

CHAPTER NINETEEN

A HISTORY OF GENDER AT COLORADO COLLEGE

by **Hannah Varnell and Robert D. Loevy**

Editor's Note: To date, the history of gender at Colorado College has never been specifically studied. Because Colorado College was founded as a coeducational institution in 1874, both men and women have influenced the development of the College as students, faculty, administrative staff, and alumni. This chapter views Colorado College's history through a lens that highlights events on campus regarding gender, focusing on women's role and advancement in campus life.

Hannah Varnell was a student at Colorado College in the Class of 2012. She initiated the research and wrote the first draft of this chapter as a student volunteer during her senior year.

Pre-College Era

Young Florence Haskell is the first woman who enters Colorado College history, and without her legacy, Colorado College would not exist.

In 1873, Reverend Thomas Nelson Haskell and his daughter, Florence, visited General William Jackson Palmer, the founder of Colorado Springs. The Haskells visited Palmer at his new home, named Glen Eyrie, located to the west of Colorado Springs near the Garden of the Gods.

Florence was 14-years-old and in poor health. Her father had moved the family to Colorado in an attempt to heal her ailing lungs in the high-elevation mountain air. While at Glen Eyrie, Florence was moved by the sight of eagles nesting and flying in a nearby canyon. She suggested to her father the creation of a college in Colorado that would attract students with a range of health conditions. It would be a place that would offer them the opportunity to soar in their education as the eagles of Glen Eyrie soared in the skies.

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Tragically, Florence Haskell died in the fall of 1873. Moved by his daughter's insatiable curiosity and lost potential, Reverend Haskell vowed to establish a college in the Colorado territory "as a paternal tribute to her marvelous memory."¹

On October 29, 1873, Reverend Haskell proposed the founding of a Christian college at a conference of Colorado Congregational Churches in Boulder, Colorado. Haskell had attended Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio, and was committed to creating a new college similar to Oberlin – a liberal arts college open to both sexes and all races.

Thus, in the earliest conception of Colorado College, women were to be in the student body along with men. Both the fact that Thomas Nelson Haskell was memorializing a daughter rather than a son, as well as Haskell's experience as a student at coeducational Oberlin College, guaranteed that, from the first instant, Colorado College would be for women as well as men.

The First Meeting of the Board of Trustees

The first meeting of the group that would evolve into the Colorado College Board of Trustees was held at the home of Frank L. Rouse in downtown Colorado Springs. A woman identified only as "Mother Rouse" was listed as attending the meeting. Whether she was Frank Rouse's wife, or mother, or some other relative is unknown. Her name appeared with the names of the men attending the meeting as if she were a full participant in the deliberations and the decision making.²

As a result of this meeting, Thomas Nelson Haskell selected Colorado Springs as the location for the new college in Colorado memorializing his late daughter.

Early Women Teachers

¹ Horace M. Hale, *Education in Colorado* (Denver, CO: News Printing Company, 1985), 96.

² James Hutchison Kerr, "The Pioneer Days of Colorado College," *El Paso County Democrat*, Pioneer ed., December 1908.

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On May 6, 1874, Colorado College held its first classes. Twenty-five students were split nearly evenly among male and female, with 13 men and 12 women attending the first class sessions.

There was a woman teaching on this “first faculty” of Colorado College. Miss Minna Knapp, of Germany, helped with the teaching of German and Music.³ Another woman who assisted a male professor with his teaching duties during the early days was Miss Mary S. Mackenzie. In the style of the time, Miss Mackenzie, who subsequently married, was identified by her married name, Mrs. Cornelius S. Gambrill, as well as her maiden name.

It does appear these early women teachers at Colorado College were viewed as being temporarily employed while waiting to marry. Thus Miss Emma Bump, a teaching assistant from 1878 to 1881, was described as serving “with credit” and identified as “*later* Mrs. Meriam of Washington, D.C.”

The first married woman to teach at Colorado College was Mary Tenney Hatch. Mrs. Hatch was described as “no ordinary teacher” and was said to have established “a high standard of scholarship in Colorado College.”

Miss Eloise Wickard, from Kansas, taught German and English Literature. Her work was so outstanding that she was recommended “for a regular professorship” and was “accordingly elected Professor of English Literature.” She thus was the first woman professor at Colorado College. Her service with the College was brief, however, as she subsequently became the wife of Professor Oliver H. Richardson at Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut.”⁴

Clearly much of the teaching in the early days of Colorado College was done by women, and one of those women attained the rank of professor. It is also true, however, that most of the professors were males, and it was

³ Jonathan Edwards, Report to the Board of Trustees of Colorado College, June 30, 1874.

⁴ These reports on early women teachers at Colorado College are from James Hutchison Kerr, “The Pioneer Days of Colorado College,” *El Paso County Democrat*, Pioneer ed., December 1908. Of the early historians of Colorado College, it is Kerr who is most careful about observing and evaluating the contributions of women teachers.

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exclusively the male professors who found lifetime careers teaching at the College.

First Honor Credits

Women students in the early days of Colorado College shared equally in the first academic awards bestowed by the College. At the end of the first semester of teaching, those students earning “honor credits” had their names listed in an exhibition at the Colorado Springs City Hall. Three women and five men were cited for academic excellence. As ever in the style of the time, the women were listed first and the men second. The women were Rose Hurd, Kate Kennedy, and Lilly Kimball. The men were Justin Edwards, H. Mac Hurd, Frank C. Kimball, R. S. Owens, and George Sarl.⁵

Women’s Dormitories

In the late 19th century, respectable Victorian parents refused to send their daughters off to college if they were not certain the school would provide adequate supervision over female students. For this reason, Colorado College’s founders adopted a “loco parentis” mentality, acting as rules enforcers in place of parental guidance. This was particularly true for women students, who were required to follow strict guidelines of conduct, including curfews and restrictions on visitors in dormitories. All of the dormitories at Colorado College during roughly the institution’s first one hundred years were strictly segregated by gender.

An essential instrument for controlling the social behavior of women students was the women’s dormitory. Dormitory hours required women students to be safe inside the building by an early evening hour, and the hours were set only slightly later on Friday and Saturday nights. The women’s dormitory, with its dining facilities and social lounges, also provided a place where young women could be taught the social graces considered so important during the late Victorian era.

Thus during the first 34 years of its history, Colorado College constructed five women’s dormitories and only two men’s dormitories. Those male students who could not get housing in the two men’s dormitories

⁵ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, July 18, 1874.

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were left to find housing in the community. The result was the fraternity system. Male students got together and rented or bought large Victorian houses adjacent to the campus (mainly on North Nevada Avenue and North Weber Street) and provided their own housing and meals.

And so it was that women students, confined to College-owned dormitories, were strictly regulated in their social lives. The men students, on the other hand, lived in all-male dormitories or in fraternity houses with less strict limits on their behavior.

Dormitories by Gender

The student dormitories during the first years at Colorado College were:

Columbian Clubhouse – women – c. 1883 (burned to the ground in 1884).

Hooper House – men – c. 1883 – (an existing structure used only temporarily).

Hagerman Hall – men – 1889 – (the first permanent dormitory at Colorado College, it was torn down in the 1950s).

Montgomery Hall – women – 1891 (it was modeled after the “cottage” system at Smith College, a women’s college in Northampton, Massachusetts, and included an infirmary as well as a kitchen and pantry).

Ticknor Hall – women – 1898 (it tripled the dormitory space available for women students and included a basement recreation room, a storage area for bicycles, and a dining room for all the women students on campus).

McGregor Hall – women – 1903 (built behind Montgomery and Ticknor Halls, it had 60 bedrooms and a women’s gymnasium in the basement).

Bemis Hall – women – 1908 (it formed the third side of what had become known as the “Women’s Quadrangle” at the College, and it included a large dining room for all the women students on campus and a sumptuous lounge that was heavily used for a wide variety of campus social events).



WOMEN STUDENTS AT MONTGOMERY HALL

This photograph was taken in 1891, the year Montgomery Hall opened as the first permanent dormitory for women at Colorado College. Montgomery Hall was modeled after the “cottage” system in use at Smith College, a women’s college in Massachusetts. (Photograph from Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.)

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The pressure to house women was relentless during the first 35 years of the College's history. Periodically the College would rent rooms for women students in the Plaza Hotel, located at the southwest corner of North Tejon Street and East Cache La Poudre Street (later the College's Spencer Center). The portion of the Plaza Hotel used as a women's dormitory was called South Hall.

Did Colorado College coddle and pamper its women students with all those spacious and well-equipped dormitories while essentially leaving the men students to fend for themselves? Whether intended or not, that is certainly what happened. Sixty-five years went by from the completion of Hagerman Hall (1889), the College's first permanent dormitory for men, until the opening of Slocum Hall (1954), the College's second major dormitory for men. During that lengthy time period, the College built four major dormitories for women, equipped them with dining halls and recreation facilities and a gymnasium, and rented excess rooms for women in the Plaza Hotel (South Hall) when necessary.

The First Women Graduates

On May 31, 1882, the College held its first graduation ceremony. Two men students, Parker Sedgwick Halleck and Frederick Wells Tuckerman, became the first two graduates of Colorado College.

Thirteen years later, in 1895, two women students, Nettie Carey and Elizabeth Powell, became the first two women graduates of Colorado College. That was 21 years after the founding of the College in 1874.

It does appear to have taken an unseemly long time for Colorado College to produce its first two women graduates. All that can be said is that the idea of a college education for women was still a somewhat radical thought in the 1880s and 1890s. Also, the overall enrollment at Colorado College during this period was quite small – always less than 200 students per year.

The Woman's Educational Society (WES)

In the early 1890s, Mary Montgomery Slocum, the wife of Colorado College's third President, William Frederick Slocum, made an invaluable contribution to female influence at Colorado College. She founded the

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Woman's Educational Society, often referred to as the WES. The organization was intended to act as a bridge between female community members in Colorado Springs interested in supporting the growth of the College and any female Colorado College students in need of "physical, intellectual, and spiritual aid."

The WES quickly adopted an active role fundraising for a new women's dormitory at Colorado College. The result was Montgomery Hall, the first permanent women's dormitory on the campus. Montgomery was Mrs. Slocum's maiden name. The WES not only paid for the construction of the building but also provided funds for decorating the interior and furnishing it.

The Woman's Educational Society remains the oldest women's advocacy group at Colorado College. For more than a century and a quarter, it has provided scholarships for women students at Colorado College. Upon graduation from the College, each WES scholar receives a copy of a book detailing the College's history.

There is no advocacy group at Colorado College for men similar to the Woman's Educational Society advocating for women, but no one has ever seemed to mind that fact. The WES is one of the most venerated organizations on the Colorado College campus.

Woman Suffrage in Colorado

In 1893, Colorado became the first state in the United States where women were granted the right to vote in all elections. Women had been voting in Wyoming Territory, just to the north of Colorado, ever since 1869, but it was said that the territorial legislature in Wyoming had passed the women's suffrage bill as a joke and that everyone was surprised when the territorial Governor of Wyoming actually signed it.⁶ In the case of Colorado, however, woman suffrage was the result of a favorable vote from an all-male electorate by a margin of 35,798 in favor to 29,451 opposed.⁷

⁶ Wyoming State Highway Map, Centennial Edition, 1999. This state highway map, issued on the 100th anniversary of Wyoming statehood, contained an extensive section on Wyoming history.

⁷ Thomas E. Cronin and Robert D. Loevy, *Colorado Politics and Government* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1993), 91.

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For 27 years, from 1893 until the adoption of the Woman Suffrage Amendment to the United States Constitution in 1920, Colorado women over the age of 21 enjoyed the right to vote when most of their sisters in other states could not. This politically liberated position must have had some effect on the political attitudes of Colorado women.

At Colorado College, women faculty and staff, faculty wives, and even women students over the age of 21 who were from Colorado could all cast votes in elections. This surely gave them a deep sense of political equality with men and encouraged them to seek political careers in Colorado if they wanted them. Granted, it was only one piece of equality with Colorado men, but it was an important piece nonetheless.

Katherine Lee Bates

The summer of 1893, a Professor of English at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, Katherine Lee Bates, came to Colorado Springs to teach in the Colorado Summer School of Science, Philosophy, and Languages. Although the summer session was supported by colleges and universities throughout Colorado, it was hosted by Colorado College.

While teaching on the Colorado College campus, Katherine Lee Bates took a wagon ride to the summit of Pike's Peak, the 14,110 foot high mountain located to the west of Colorado Springs. The beautiful views she saw from the mountaintop inspired her to write a poem, later set to music, entitled "America the Beautiful."

Because of the great popularity of "America the Beautiful" with the United States public, Katherine Lee Bates is undoubtedly one of the most influential and important women ever to teach on the Colorado College campus.⁸ One could even go as far as to say that Colorado College is "The 'America the Beautiful' College."

⁸ For further details on "America the Beautiful" and Colorado College, see Robert D. Loevy, *Colorado College: A Place Of Learning, 1874-1999* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1999), 63.



WOMEN AND MEN STUDENTS IN THE 1890s

The students are standing and socializing on the front steps of Coburn Library, a popular gathering place for students at Colorado College in the 1890s. Coburn Library was torn down in the early 1960s to make way for Armstrong Hall. (Photograph from Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.)

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Women Financial Contributors

Miss Elizabeth Cheney moved to Colorado Springs in search of a remedy to her ailing health. She was particularly impressed with Colorado College and its potential for educating young women in Colorado. In the late 1890s, she gave President William Frederick Slocum an envelope containing a check for \$5,000. When Slocum told Elizabeth Cheney he was going to use the money to build a women's dormitory, she said: "I'll make it \$10,000." The result was Ticknor Hall, named for Anna Ticknor of Boston, a close friend and adviser of Miss Cheney. Later on, she contributed money to pay for a pipe organ for the assembly hall in Perkins Hall, an art and music building being constructed at Colorado College.

Elizabeth Cheney was the first in what would become a significant line of women who would be major financial contributors to Colorado College. She was followed by Miss Marion McGregor Noyes, who taught Latin and Philosophy and was President Slocum's assistant in the Philosophy Department from 1891 to 1897. In addition to her teaching at the College, she solicited a number of major contributions for a new women's residence hall. It was named McGregor Hall in honor of Marion McGregor Noyes's mother's family name.

In 1931, Mrs. Augusta Swart-Earle oversaw construction of the Earle Flagpole, a seventy-five foot flagpole with four bronze tigers at the base, which she gave to the College in memory of her late husband. In the 1940s, Mrs. Alice Bemis Taylor left \$400,000 in her estate to Colorado College to build a new library.

A more recent woman financial contributor to Colorado College was Edith Kinney Gaylord, a member of a prominent Oklahoma publishing family. A new performing arts center at the College, the Edith Kinney Gaylord Cornerstone Arts Center, was named for her.

Female Social Life Presided Over by Dean of Women

The rapid expansion of housing for female students was followed by strict expectations for their safety and social conduct, and thus was born the position of Dean of Women at Colorado College. Institutions nationwide with male presidents were forced to address female student's personal issues

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with caution. Uncomfortable stigmas surrounded the idea of male presidents meeting privately with female students, and it was decided that a Dean of Women could better, and more safely, address the private concerns of female students.

In 1897, Ruth Loomis was appointed Colorado College's first Dean of Women. This administrative decision would prove to be highly influential in the development of women's culture at Colorado College, as Ruth Loomis bestowed a legacy of elevated moral standards and social etiquette. It was stated that Loomis, in effect, "maintained a college for women in a coeducational institution."⁹

In the words of her successor, Mabel Barbee Lee: "The College boasted of enough girls with cultivated backgrounds to leaven the group, yet most of the others came from dry-farming towns and mining camps of Colorado, with some from the scattered cattle ranches of Wyoming and New Mexico. Dean Loomis felt it was important to give them a polish along with strict moral standards.... Dignity marked Dean Loomis's bearing; even her laughter was subdued and lady-like.... She knew all the requirements for proper young women, and lest we forget, a list of reminders was tacked inside our closet doors."¹⁰

These regulations included the requiring of female students to sign-out and sign-in before their rigid curfews of 10 P.M. on weekdays and Sundays and 12 Midnight on Saturdays. There was also a limit placed on how many nights they were permitted out, with freshmen women given one night a week and senior women allowed ten nights per month.

The three-sided "quadrangle" of four women's dormitories provided a location for the social engagements of female students to thrive, and Dean Loomis's living quarters in Ticknor Hall (and later Bemis Hall) kept these social activities under close watch. Loomis was chair of the committee that regulated scheduled school social events, and she took care to ensure these events represented the proper standards of conduct she expected from her women students.

⁹ Charlie Brown Hershey, *Colorado College, 1874-1949* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1952), 163.

¹⁰ J. Juan Reid, *Colorado College: The First Century, 1874-1974* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1979), 49-50.

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Dances were permitted only at San Luis School, an elementary school on campus, and at selected hotels in Colorado Springs. Dean Loomis supported bands that did not play “raggy” music. She urged the women students to show restraint in their dancing. Chaperones, usually two faculty members and their wives, were present at each social function. Drinking was banned for female students on or off campus.¹¹

The Beginning of Student Government for Women

In 1906, the Student Government Association for Women Students was founded to provide “the utmost freedom of individual action possible in community life with the highest mental and moral development.” The organization published the “Handbook of the Associated Students at Colorado College,” a small pamphlet distributed to female incoming freshmen. The tiny book was comprised of “directions for the life of young women in Colorado College.” Subjects covered included mealtimes, care of rooms, laundry arrangements, precautions against fire and illness, hour regulations, study hours, and rules for entertaining guests.

By having their own student government, the women students played an active role in writing and enforcing the rules under which they conducted their social lives. The student Executive Board consisted of a president, vice-president, secretary, and five regular members, all of whom were women students. This gave the women students the opportunity to participate in a portion of student governance at the College without having to compete with men to attain elected office.¹²

¹¹ This list of social restrictions on women students applied by Dean Loomis is from J. Juan Reid, *Colorado College: The First Century, 1874-1974* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1979), 67-68.

¹² For an example of the social regulations for women, see “Regulations passed by the Student Government Association governing the Life of the Women of Colorado College,” September, 1906, Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.



A STUDENT OUTING IN THE GARDEN OF THE GODS

This photograph depicts women and men students enjoying a visit to the Garden of the Gods, a “red rocks” public park on the west side of Colorado Springs not far from the Colorado College campus. The date is 1908. Photographs indicate that women students in the 1890s and early 1900s always wore hats, even when in the classroom and the laboratory. (Photograph from Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.)

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Women Administrators

It is important to note that a woman, Ruth Loomis, was the *first* administrator of either sex hired by Colorado College. There would be many more female administrators over the years. In 1910 Mrs. Josephine Morrow became the Registrar at Colorado College. Her time in that post lasted 37 years until 1947. Another significant woman administrator was Louise Kampf, who was the Librarian at the College for 29 years, from 1929 to 1958.

Women's Clubs

In 1891, a men's military drill team was formed as an early student organization on campus. Not to be outdone, or perhaps just to gain their share of the activity, female students organized the Plantagenets drill team, with gender appropriate uniforms and broomsticks in place of rifles.¹³

At about the same time, some men students met to form a new literary and debating society named the Appolonian Club. "The women felt very much left out," it was later reported. "Miss Eloise Wickard, then in the English Department, came to the rescue. On October 14, 1891, she invited five girls to her home.... The result of the afternoon was the formation of the Minerva literary society. It was a sensational event in the life of the College and received enthusiastic approval and support."

School bulletins tell of a friendly rivalry between the Appolonian males and the Minerva females in their struggles for literary advancement. Minerva earned the respect of the male Appolonian Club members, who were recorded as stating: "The girls' star is in the ascendancy," and behold "Minerva, sister of Apollo!"¹⁴

The two societies began entertaining one another at their meetings and inviting each other, as honorary members, to their debates. Upon the completion of Coburn Library, the Appolonian Club and the Minerva

¹³ J. Juan Reid, *Colorado College: The First Century, 1874-1974* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1979), 44.

¹⁴ Lena Murphy, "A Short History of the Minerva Society," 1921, Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.

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Society worked together to furnish a society hall as a meeting place for both clubs to use.

Minerva proved so successful it was followed by two other female societies in 1899, Contemporary and Hypatia. The societies organized socials, dances, picnics, musicals, and banquets alongside their literary and debate activities. A notable rivalry formed among the numerous women's literary societies in the early 1900s, and in 1911 a committee with representatives from each of the three societies met with Dean Ruth Loomis to form inter-society rules.

The literary societies would later, in the 1930s, be transformed into sororities on campus. Additional early clubs for women students included the Young Women's Christian Association, the Dramatic Club, the Girls' Athletic Association, Girls' Glee Club, and the Girls' Mandolin Club.

Athletics

In 1912, a relative of President Slocum named Mrs. A. D. Juilliard gave \$100,000 to the College for the construction of a social and athletic center for male students. The facility was to be named in memory of her father, Frederick H. Cossitt. It was constructed to the south of the women's residence halls and adjacent to Hagerman Hall, the only men's dormitory.

Cossitt Hall included a men's lounge, meeting rooms, and a men's dining hall as well as a basketball court and a small outdoor exercise area. At this time, female intercollegiate athletic teams were virtually nonexistent at the College. The Tiger Club, a women's pep club to boost the cheering sections at male sporting events, was the primary form of female involvement in competitive intercollegiate sports at the College.

Quieter forms of sports were available for women students, however. At various times in the early 20th Century, women at Colorado College could take physical education courses in tennis, horseback riding, waterskiing (on the lake at the Broadmoor Hotel), swimming, etc.

An important woman on the faculty at this time was Eleanor Davis, who served as director of women's athletics from 1914 to 1930. Davis also was a pioneer woman technical mountain climber who successfully summited a number of extremely difficult 14,000 foot high mountains in the Rocky Mountain West.

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World War I

With the outbreak of World War I, the focus of the College shifted to aiding the war effort. In 1918, Colorado College instituted a compulsory military training program for all of the male students. The U.S. Army established an Army Signal Corps service school on the campus to train radio operators. Some 500 soldiers got their radio training at the College, with about 350 of them serving at or near the battlefield in Europe.

The Turbulent 1920s

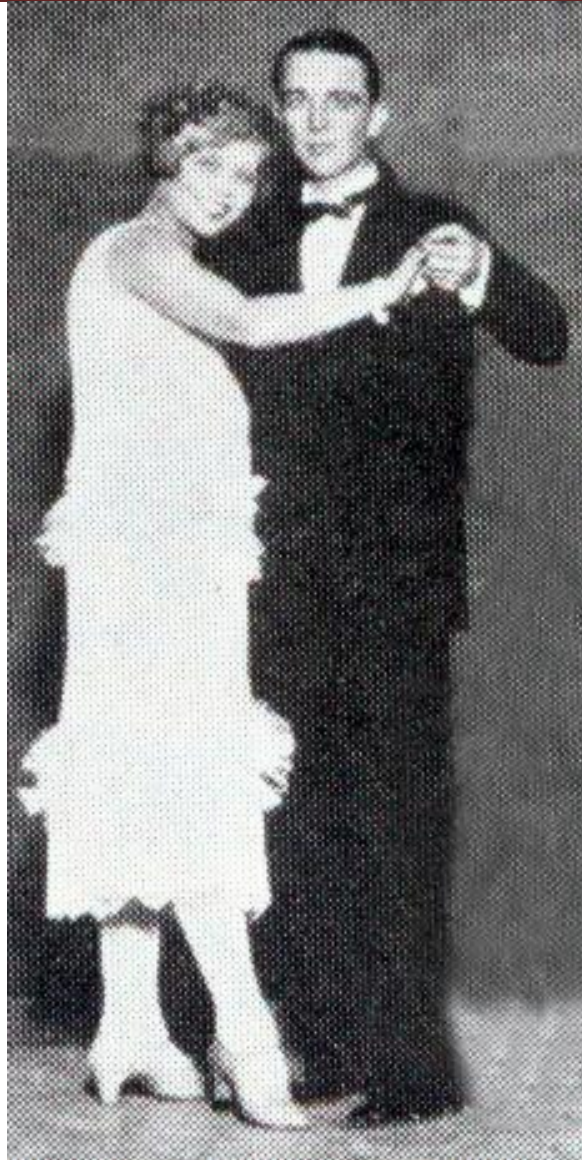
The flamboyant and liberating culture of the 1920s (the “Roaring Twenties”) made a profound impression on the attitudes of Colorado College students. A new Dean of Women, Mabel Barbee Lee, came to the campus in 1922, faced with the challenge of adapting social policies for women at the College to shifting national attitudes. She noted: “I was greeted by the fulsome breath of prohibition and the clanging discords of hot jazz. The docile freshman of my day had been replaced by a rebel, screaming for ... freedom and self-expression.”¹⁵

Students began to vocalize their discontent with administrative policies that dictated students’ social lives. In the early 1920s, students questioned the women’s residence hall regulation that forbade male visitors on Sundays. There also was student opposition to mandatory attendance at chapel. The result was well-publicized clashes between the student body and the College administration.

The Colorado Springs community expressed disapproval of these new liberated forms of student behavior. A 1924 editorial in the *Colorado Springs Gazette* stated that modern college students were indifferent to the teachings of their professors, drank with utter disregard for the Prohibition laws, spent too much time playing card games (such as bridge), and indulged themselves in immoral behavior.¹⁶

¹⁵ Mabel Barbee Lee, “Stormy Young Rebels,” *Empire Magazine*, *Denver Post*, December 30, 1951, 8-9.

¹⁶ *Colorado Springs Gazette*, February 13, 1924.



**A STUDENT COUPLE PREPARING TO DO
THE CHARLESTON IN THE 1920s**

*This photograph is not of an actual student dance at Colorado College but is of a scene from a musical comedy presented by the students. The particular scene was entitled “The Charleston.” The photo is from the 1927 College yearbook, *The Nugget*. (Photograph from Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.)*

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A noticeable change had occurred in female behavior at Colorado College. The women students dressed to reflect the more liberalized mores of the nation. The old College social rules for women clashed mightily with new values that involved bathtub gin, bobbed hair, flapper skirts, and dancing the Charleston. Romantic relationships were prominent on campus, and female students coveted the fraternity pins that male students pinned on the female of their choosing.

Formerly taboo subjects such as eroticism, free love, necking, and petting became topics of student discussion for both sexes. This liberated Colorado College females to embrace and flaunt their sexuality, but concurrently it reduced them to being idealized as beauty queens.

In 1925, the College yearbook, the *Nugget*, began an annual contest to select the most beautiful Colorado College female student. The student body would elect 12 finalists, who were photographed. The photos were sent off to be judged by a male connected to the College. The judge would return the photos with his selections for fourth, third, second, and first place beauty honors. The photos of the beauty contest winners were printed on full-size pages in the yearbook.

One of the treasured memories of the 1920s at Colorado College was the fraternity serenade. On Sunday nights, the various fraternities would come over to the Women's Quadrangle and compete with one another at providing musical entertainment for the women students. As fraternity men arrived with their musical instruments, the women students would gather on the porch in front of Bemis Hall or look out from the windows of the other women's dorms. The entertainment often last as long as an hour, and it sometimes included the fraternity men doing hula dances, singing blues songs, and shooting off fireworks.

And yet, despite all the hoopla about the liberated 1920s, most of the rules limiting women students' social behavior at Colorado College remained in place and stayed in place for the next 40 years until the 1960s. Of those unchanged rules, the most important, and burdensome, was the rule that women students sign-in and sign-out when leaving the dormitory and that they be back in their dorm room every night, even on weekends, by a set deadline.

There seemed to be a sense that the women students of Colorado College had it pretty good in the 1920s. They were regulated socially by their own all-woman student government. There were many "all-girl"

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parties. A “sponsor system” provided each entering woman student with a junior or senior class woman to guide her into college life. And a woman faculty member lived in each dormitory and was there to provide guidance as well as to listen to and try to help solve women students’ personal problems.

In 1928, the College yearbook, the *Nugget*, summed it up this way: “There is no place like Colorado College for a girl.”¹⁷

Female Pioneers on the Faculty

It appears that the first woman with a Ph.D. to teach at Colorado College was Leila Clement Spaulding, who taught Classics from 1911 to 1914. She also was the resident female faculty member in Ticknor Hall, a women’s dormitory.¹⁸

Leila Spaulding was born in Morristown, New Jersey, in 1878. She graduated with a B.A. from Vassar College in 1899 and received her Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1910. She trained in Archaeology as well as Classics, and she won graduate fellowships to study and do research in both Athens and Rome. While working for her Ph.D., she taught at both Vassar College and Bryn Mawr College.

Her doctoral dissertation was entitled “The ‘Camillus’ Type in Sculpture” and was published in 1911. She was described as a strong supporter of votes for women, and she was labeled as “progressive” in her political outlook.

Up until she left the faculty at Colorado College in 1914, Leila Spaulding was pursuing a traditional professional academic career, much as a male professor would. She subsequently married Edward W. Kent, and the two of them remained in Colorado Springs for about twenty years. In the 1930s, they moved to Florida, where Leila Spaulding died at the age of 94

¹⁷ This glowing view of life for women students at Colorado College is from *The 1928 Nugget*, Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College, 34.

¹⁸ Judgments about the service dates of women faculty members were made by checking a list of all Colorado College faculty members, with their highest degree earned and their years of service, found in Charlie Brown Hershey, *Colorado College, 1874-1949* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1952), 279-295.

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on January 1, 1973. There is no evidence that she did any major academic research or college teaching following her marriage.

Leila Spaulding's unique role as the first woman with a Ph.D. to teach at Colorado College was not mentioned in any of the three major histories of Colorado College published prior to 2012. The College took its time getting around to hiring its first woman Ph.D. Nineteen males with Ph.D.s were hired before Colorado College hired its first woman with a doctorate. A male with a Ph.D. was hired the same year Leila Spaulding was. She thus is tied for the honor of being the 20th Ph.D. hired at Colorado College.

Once Leila Spaulding had broken the ice, Colorado College starting hiring more women faculty with a Ph.D. One year after Spaulding joined the faculty, Hester Donaldson Jenkins, whose Ph.D. was from Columbia University, signed on to teach History for two years until 1914. She was followed by Mabel Dominick, who had a doctoral degree and taught German for three years from 1917 to 1920. Helen Murphy had a Ph.D. and taught Biology only during the 1920-1921 academic year.

The first woman faculty member with a Ph.D. to make a career of teaching at Colorado College was Edith Bramhall, who taught Political Science for 26 years, from 1920 to 1946. Bramhall was born in 1874, the same year that Colorado College was founded. She earned her B.A. degree from the University of Indiana at Bloomington. She was awarded her Ph.D. degree, in Medieval History with a minor in Political Science, at the University of Pennsylvania in 1898.

Bramhall was an adventurous woman. During World War I, she worked as a nurse's assistant taking care of wounded soldiers in France. She enjoyed attending legislative hearings in the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C., and she was the first woman to be elected to the Colorado Springs City Council. In the years prior to World War II, she was an open and outspoken critic of Adolph Hitler and Nazism.

In the early 20th Century, a number of women teachers without a Ph.D. degree were putting in respectably long careers on the Colorado College faculty. Marie Sahn taught German, Italian, and Art for 12 years from 1907 to 1919. Mrs. Emilie Reutlinger taught music for 13 years from 1922 to 1935. Martha Belschner taught Mathematics for 14 years from 1927 to 1941. Charlotte Leaming, with help from her sister Susan Leaming, taught Art at Colorado College in two different time periods – 1916 to 1926 and 1930 to 1940.

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Also worthy of notice was Mabel Barbee Lee, who left her job as Dean of Women in 1929. She took up a career as a writer, earning extensive publicity with the publication of her book *Cripple Creek Days*, a memoir detailing her life as a young wife in a gold mining camp during the Cripple Creek Gold Rush.

The Great Depression

The Great Depression, which began with the Stock Market Crash of 1929, had a significant impact on Colorado College student enrollment, and particularly on the number of student residents in the dorms. At a time when money was in short supply, one of the easiest ways for a family to save money was to send the children to a local college or university and save the cost of room and board.

Three of the four women's dormitories - Ticknor, Montgomery, and McGregor halls - were temporarily closed. All remaining residential females were housed in Bemis Hall. Of the 509 undergraduates enrolled for the fall term of 1934 at the College, only 75 women chose to live in the dormitories. Only six men were living in the College's one male dormitory, Hagerman Hall. The remaining students, men and women alike, commuted from family or friends' homes in the Colorado Springs area.

The situation began to improve in 1936. The number of residential female students that year doubled over the previous year, causing Ticknor Hall and a newly renovated Montgomery Hall to be reopened. Shortly thereafter, McGregor Hall opened its doors, and all four women's dormitories were back operating at full strength.

Sororities

The faculty and Board of Trustees approved the "New Colorado College Plan" for the 1930-1931 school year. The plan included the establishment of national sororities on the campus, with the condition that women would not live in their sorority houses the way men lived in fraternity houses.

The four women's literary societies existing at the time were reorganized as chapters of national sororities. Minerva was made Delta

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Gamma, Contemporary became Kappa Alpha Theta, Hypatia was accepted by Kappa Kappa Gamma, and Zatalathian became Gamma Phi Beta.

Women students not interested in Greek life started more inclusive social groups such as the “Barbetts,” the “Campus Club,” and “Independent Women.”

More Women Administrators

Throughout the 1930s, women continued to take on important jobs as administrators at the College. One major appointment was Evaline C. McNary as Dietitian and Director of Women’s Residence Halls. Another significant placement was Lorena A. Berger as Alumni Secretary. She successfully merged the National Alumni Association of the College with the Alumni Fund-Raising Program.

World War II

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 did not immediately affect the Colorado College campus. As one College historian explained it: “The crowning of Julia Gates [as the Beauty Queen] at the Homecoming Dance at the Broadmoor seemed to be of more concern to the students than the bombing of Warsaw by Hitler’s warplanes.”¹⁹

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, brought the United States into direct involvement in World War II. Colorado College quickly shifted into wartime mode. As it had done in World War I, the College instituted a compulsory physical training program for all male students. It also approved accelerated academic programs for male seniors with low draft numbers so they could graduate early before beginning military service.

During the World War II years, the enrollment of women students was the highest in the history of the College up to that time. In response, the College purchased residences at 1122 Wood Avenue (now known as Hamlin House) and 1110 North Tejon Street to be converted into women’s housing.

¹⁹ J. Juan Reid, *Colorado College: The First Century, 1874-1974* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1979), 149-150.

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In the absence of the large number of male students who were away doing their military service, women took greater charge of student activities on campus. The women students took major responsibility for serving in the student government, for publishing the student newspaper, and for putting out the yearbook.

To do their part in the “war effort,” the women students worked on a Victory Garden planted in the main quadrangle between Coburn Library and Palmer Hall. Joining with faculty and administrators, the women students cultivated vegetables in order to save food for military personnel serving in World War II throughout the world.

Colorado College became a training center for the Navy-Marine V-12 Program during World War II. The young men, some of them combat veterans returned from overseas battlegrounds, took college-level courses along with their military training. Many of the V-12 students were housed in Hagerman Hall, the principal men’s dormitory on campus.

Although the women students and the V-12 sailors and marines mixed together in the social life on campus, things were not the same as before the war. Romances, if they occurred, were short-lived, as the military men were often transferred out to regular military duty at the end of a semester. A 1944 report on the situation stated:

“The V-12 Unit and the women have never fused into [a united campus community]. Colorado College spirit was lacking as a ‘We’ and ‘You’ attitude prevailed. Underneath there was an undercurrent of unrest, the feeling of insecurity. There was more concern for the immediate, an intentness on personal affairs, and a fear that life was passing them by, and tomorrow might never come.”²⁰

The war claimed the lives of 52 Colorado College men. Some 2,000 Navy and Marine Corps trainees had been in the V-12 Program during the war. After the fighting was over, military veterans returned to Colorado College, in many cases with their wives and children, to complete their college educations. Military veterans with wives and children were mainly housed in Quonset huts – temporary housing – that had been hastily constructed to the east of Perkins Hall. The site in 2012 was the Armstrong Hall parking lot.

²⁰ J. Juan Reid, *Colorado College: The First Century, 1874-1974* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1979), 159-160.



TENDING THE VICTORY GARDEN

During World War II, the women students, joined by faculty and administrators, planted a Victory Garden in the main quadrangle in front of Palmer Hall. The large stone building in the background is Coburn Library. (Photograph from Special Collections, Tutt Library, Colorado College.)

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Hanya Holm

In 1941, a famous former Broadway dancer and choreographer, Hanya Holm, began teaching dance classes in the Summer Session at Colorado College. It was the beginning of a 43-year stint of teaching dance every summer that lasted into the early 1980s. One of the highlights of summertime at Colorado College during those many years was the public dance performances put on by Hanya Holm's students, with Hanya herself performing as well.

The 1950s

In the 1950s, although female students had escaped some restrictions of the early 20th Century, the College retained a number of elements of control over female students' lives. A new element was the installation of head residents in female dormitories. Sallie Payne Morgan, appointed Dean of Women in 1950, introduced the idea of having older college graduates with counseling experience live in the women's dorms and serve as mentors and monitors of student wellbeing.

Traditional residence hall rules for women students were modified but remained in effect. Female students had to sign in and sign out when leaving their dormitory after 8:30 P.M. In order for women students to stay out overnight, parental permission was required. In addition, Colorado College began hiring "house mothers" to live in the sorority houses (even though no women students lived there). These women were older caretakers who were to see to the maintenance of proper conduct during sorority social events.

Also during the 1950s, two new buildings were named for two of Colorado College's most influential women. A new dormitory for women was named Loomis Hall, in honor of Ruth Loomis, the College's first Dean of Women. Loomis Hall was located so as to complete the quadrangle of women's residence halls that included Montgomery Hall, Ticknor Hall, Bemis Hall, and McGregor Hall.

The other new building named for a woman was Taylor Dining Room, which honored Alice Bemis Taylor, the first woman member of the Colorado College Board of Trustees. She was also a major financial contributor to the College, both during her lifetime and in her will. Taylor Dining Hall was added on to the east side of Bemis Hall.

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The opening of Taylor Dining Hall in 1956 was a very significant event in the history of gender relationships at Colorado College. For the first time in the College's history, men and women students were allowed to eat together in College dining halls on a regular basis. Previously, the men ate regularly in the men's dining hall in Cossitt Hall, and the women ate in the women's dining hall in Bemis Hall. The men's dining hall in Cossitt Hall closed when Taylor Dining Room opened.

Taylor Dining Room going co-educational marked the beginning of the end of rigid social segregation of men and women students at Colorado College. Some observers expressed sadness at the demise of that lengthy era when Colorado College "maintained a college for women in a coeducational institution."²¹

Also during the 1950s, a chapter of Alpha Lambda Delta, a freshman women's honor society, was established on campus in an effort to emphasize academic achievement by first-year women students.

The Turbulent 1960s

The 1960s were the years when the World War II "Baby Boomers" began arriving as students at United States colleges and universities. This giant expansion in the number of college-age men and women was caused by the large numbers of babies born in the late 1940s to military personnel and their spouses returning to civilian life after World War II.

The Free Speech Movement began in 1964 at the University of California at Berkeley, spreading across the nation with student demonstrations, sit-ins, and riots to express discontent with the rigidity and conformity in American life and American higher education. At Colorado College in the 1960s, the students turned their critical eyes on the rigid rules that had governed the social behavior of women students ever since the College's founding in 1874. The two major student governments of the era, the Associated Women Students and the Associated Students of Colorado College, came under pressure to reevaluate and liberalize the strict residence hall policies at the College.

²¹ This quote relates to Ruth Loomis, the College's first Dean of Women. She wrote and enforced the original strict rules governing the social behavior of women students at Colorado College.

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The result was a non-violent campus revolution in which a new form of student government was created that did away with the old system of having one student government for women students (to make and enforce social rules) and a second student government for both men and women (to deal with more general campus matters of interest to students). A single new student government emerged. It was called the Colorado College Campus Association (CCCA).

The CCCA consisted of a majority of elected student members along with minority representation of the faculty and the dean's office. Towards the end of the 1960s, the social policies of the College began to more fully reflect student sentiment. In 1967, the students staged a peaceful protest in front of Armstrong Hall for the right to live off-campus if desired. The College extended that privilege to both men and women students who were military veterans, members of the senior class, and over the age of 21.

About the same time, the College lifted "hours" restrictions in female dormitories for women in the senior class and women over the age of 21. During the 1968-1969 school year, the CCCA pressured the College to remove the ban on entertaining members of the opposite sex in dormitory bedrooms. The campaign was successful, and subsequently students were allowed to have whomever they wished in their dormitory rooms without hours limitations.

In 1969, the College made the decision to convert Mathias Hall, previously a men's dormitory, into a coed dorm. The following year, all residence halls on campus were granted the option of housing both male and female students, if approved by majority vote of the residents of the hall. Originally coed dormitories meant having women students living on one floor or in one wing of the dorm and men students living on a different floor or in a different wing. By 1977, however, the College was providing for "alternate room" coed housing.

Two external forces in the United States contributed to the wholesale relaxation of college and university social rules for women students in the 1960s and 1970s. One was the development of efficient and effective birth-control pills in the early 1960s. The other was the *Roe v. Wade* decision by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973 that legalized medical termination of pregnancies. These two developments, one in medical technology and the other in the legal system, helped to reduce the likelihood of the most

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unsatisfactory result of close male-female student relationships – unwanted pregnancies.

The Changing Nature of Student Life

The revolutionary spirit in the student body that produced coed housing also resulted in the demise of a number of hallowed traditions at Colorado College. The Homecoming Parade, the Winter Carnival, the Songfest, and a number of other student activities soon were regarded as unsophisticated and uncool and disappeared from the campus. The student band that played and marched at football games dis-banded, and suddenly organized sports pep rallies with female cheerleaders were a thing of the past. Also coming to an abrupt end was the annual selection of women students as beauty queens.

As the College entered the 1970s, the way students dressed and groomed themselves changed radically. Gone were the suit coats and ties that characterized the male students of the 1950s. Denim trousers, also called dungarees or levis, became the order of the day, often accompanied by nothing more than a T-shirt above the waste. Levis also became popular with the women students, who turned away from the sweaters and skirts and camel's hair coats of the 1950s.

There soon arose a phenomenon known as: "The Pursuit of the Ugly." It involved non-descript dress for both sexes, torn and otherwise old-looking clothes, bare feet, long hair and beards for men, and cut-off long pants (into homemade shorts) for women. Formality and attractive appearance were disdained by many Colorado College students.

And there was another casualty of the great social changes of the late 1960s. Men and women students no longer went on "formal dates" as they had in the 1950s. Instead, the two sexes got together during class or laboratory, or at parties, or by "hanging out" at a variety of meeting places on the campus.

Women's Liberation Movement

The Women's Liberation Movement began sweeping across the United States in the early 1970s, and it definitely left its mark on Colorado College. Women students became concerned about the objectification of

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women and their marginalization in respect to various activities on campus. The College hosted speakers such as Rita Costick and Don Ward, who spoke on “The Role of Communication in Sexual Behavior.” They decried the conventional stereotypes in which men were cast as “powerful” and the women were to be “secure in male power.” They urged the students to break out of the customary roles assigned to males and females and thereby avoid the pre-prescribed gender stereotypes.²²

Ayuda

An activist women’s rights group (which some would have labeled a radical feminist organization) formed during the 1971-1972 academic year. It was named Ayuda, and one of its major goals was to press for equal numbers of men and women in the student body. At that time, there were almost twice as many males as females studying at Colorado College.

It took some 20-years, but by the early 1990s Ayuda’s goal of a student body at Colorado College equally balanced between men and women had been achieved.

Facilitating that change was the fact that the Baby Boom years at colleges and universities were over. Suddenly there was a diminishing number of students available to go to college or university. Luckily, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, increasing numbers of young women elected to get a higher education. Their increasing numbers kept college and university enrollments from shrinking during the 1990s and simultaneously made women students a larger presence in college and university student bodies.

In other words, the increasing propensity of women to go to college and university during the 1990s really helped Colorado College in its efforts to maintain its traditional enrollment of about 2,000 students throughout the 1990s.

²² Anne Reifenberg, “Ward and Costick Decry Sexual Stereotypes,” *Colorado College Catalyst*, November 8, 1974, 3.

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Women's Healthcare at CC

Ayuda also complained about the lack of female-specialized services offered at the student infirmary at Colorado College. Ayuda's goal was to have Boettcher Health Center "provide education necessary for insuring students against possible results of sex, i.e. venereal disease and or pregnancy."²³ Ayuda lobbied for establishing free gynecological services for women students at Boettcher.

Student health care first came on to Colorado College's agenda during the presidency of William Frederick Slocum. In 1894, Slocum brought a woman doctor, Grace A. Preston, to campus as a Lecturer in Physiology and Hygiene and to serve part time as the College's Medical Advisor. The recipient of an M.A. and a M.D, Preston's hiring marked the beginning of medical services at Colorado College. She was succeeded by a series of women and men doctors who served the campus as Medical Advisor.²⁴

It is interesting to note that Colorado College hired a woman M.D., Grace Preston, almost two decades before it hired its first woman Ph.D., Leila Spaulding. Preston was hired in 1894 and Spaulding 17 years later in 1911.

By the early 1970s, Colorado College had a fully functioning student infirmary, Boettcher Health Center, but gynecological services, including birth control, were not available to women students there. The College's policy was to send women students needing birth control advice to local doctors in the Colorado Springs community.

During the 1977-1978 academic year, a Women's Health Task Force was formed to study women's health care at Colorado College and make recommendations on how to improve it. The Task Force made a number of suggestions, such as hiring a part-time nurse practitioner to provide basic gynecological services to women students.

The situation clarified in 1981, when Judith Reynolds, a graduate of Colorado College, became the new College doctor at Boettcher Health

²³ J. Juan Reid, *Colorado College: The First Century, 1874-1974* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1979), 278.

²⁴ Charlie Brown Hershey, *Colorado College, 1874-1949* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1952), 274-276.

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Center. Dr. Reynolds announced that she would provide gynecological examinations and conferences as well as birth control counseling.²⁵

A Women's Studies Major

The initial women's political organization at Colorado College, Ayuda, was a student group and, typical of student groups, soon broke up and disappeared from the campus. In 1974, the Women's Commission was formed to create a more permanent organization designed to represent women's rights and women's interests at Colorado College. A primary goal of the Women's Commission was to have more teaching about women and women's accomplishments presented in academic courses at the College.

The Women's Commission said the goal of a Women's Studies major would be to discover, write about, and teach about the literary and historical achievements of notable females. The Commission denied the charge that it was going to "create" or "invent" such a literature and history.²⁶

The struggle to create a Women's Studies major at Colorado College would be a long one. Finally, 25 years after the Women's Commission was first organized, a Women's Studies major was adopted in 1995 and became a recognized part of the curriculum. The major was mainly composed of courses related to women's issues that were taught by faculty members in other departments of the College.²⁷ It should be noted that Colorado College did not adopt a Women's Studies major until it had a woman serving as President (Kathryn Mohrman).

²⁵ James Schmid, "Boettcher Offers Complete Care," *Colorado College Catalyst*, April 24, 1981, 3.

²⁶ Vicki Ziegler, "Explanation of Goals of the Women's Commission," *Colorado College Catalyst*, January 25, 1975, 5. See also Gail Bradney, "Women's Commission Strives to Improve Education at CC," *Colorado College Catalyst*, May 14, 1976, 5.

²⁷ Lisa Gesson, "Women Studies Now an Official Major," *Colorado College Catalyst*, December 1, 1995, 14.

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Women in Athletics

In 1972, the U.S. Congress enacted Title IX of the 1972 Amendments to the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This law required that colleges and universities that receive U.S. Government funds treat men's and women's sports equally. Since Colorado College received U.S. Government funds for scholarships, scientific research, constructing dormitories, etc., Title IX had a major impact on athletic activity at the College. Actually, Title IX signified a monumental triumph for women in athletics at Colorado College.

One of the first effects of Title IX was a growing realization that Colorado College lacked the facilities to accommodate the expansion of female sports programs. To highlight this shortcoming in women's athletic facilities, in 1973 20 female students staged a "shower in" in one of the men's locker rooms in the College's El Pomar Sports Center.

In 1975, reacting to the pressures created by Title IX, President Lloyd Edson (Lew) Worner hired Laura Golden to organize a formal intercollegiate sports program for female students. Golden engaged the student body to determine athletic interest, and it was decided that Colorado College would start eight intercollegiate varsity sports for females. They were field hockey, soccer, volleyball, basketball, snow skiing, softball, tennis, and track and field. From their initiation, women's sports operated under the same regulations as male sports (except for the Division I men's ice hockey team). There were no scholarships and no formal recruiting by coaches, but there was a deep commitment to academics rather than sports as the fundamental mission of the College.

Colorado College women got off to a particularly fast start in the sport of basketball. In 1976-1977, the women's basketball team triumphed at the regional playoffs in Denver, only to lose at the National Division II championships in Pomona, California. The *Colorado College Catalyst*, the student newspaper, bestowed typical sports-style nicknames on the women hoopsters. "Lorna Kollmeyer was referred to in print as 'Lanky Lorna,' Mary Shifrin was called 'Shifty Shifrin,' and Rose Harvey was described as 'Ramblin' Rose.'"²⁸

²⁸ Robert D. Loevy, *Colorado College: A Place of Learning, 1874-1999* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1999), 226.

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There was a price to be paid for the rapid expansion of the women's sports programs at Colorado College. In order to keep gender participation equal, eventually the men's baseball team and the men's golf team had to be eliminated.

Division I Women's Soccer

In the early 1980s, it became evident that it was unfair for the College to have a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I men's ice hockey team, supported by athletic scholarships, when there was no equivalent Division I sports program for women with scholarships to match.

To remedy this situation, and to meet the gender-equality requirements of Title IX, the women's soccer team at Colorado College was elevated to NCAA Division I status.

Soccer was chosen because soccer had become very popular with women and men athletes alike by the 1980s. Furthermore, it was argued that the kind of young women who played soccer would be capable of doing well academically at Colorado College.

During the 1980s, the Colorado College women's soccer team was very competitive at the national level. In 1986, it was the Number Two women's soccer team in the United States. It lost the national Division I championship to the University of North Carolina by a score of only 2-0.

All at once, there were national sports heroes on the Colorado College campus who were women. They served as role models for other women students, and they demonstrated that women could succeed in athletics as well as men. In the decade of the 1980s, there were 14 women soccer players from Colorado College who were named All-Americans.²⁹

The Last Dean of Women

Laurel McLeod, hired in 1977, was Colorado College's last employee to bear the title of Dean of Women. As dormitory rules for women students were progressively relaxed and reduced, the major part of the job of Dean of Women had been eliminated. During her tenure in office, Laurel McLeod

²⁹ Robert D. Loevy, *Colorado College: A Place of Learning, 1874-1999* (Colorado Springs, CO: Colorado College, 1999), 317-319.

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evolved from being Dean of Women to being Dean of Students to being Vice President for Student Life.

Women Faculty and Administrators

In the 1980s, women remained underrepresented on the Colorado College faculty and in the College administration. They comprised about 20 percent of the faculty and 30 percent of the administrative staff.

In 1988, Professor of Sociology Margaret Duncombe, chair of the Sociology Department, conducted a study illuminating potential sexism and racism in hiring procedures at Colorado College. When she looked at professors receiving tenure from 1981-1988, she found that tenure recipients were mainly male. In addition, out of the eleven faculty members who were terminated during the years she reviewed, nine were women or members of minority groups.

She concluded there was no racism or sexism *per se* at Colorado College, but she alluded to structural barriers to women and minorities achieving success as faculty and administrators. She reported:

“You have a disparity between the older faculty department heads (who tend to be white males) and the newer faculty, many of whom are women or minorities. What is happening is a greater regard for the established department members than the newer faculty, who represent a less traditional canon and tend to be involved with non-departmental programs (i.e., Women’s Studies, Southwest Studies, and Comparative Literature).”

In response to Duncombe’s report, President Gresham Riley pointed out that eleven of the 29 professors awarded tenure at Colorado College were female, and that 50 percent of the women currently on the faculty had received tenure during the time of his presidency. Riley also pointed out that the eleven terminated faculty members in Duncombe’s study had their termination carefully reviewed under the College’s extensive tenure policies and procedures.³⁰

³⁰ David Lazerwitz, “Riley Administration Accused of Bias: Something’s Amiss in Renewals of Women and Minority Faculty Contracts?” *Colorado College Catalyst*, May 20, 1988.

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Changing Status of Women Faculty – 1970s to 2012

Women faculty at Colorado College regarded themselves as the victims of systematic prejudice in the 1970s. A number of them, such as Marianne Stoller in the Anthropology Department and Ruth Barton in the English Department, were forced to work for a long period of time in non-tenured positions. The Admissions Committee had an established policy of admitting 60 percent male students and 40 percent female students. In the classroom, male students occasionally did not show respect to women professors, making snide and sexist comments.

There was no maternity leave. There was no child care center. The social life of the faculty was governed by the Faculty Wives Club, made up of the wives of male faculty. In the College's major athletic facility, there was a faculty locker room for men, but female faculty had to use the women's locker room at the swimming pool. In a condescending manner, women faculty members were often asked by their male counterparts to provide "the women's point of view" on a variety of issues.

There were so few women on the faculty that they could get together for a small luncheon "once-a-block." Some of the regulars at these lunches were Susan Ashley in History, Mary Chenoweth in Art, Margaret Duncombe in Sociology, and Sarah Simmons in Mathematics. According to Susan Ashley, who subsequently became the first woman to be the academic Dean at Colorado College: "The lunches soon came to function as an *ad hoc* support group for the women faculty at the College."³¹

But the number of women on the Colorado College faculty was constantly growing throughout the 1970s and the 1980s. A symbolic moment occurred when the lunch group became too large to meet for lunch and have a single discussion going. The meetings became more occasional rather than once-a-block, were held in classrooms or lecture halls, and usually were precipitated by developments in current issues concerning women faculty.

Another symbolic moment was the end of the Faculty Wives Club and its replacement by a Faculty Club composed of both male and female faculty

³¹ This and subsequent quotes from Professor Ashley are from Susan Ashley, Professor of History and academic Dean of Colorado College, interview by Robert D. Loevy, May 30, 2012.

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members. This change was facilitated by the fact that, as more and more married women became employed, there were fewer unemployed faculty wives available to provide volunteer services to the Faculty Club.

Susan Ashley believes she may have been the first woman on the Colorado College faculty to have a baby while actually teaching a Block Plan class. The year was 1977, and she taught her History class in the morning and gave birth to a little boy later that afternoon. She credits the academic Dean at that time, Richard Bradley, with facilitating that breakthrough moment for women faculty. When she told Dean Bradley of her pregnancy and its possible conflict with her teaching, Bradley replied: “I do not see that being a problem.”

Ashley said that Dean Bradley’s attitude marked the beginning of Colorado College becoming more “family friendly” to female and male faculty alike.

And that brings up another major change. In the early 20th Century, women faculty members at Colorado College mainly were either single or divorced. By the turn of the 21st Century, many of the women faculty at the College were married and raising families. Helping them raise their children was a Child Care Center owned and operated by Colorado College.

Women in Leadership Roles

The atmosphere for women at Colorado College changed completely in the 1990s. “That’s when women reached *critical mass*,” Susan Ashley explained. “Women were moving upwards in large numbers on the faculty and in the college administration. Women were taking more responsibility. The 1990s also were the years when women students became about 50 percent of the student body.”

In Susan Ashley’s view, the history of gender at Colorado College has been one of women students progressively gaining more equality with men students and more freedom to govern their own behavior, both academically and in their social lives. More recently, the major gender change has been the rise of women to leadership roles at the College. “Previously women were not socialized to leadership roles,” Ashley concluded, “but since the 1990s women have been trained as leaders at Colorado College – in their roles as students, as faculty, and as administrators.”

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Two Women Presidents

A crowning moment in women's achievement at Colorado College was when Katharine Mohrman was appointed the first woman President in the history of the College in 1993.

And Mohrman was not a first and only. A man, Dick Celeste, held the presidency following Mohrman. But then he was succeeded in 2011 by Jill Tiefenthaler, the second woman to be President of Colorado College.