

# The Cornell Daily Sun

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## Perspective... Earliest Dorm Met Protests [ARTICLE]

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### Perspective . . .

## Earliest Dorm Met Protests

By BARBARA R. KLOPPER

After a look at early University history, the triumph of senior women in gaining apartment privileges may be considered either an anti-climax or a return to the pioneering spirit.

In other words, from the founding of Sage College for women in 1872 to the infamous date of July 3, 1884, no Cornell co-ed was required to live in a dormitory.

In the deceiving quiet of summer, 1884, the Board of Trustees saw fit to impose living restrictions on the women.

Ellen Coit Elliott '82, a leader in the ensuing protest, summarized the situation as follows: "There was issued by the University and sent to the women students an obnoxious leaflet informing them that a matron had been engaged for Sage College and now all women students would be required to live there. The pamphlet, in a blundering masculine way made some attempt to soften this tyrannical and unjust law (men lived where they pleased) by mentioning that bathrooms had been installed, etc."

According to the University, the fine new Sage College building, completed in 1875, was being wasted. Though it had a capacity for 120 girls, only 25 were living there prior to the decision

sunk without a trace." Most probably, said Mrs. Elliott, it was "presented, tabled and forgotten . . . That was the historic meeting at which the Board received the resignation of Mr. (Andrew Dickson) White; they and he had enough to think about . . . , particularly as Sage had been successfully carrying on for a year under the new arrangement."

However, the contents of the Memorial have peculiar significance in 1962.

"Those," it said, "who have boarded outside of the Sage must feel that this action implies, in the eyes of the world (though undoubtedly such is not the intention of the Board of Trustees), that they have been found unworthy to be trusted with such freedom."

The signees also felt that they had been admitted to the University as individuals, not as women, and that the dormitory ruling drew a distinction between men and women.

The Presidents of several other universities supported the stand of the Memorial.

At once a number of freedom-loving Cornell women assumed the responsibility of developing the clamor into an organized protest. A message was sent to all past and present University coeds requesting their suggestions, reactions and criticisms. The Presidents of other universities and colleges were also solicited. The result was the Sage College Memorial, which was finished in time for presentation at the June 17, 1935 meeting of the Board of Trustees.

At this point, unfortunately, no one seems to know quite what happened. The memorial, signed by 52 women, "seems to have

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