the Pan-Hellenic Association to demonstrate their compliance with the set limits.¹⁰² Also, the 1937 – 1938 “Instructions Concerning Bids” included a provision that “Two lawyers chosen by Pan-Hellenic shall deliver the bids” to pledges at an appointed day and time.¹⁰³ By 1945 – 1946, rules were more complicated still. Rushing had been divided into first and second semesters. Sorority sisters could not enter campus dormitories during rush. Also, stiff monetary penalties were spelled out for breaking rushing rules. For example, a sorority would be fined \$50 for “contacting a rushee in any way whatsoever” outside of those ways prescribed and \$50 for “having more that two dates per day with one girl.”¹⁰⁴

By 1955, fully eighteen pages were devoted to sorority life and rushing in the 81 page student handbook. Described therein was a “Preferential Bidding System” where sorority and rushee preferences were collected and matched to one another. Ideally, a rushee’s top pick would be for a sorority that had also selected her as a top pick. If this was not the case, then a rushee’s second choices would be matched up with the selections of the sororities. A neutral party was entrusted with this task of conducting the matching procedure. According to the rules, and reflecting the importance of this process, said party would be either “a lawyer, or other

¹⁰¹ *Handbook* (1925), 31.

¹⁰² *Handbook* (1937), 54.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Handbook* (1945), 52.

outsider, or the dean of women.”¹⁰⁵ The rules in the nineteen-fifties also included a quota system for Greek membership so that no one chapter could snatch up too many pledges. Also, according to the rules, “The number of members in each sorority of Panhellenic shall not exceed forty,” but this quota was subject to change as the association saw fit.¹⁰⁶

By 1965, rushing rules had changed significantly. The *Student Handbook*, which was no longer called the *Brenau Girl*, listed only twenty-three brief rules and did not reproduce the by-laws of the Panhellenic Association as earlier versions had done. Some strictures were also relaxed. For example, upper classmen were permitted to speak to freshman during rush, but “only in a casual way without carrying on lengthy conversations.”¹⁰⁷ Also, while no sorority girl could “rush any girl during the summer,” they were permitted to associate with incoming freshmen since the rule pertaining to this banned only “*detailed* talk about a sorority” (emphasis mine).¹⁰⁸

Roughly a decade later, rushing regulations had relaxed even further and only a mere one and a half pages were devoted to these rules in the handbook. Absent from the 1974 – 1975 handbook were any rules regarding how or when a sorority member could speak with rushees. There was also no mention of fines, quotas, a bidding system, or minimum academic requirements for going Greek. Sorority members were prohibited from buying anything (such as dinner) for new students, however. Also, the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s had left its mark on Brenau’s Greek system as a rule in the handbook indicated that, “Panhellenic sanctions no discrimination.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ *Handbook* (1955), 60. Note that while the dean of women might be involved with rush, her role was strictly to sort ballots. She would have exercised no authority over determining membership selection.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Handbook* (1965), 89.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 90.

¹⁰⁹ *Handbook* (1974), 60.

The *Brenau Women's College Student Handbook of 1984 – 1985* saw something of a resurgence of Greek presence. This version reprinted the constitution of the Panhellenic Association and also presented four pages of by-laws. Aspects of these by-laws served to replace the “Rushing Rules” outlined in earlier handbooks. The rules were substantially relaxed. Perhaps most telling of this change was the stipulation that, “Except during rushing period, continuous open bidding shall be in effect during the college year for eligible women students.”¹¹⁰ Also, the regulations indicated that “A pledge may be initiated whenever she has met the requirements of the fraternity to which she has pledged.”¹¹¹ These rules operated together to essentially say that sorority membership could grow throughout the year, which meant that Greeks must have been permitted to associate with non-Greeks year-round. Gone were the days when sisters were restricted in speaking to rushees and when rushees were barred from entry into sorority houses.

What is interesting about all of these regulations regarding sorority rush is what they communicate about some aspects of Brenau sorority life. In some respects, there is truly a near-complete absence of any faculty involvement in sorority life. In these instances, Brenau’s sororities were practically self-governing entities where student desires held sway. The historical evidence suggests that Brenau’s sororities had a great deal of latitude to conduct their own affairs. For example, college officials apparently never contested with the sororities over whom the sororities could admit into their ranks. Brenau permitted the sororities to include (or exclude) whomever they chose from membership. Brenau’s administrations also left it up to the sororities to determine how their houses would be occupied. Students in Brenau’s sororities evidently negotiated successfully with faculty in at least some cases to obtain such boons. Greek

¹¹⁰ *Handbook* (1984), 70.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

life had, therefore, the potential to be one aspect of the negotiated college experience where faculty had virtually no say.

Other aspects about Brenau's sororities reveal that the ongoing negotiation between students and faculty was more two-sided. In some cases, the faculty did have pull. For example, Brenau's faculty and administration dictated such things as how frequently the sororities could have socials. Also, at some times in the college's history, house directors ensured proper conduct of sorority members in houses that were technically owned by the college. Still, even in the face of faculty authority, students still contested for "their Brenau." Brenau officials might have cracked down further against such student action just as students might have rebelled in other respects. That the college and students did not illustrates that the negotiated arrangement regarding sorority life that emerged between faculty and students was acceptable to both students and faculty. Students simply appreciated what autonomy they had. Faculty, in turn, derived benefits from the sororities like monetary assistance in developing college housing and assistance with student social control as sororities kept their members in line. Ultimately, the negotiation over Greek life at Brenau resulted in something like a "win-win" situation.

Examining sororities and secret societies at Brenau does more than just shed light on the negotiations between students and faculty to mold the institutional character of the college. We learn of a great irony from considering the darker nature of these groups. With respect to the secret societies, with their morbid symbols of skulls and knives, this nature is perhaps self-evident. Sororities, too, had their dark sides, which were perhaps less overt. Some regulations in the 1984 *Student Handbook* suggested this. Article VII of the by-laws banned all forms of hazing "which would reflect unfavorably on the fraternity system."¹¹² Blindfolding is mentioned specifically as something not condoned outside of specific sorority rituals. Also, Article X of the

¹¹² Ibid.

by-laws dealt with “Theft, Destruction of Greek Property.” This was strictly forbidden by the Association. Curiously, though, the text read that “Theft or destruction of Greek property from *another campus*” (emphasis mine) is what was prohibited.¹¹³ This might imply that intra-campus theft did not occur. In any case, the fact that the Greek regulations included provisions banning hazing and theft suggest that both may have occurred in Brenau’s sororities in the past to such an extent that they needed curbing.

Ultimately, the existence of these last two regulations is illustrative of what is perhaps the most interesting thing about Greek life and secret societies at Brenau. When one thinks of morbid symbols, “hazing,” and “theft,” what probably comes to mind are *fraternities* and men’s organizations, not sororities or women’s organizations. For example, it is perhaps easy to imagine brother John “Bluto” Blutarsky and his confederates from Animal House giving pledges the third degree or swiping some prized artifact from a rival house on fraternity row. However, it is perhaps more difficult to ascribe such behaviors to women. After all, whether it is reality or not, American society has tended to view women as being better-behaved and more passive than men. Indeed, women’s colleges like Brenau initially developed as much to safeguard this feminine ideal as they did to educate women. Sororities and secret societies, in turn, developed to sequester women in secure houses or in private club meetings, to further perpetuate the feminine ideal of sisterhood, and, in the case of sororities, to cultivate the qualities society prized in women of nurturing others and of being socially able. The great irony is that Brenau’s sororities and secret organizations probably did just as much to subvert femininity as to support it.

¹¹³ Ibid., 71. Incidentally, the penalty for violating this provision of the regulations was a fine of “up to, but not exceeding, \$100” (71). In the big scheme of things, this probably could not really be seen as a harsh punishment, which might suggest that some hi-jinks might have been expected and winked at.

To be sure, sororities and secret organizations at Brenau perpetuated feminine ideals. The myriad of accounts of sorority women hosting tea parties and the like support this notion. However, in other ways, Brenau's sororities and secret societies did little to perpetuate femininity and instead made women more the equals of men. For example, speaking of sorority houses, Horowitz observed that, "Buildings designed to protect femininity were subverted to its suppression."¹¹⁴ This was true as sororities turned their houses into their homes. The excerpt above indicated that exactly this happened at Brenau. The faculty member who observed the sorority member doing "other work not generally pursued by a girl of college age" was observing a woman assuming the masculine role of home-repairer. As she and her sisters saved their pennies and worried about finances, they were leaving further behind their traditional, passive, gender-determined, stereotyped roles. Also, the sorority women at Brenau did more than merely "worry their pretty little heads" about the complexities of rush at the college. They grappled with those difficulties, negotiated with faculty, and developed sophisticated, complicated regulations to govern sorority life. Brenau girls in groups like H.G.H. took on the weighty responsibility of doing anything for Brenau that they might be called upon to do as students or as alumnae. And if the anonymous alumnae's account about smoking can be believed, sorority women sought to demonstrate that they were on equal footing with men by insisting that their members even adopt the same bad habits as men. In sum, the life of sororities and secret societies at Brenau saw young women demonstrate that they were both the equals of men and, at the same time, quite different from them as well.

¹¹⁴ Horowitz, *Alma Mater*, 178.

CONCLUSION

Brenau University's Women's College is rare among institutions of higher education because it remains a thriving women's college. Around the mid-twentieth century, roughly 300 women's colleges existed in the United States. These institutions provided higher education to women at a time when not all state and private colleges admitted women. By 1970, that number had declined to 230. The decline was the result of a great drop in enrollment at women's colleges as young women opted to attend other public or private institutions that had become co-educational. In the 1970s, 108 women's colleges converted to coeducation themselves while another 46 women's colleges closed their doors outright. This trend would continue for many years. By 2007, only 58 women's colleges remained in existence in the country.¹ Many educators lament the disappearance of women's colleges because these institutions can play such an important role in women's education. They remove the element of competition with men for academic honors, leadership positions on campus, etc., and thereby give women much more space for intellectual and character development. When many women's colleges were closing or going co-ed to make ends meet, Brenau's Women's College stayed its course and actually

¹ Heather Geraci, "'Better Dead than Coed?' Survival and Decline of Single-Sex College in the United States." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Marriott Hotel, Loews Philadelphia Hotel, Philadelphia, PA, 12 August 2005; available from http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p21296_index.html; Internet; accessed 8 November 2007. See also Leslie Miller-Bernal and Susan L. Poulson, eds., *Challenged by Coeducation: Women's Colleges Since the 1960s* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005) for more information on the decline of women's colleges.

thrived. In the 2007 – 2008 academic year, the Women’s College enrolled close to a record 930 students, a 50 percent increase in enrollment in just four years.²

Precisely what accounts for Brenau’s longevity is not easy to discern as a myriad of factors have no doubt contributed to it. What is evident, however, is that the Brenau of today is a product of its past. Every event, large and small, in the history of the institution contributed to placing Brenau on its present trajectory. Moreover, these events—especially the most significant ones—would, at some level, typically be the product of subtle and not-so-subtle negotiation between Brenau’s students and its faculty and administration.

Throughout its history, Brenau’s students and its faculty and administration have each sought to refine the college to create “their Brenau.” Each party to the on-going negotiation at the institution sought to construct an ideal college experience based upon their desires. Each side achieved varying degrees of success in the negotiations at different times during the life of the college.

Brenau’s faculty and administration have historically held much sway over academic matters. They set degree requirements and scholastic standards and expected students to satisfy and adhere to them. The students generally complied for the sake of simply being able to graduate. Little suggests that students ever gained much ground in negotiations with college officials over academic matters. However, students were not entirely without agency. From time to time, students did petition the faculty or otherwise negotiated successfully for changes at the college that related to academics. In addition, students shaped academic life at Brenau when they elected to study in some programs and declined to study in others. Brenau actually discontinued several academic programs as a result of low student enrollment.

² *Brenau Magazine* (fall, 2007), “Will Success Spoil Single-gender Education at Brenau?”; available from <http://alum.brenau.edu/Development/BrenauMagazine/default.cfm>; Internet; accessed 8 November 2007.

Besides controlling academic matters, Brenau's faculty and administration governed the composition of Brenau's student body. For much of the twentieth century, Brenau's faculty and administration implemented policies to ensure that only whites would attend the college. Compared to other similarly situated institutions, some of these policies were quite novel and well-calculated. While the government forced other private colleges to integrate, Brenau avoided integrating for many years thanks to its policy of not accepting any funding from government sources. While this did prevent desegregation from occurring for many years at the college, Brenau's stance probably cost the institution millions of dollars in support. Had Brenau students wanted their college to integrate—and it is not entirely evident that they did—history suggests that their views on the matter would have been given scant attention by college officials. Rather, Brenau's faculty and administrators set policies for the college on such things as integration largely absent student input.

While students were scarcely party to these negotiations at all, other negotiations with the faculty demonstrated a more notable (though by no means grand) degree of give and take. Student discipline at Brenau was one area in which students, though largely subject to faculty authority, had some say-so. Throughout the history of the college, officials entrusted Brenau students with an exceptional degree of self-government. Through their student government associations, Brenau women negotiated with the faculty over disciplinary regulations and enjoyed occasional success in changing or eliminating rules that governed their behavior. For example, in the early twentieth century, Brenau students could not date, smoke, ride in cars with men, see movies, or wear shorts in public. Even though students still remained ultimately subject to college authority, over the course of several decades, Brenau women successfully petitioned for permission to do all of these once forbidden things.

Students arguably enjoyed even greater successes in negotiating with faculty over other matters. There is much more to college than professors, textbooks, and attending classes. John R. Thelin observed that as American colleges developed, “undergraduates...created an elaborate world of their own within and alongside the official world of the college.”³ In this world, student clubs, secret societies, athletic teams, campus traditions and the like emerged and became key components of the college experience. Indeed, some students were more interested in this “extracurricular” aspect of college than in their schooling. Since the founding of Brenau College and its predecessor, the Georgia Baptist Female Seminary, students negotiated doggedly (and, occasionally, successfully) with college officials to create the extracurricular world they wanted.

The product of these negotiations is chiefly apparent in the few surviving editions of the *Alchemist*, Brenau’s student newspaper, in newspaper columns referred to as “Brenau College Notes” or “Brenau Notes” in the *Atlanta Constitution*, and in a hundred year’s worth of Brenau’s annually-published student yearbook, the *Bubbles*. All of these sources began publication around the turn of the twentieth century. All would, for several decades, substantiate that students refined “their Brenau” through the sporting, cultural, and extracurricular organizations they created and maintained. Indeed, Brenau students probably enjoyed their greatest success in their negotiations with faculty in creating and maintaining their sororities and secret societies and their sporting groups and clubs. Brenau students formed the organizations, populated them, elected officers, held events and functions—all with relatively little tangible interference or involvement on the part of faculty.

Indeed, Brenau’s faculty members and administrators were likely quite content with this arrangement. Paraphrasing Frederick Rudolph, Thelin contended that:

³ Thelin, *History of American Higher Education*, 64.

student initiated activities had a discernible life cycle. In the initial stage, an activity would surface informally and even spontaneously among undergraduates. If a particular activity enjoyed sustained popularity, it attracted scrutiny from the administration and then attempts at either official abolition or control. Such administrative efforts usually failed and the activity would resurface in the form of a renegade organization. Ultimately the administration would try to control or co-opt the activity by assimilating it into the formal structure (and covenants) of the college.⁴

This life cycle is, in essence, an ongoing negotiation between college students and faculty, one of several, in fact, that occur between these two sides. This life cycle was indeed discernable at Brenau.

On the surface, most of Brenau's several student organizations (especially groups like the secret societies or the sororities) might appear to be bastions of student agency, places where Brenau students held virtually all sway. Indeed, to an extent, they were. However, beneath the surface, more was going on. Brenau college officials did, indeed, work at co-opting and assimilating these groups for their own purposes. Brenau's faculty and administration and even Brenau's own student body relied upon the college's student organizations to police student conduct and to encourage conformity. This was clearly evident in several ways.

One example of this dynamic in action is apparent in regard to the college's honor societies. Faculty members selected students for membership based upon their scholastic accomplishments and good behavior. Desirous of membership in the societies, many students studied hard and behaved, much to the faculty's relief. The faculty used other student organizations in like fashion in an attempt to gain the upper hand in the negotiations over how Brenau would be. At the same time, Brenau students used these same organizations to encourage other students—particularly new students—to fill the roles they were expected to play at the college. When, for example, college officials let sororities, sports clubs, and secret

⁴ Ibid., 65.

organizations thrive, they did so knowing that those organizations would actually do a good measure of policing and disciplining the student body on behalf of the faculty. Professors did not have to tell students to study; students studied because the sports team they wanted to play on or the sorority they wanted to join set high academic standards for membership. College officials did not have to tell students to dress properly or to behave as ladies; things like sororities or Brenau's Student Government Association demanded that their members conform or face stern social consequences. Clearly, Brenau's students and its faculty were not always working at cross purposes in their negotiations to refine the Brenau college experience.

In a letter written to Jean-Baptiste Leroy in 1789, the venerable Benjamin Franklin turned a now-famous phrase: "In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes." To these, Franklin might have added another certainty: That as long as there are colleges and universities, there will be negotiations between college students and college faculty and administrators to bring into being at their institution what each side regards as an ideal collegiate experience. The result of the long-term give-and-take, the back-and-forth between the two sides, is frequently the emergence of a remarkable place of learning that endears itself to many. This is Brenau. It is wholly apropos that the very meaning of this name is "gold as refined by fire." Like smiths at a forge, Brenau's students and faculty hammer away in their perpetual negotiations to refine their college. The piece they have created and will continue to create is, for them, akin to gold—a college that is exceptionally brilliant, extraordinarily valuable, and exceedingly rare.

ABBREVIATIONS

Where appropriate, the full citations for all Brenau College catalogs/bulletins and student handbooks referenced throughout this work are abbreviated simply as “*Catalog (XXXX)*” or “*Handbook (XXXX)*,” with “XXXX” representing the year of publication. Thus, the abbreviation for the “*Brenau Bulletin, 1949 – 1950 v. XXXXI n. 3* (Gainesville, GA: Brenau College, 1949), 17” would be “*Catalog (1949), 17.*” Copies of all catalogs and handbooks are available in the Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia.

The minutes of many years worth of Brenau College faculty meetings are recorded in two volumes housed in the Brenau University Archives: *Brenau College Faculty Journal for Twelve Years (1910 – 1922)* and *Faculty Journal for Twenty-five Years* (which contains minutes from 1923 to 1948). The volumes are not well-paginated, but entries are listed chronologically by date. Where appropriate, the full citations for these volumes throughout this work are abbreviated simply as “*Faculty Journal (12 years), [entry date]*” and “*Faculty Journal (25 years), [entry date].*”

As president of Brenau, Dr. Josiah Crudup delivered a report to the college board of trustees at their annual meeting held in late May or early June of each year. Typewritten transcriptions of these reports are filed in chronological order in folders located in several boxes of the “Dr. Crudup Files” collection of the Brenau University Archives in Gainesville, Georgia. Where appropriate, the full citations of each of these sources (e.g., Josiah Crudup, “A Report to the Board of Trustees of Brenau College (Friday, May 29, 1953).” Dr. Crudup Files, Box 34 of 40, Folder 10, Brenau University Archives, Gainesville, Georgia) will be abbreviated as follows: Crudup, “Report to the Board ([date]).”

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APPENDIX

TABLE A.1: UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES OFFERED BY BRENAU FROM 1900 - 1930

Degree	1900	1910	1920	1930
A.B. or B.A. (Bachelor of Arts, a.k.a. the "Classical Degree") ¹ B.S. (Bachelor of Science, a.k.a. "the Scientific Degree") ² B.L. (Bachelor of Letters, a.k.a. the "Literary Degree") ³	Brenau had "schools," akin to modern departments. "At the completion of any one of the schools a certificate of proficiency in that school is awarded; a certain number of such certificates entitles the holder to a ... degree." ⁴ Brenau required four years of subjects like history, math, and English for all degrees. Students focused on one subject, but had to take outside courses. Hence, classic or literary students would take courses in, e.g., the sciences. ⁵ Students with parental permission could substitute courses in art, music, etc., for courses in their school and so earn a collegiate degree while getting conservatory training. ⁶	A.B., B.S., or B.L. degrees required "fifteen hours per week for eight terms" studying core subjects like math and English and elective courses in a major area. ⁷	Brenau had converted to the semester system and required 120 hours for an A.B., B.S., or B.L. degree. A major required a minimum of 24 semester hours of credit and a minor required half as much. Students could both major and minor in several departments, which generally embraced the typical subjects offered at liberal arts colleges. Brenau required students to earn 60 semester hours during their junior and senior years. ⁸	Students took 48 hours of "required courses" and some "courses with options," which let students choose a course from a list. ⁹ Students also took elective courses and courses in their major and minor to earn 120 hours. Students could major in "English Language and Literature, Latin, French, Spanish, German, Mathematics, Philosophy and Education, History and Political Science, the Biological Sciences, the Physical Sciences, Chemistry and Home Science." ¹⁰ Conservatory work could apply to degrees.

¹ *Catalog* (1900), 21.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 30. The catalog presented a table with year-to-year course requirements for the several degrees.

⁶ See *Catalog* (1900), 33, for a description of the elective course.

⁷ *Catalog* (1910), 15.

⁸ *Catalog* (1920).

⁹ *Catalog* (1929), 43.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

Degree	1900	1910	1920	1930
L.I. degree ("Licentiate of Instruction")		"The L.I. degree is a new course...it is intended to be something of a Normal Course, and is especially adapted to young ladies wishing to ... teach." ¹¹ Students learned pedagogy and had to pass examinations in spelling, grammar, geography, and United States history. The L.I. required slightly fewer credits than the bachelor's degrees and could be finished in two years. ¹²	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	"By completing certain specified courses in the department of Education, and satisfying the requirements of the Junior College diploma, it is possible for a student to secure, in two years, both the Junior College diploma and the Junior College Professional Teachers Certificate, qualifying the student to teach in the elementary schools of the state of Georgia." ¹³
Bachelors of Oratory		One fourth of the requirements for the degree were "Literary Interpretation and Expression" while another quarter were divided among English (mostly) and mathematics. ¹⁴	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.
"B.D." Bachelors of Domesticity		For that "large class of girls who desire to spend two or three years in college to fit themselves for the duties of society and the home." ¹⁵	The "Certificate in Household Economics" required the completion of 20 hours of "Household Economics" and "thirty semester hours, in addition" of college courses. ¹⁶ Offered.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.
Bachelor of Music (Mus.B.)				Largely unchanged from previous decade.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Catalog* (1910), 15. Most normal schools that trained teachers required three years of study.

¹³ *Catalog* (1929), 48.

¹⁴ Ibid., 16.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Catalog* (1921), 43.

Degree	1900	1910	1920	1930
Associate in Arts			Earned by completing 45 hours of "Freshman and Sophomore Requirements" that were: (a) Six [hours] in English; (b) six in the foreign language offered for entrance; (c) six in a second foreign language; (d) six in History; (e) six in Mathematics, or six in Logic and Introductory Philosophy; (f) six in one Physical Science; (g) six in one Biological Science or in Household Economics; (h) three in General Psychology and for completing elective courses open to Freshmen and Sophomores, sufficient in amount when added to the above to make sixty semester-hours. ¹⁷	The 1930 catalog indicated that, "it is a matter of record that only a small proportion of students entering college...are able to complete a four year college course. Accordingly for such students a diploma from the Junior College division is awarded by Brenau College upon the satisfactory completion of the requirements of the Freshman and Sophomore years." Brenau required 60 hours for the certificate. ¹⁸
Two-year certificate in "Secretarial Studies and Public Accounting."				Brenau offered a two-year certificate in stenography and typewriting. ¹⁹
B.S. in Education				

¹⁷ Ibid., 43.

¹⁸ *Catalog* (1929), 47.

¹⁹ *Catalog* (1939), 85.

TABLE A.2: UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES OFFERED BY BRENAU FROM 1940 - 2000

Degree	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
A.B. or B.A. (Bachelor of Arts, a.k.a. the "Classical Degree") ²⁰ B.S. (Bachelor of Science, a.k.a. "the Scientific Degree") ²¹ B.L. (Bachelor of Letters, a.k.a. the "Literary Degree") ²²	B.S., B.L. eliminated.	"Brenau Plan" only offered A.B. with majors in "English Language and Literature, Speech Arts, Foreign Languages, Psychology, Mathematics and Physics, Sociology and Economics, History and Political Science, Biology, Chemistry, and Music." "Core" courses made up one-third of the degree; the remainder consisted of courses in the major area and elective course work. Also, the catalog indicated that students required a "C" average to graduate. ²³	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Quarter system now used; required courses comprised about one-third of a Bachelor's degree. Majors in traditional liberal arts subjects and business administration, criminal justice, broadcasting and journalism, allied health, and several sub-disciplines of education. Also a general studies major and several "pre-professional" programs. ²⁴	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.

²⁰ *Catalog* (1900), 21.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Catalog* (1949), 43.

²⁴ *Catalog* (1980).

Degree	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
L.I. degree ("Licentiate of Instruction")							
Bachelors of Oratory							
"B.D." Bachelors of Domesticity							
Bachelor of Music (Mus.B.)					Resumed.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.
Associate in Arts			Resumed.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.
Two-year certificate in "Secretarial Studies and Public Accounting."	Students took a year of English, modern languages, history, etc. and then a year of typing, shorthand, stenography, office methods, dictation, and the like. ²⁵	Brenau discontinued the certificate but continued teaching these business-related courses through a department of "Commerce." ²⁶					
B.S. in Education	Offered in "Physical Education and Biological and Natural Science" until all but B.A. eliminated. ²⁷		Resumed.		Resumed.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.	Largely unchanged from previous decade.

²⁵ *Catalog* (1939), 117.

²⁶ *Catalog* (1949), 55.

²⁷ *Catalog* (1939), 117.