It All Began With Nurses: A Case Study Of Coeducation In Higher Education At Carroll College, 1943-1961

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IT ALL BEGAN WITH NURSES:
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CARROLL COLLEGE, 1943-1961

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PREFACE

Following World War II, American society entered a period of optimism unprecedented in United States history. The war was over, soldiers came home, and the post-war economic boom encouraged people to start families and pursue "the good life." For many Americans, it seemed as though women no longer needed to work. "Rosie the Riveter" was cast aside, as the image of homemaker glamorously resurfaced. Women were free to return to their housework, as though their presence in the workplace was only a passing moment.

But not all women were ready to settle down. Some women entered higher education to train for the workforce. The demand for higher education grew primarily out of the desire for nursing and education programs. Women's higher education had been steadily growing over time, but it was only after the war that the programs truly began to prosper. With the growth of women’s programs, men's colleges seemed to realize the potential for female students. As a natural progression, men's colleges slowly admitted women to the programs that suited them. Although coeducation thrived, many Roman Catholic colleges failed to coeducate until much later.

Carroll College, a diocesan college in western Montana, was founded in 1909 as a Catholic college for young men. Throughout its initial years, the college did not have much interaction with women. In 1925, Bishop John Patrick Carroll of the Diocese of Helena welcomed the Sisters of St. Dominic from Speyer, Germany, to work as staff, with duties such as preparing meals and cleaning rooms at the college. Throughout the
transition into college life, the sisters encountered harassments by both students and priests. One sister recalled, "priests were petty and hostile."¹ Some priests actively rallied to have the sisters removed from campus. When their demands were not met, the aggravated priests left the college.² Additionally, most students were not accustomed to nuns; they preferred priests and consequently disrespected the work of the sisters. Some students were so bold as to throw food at the sisters and call them "menial laborers."³ The nuns, however, did remain to serve the college for several years. Their presence exemplified the challenges that many women faced in institutions of higher education.

During and after the war, administrators of Carroll College found that women were eager to attend higher education. A partnership was made in 1946 between the Sisters of Charity School of Nursing and Carroll College to create the Department of Nursing Education at Carroll College for the fall semester of 1946. For the first time, Carroll College offered a Bachelor of Science degree to women. Women were now seen as talented and ambitious students rather than silent servers. Carroll College was one of the first Roman Catholic diocesan colleges to institute coeducation. Through its innovative practices, it served as a model for many schools to follow.

To fully create the story of the decisions behind the coeducation of Carroll College, chapter one begins by outlining the foundations of higher education in the United States. In addition, the chapter explores women’s education, as well as coeducation on a national level. The following chapters then form the story of women at Carroll College through the use of several primary sources and personal interviews. In looking at Carroll, one can see the growing influence that women had on the school.
I would like to express my sincere gratitude to several people. My director, Dr. Robert Swartout, challenged me to work to the best of my ability. My advisor, and one of my readers, Dr. David Messenger, helped me realize that a thesis will get done, even with procrastination. Prof. Murphy Fox, another reader and an amazing professor, has taught me to think for myself, both academically and in life. John Thomas and Christian Frazza helped tremendously in the Carroll College archives and library. Sr. Dolores Brinkel at the Diocese of Helena Archives was always willing to find what I needed. Mrs. Madeline Sampson, Archbishop Raymond Hunthausen, and Fr. William Greytak offered invaluable information about their lives at Carroll, and without them, the story of Carroll College would be incomplete. Without the support of my friends, those at Carroll College and from Idaho, I would not have made it as far as I have. In addition, I would like to thank my Grandma Stolworthy for believing in me and getting me through college. My mom has been a quiet strength in my life and encouraged me to do what I love. My parents have given me their love and support throughout my life. My brothers and sisters let me dream of school and gave me the passion for life. Lastly, I would like to thank Carroll College for teaching me that school, life, and fun all work hand in hand.
NOTES


2Gimness, 29.

3Gimness, 28-29.
Throughout its development, Catholic higher education essentially mirrored the Protestant colleges that dominated the American private education system. Catholics did not trust the education of the Protestant institutions and needed a system of their own. Rather than send young men to Europe to train for the clergy, Bishop John Carroll founded Georgetown in Washington, D.C., as the first Catholic college in 1786. However, over the next century, higher education in general developed beyond religious training. Sciences, history, and vernacular languages, as well as many other studies, were becoming important to the American public. Schools needed to answer this demand and offer programs for the students not interested in religious and classical studies.

By the twentieth century, in addition to the change in curriculum, war took men away from the educational system, state schools were often more attractive to young men, and women’s colleges were on the rise; therefore, the Catholic system needed to respond to these fundamental challenges. Catholics struggled with the change that was required and fell behind the rest of the educational system in an attempt to escape reform. The first half of the twentieth century, however, led to the reform that shaped the educational system that is known today. More specifically, Catholic colleges began to co-educate—a move that had been made by state schools in order to offer higher education for women that was comparable to the education of men. This chapter will outline a brief history of higher education in America, women’s higher education, and
then look at the coeducation of higher education on a national level both in the public system and Catholic educational system.

_Higher Education in America_

Historian Edward J. Power stated that modern education is based on the *studium generale* of the medieval era. The two main aspects of this concept were corporate control and a formal organization of curriculum. However, this ideology also consisted of a vast degree of freedom. Students were not under close supervision and were often left to their own devices. Universities administered oaths that were bound more by student conscience rather than law. By the 16th century, this freedom was lost because of the "threat" that it caused in society. Universities fell under the power of clergymen who perceived the institutions as an "instrument of revolt or defense."¹ Power maintained: "the free character of the university was either lost or seriously impaired and with this loss or impairment went the supreme virtue of the university – intellectual excellence."² The control that European religious institutions had over the educational system helped to shape the American educational system.

Catholic colleges seemed to be modeled after the Protestant and state schools of the era. Of the permanent colleges that preceded Georgetown (the first Catholic college, founded in 1786), only two of the seventeen were non-denominational. Although non-denominational, the two state schools (University of Pennsylvania and University of Georgia) were heavily influenced by the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches. Power believed that "the purpose of the early American college was religious. . . . [It was] a desire to dominate the social and political life of the New World and to serve the
ends of institutionalized religion.” President Thomas Clap of Yale University stated in 1754: “the original end and design of colleges was to instruct and train up persons for the work of the ministry. . . . The great design of founding this school was to educate ministers in our own way.” The ideology echoed throughout the foundations of the original American colleges and strongly supported the religious endeavors of the people founding them.

State colleges were founded throughout America’s early history. However, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the state schools were supported by a minority of the population. As the Civil War began to develop, Americans “finally developed a rather widespread and popular demand throughout the country for institutions of higher education that should be more completely responsive to the public will and more directly related to the needs of the people.” Often, schools that were state-managed still identified with a denomination, but with time, state schools began to offer technical programs that Americans were more apt to attend.

The Foundations of Catholic Colleges

There were several reasons that led to the founding of Catholic colleges in the United States. According to historian Sebastian A. Erbacher: “The specific aims of the Catholic colleges, apart from their predominantly religious purpose, were the same as those of the ordinary liberal arts colleges of America at the time. The Catholic colleges endeavored by means of a religious training, mental discipline, and liberal culture, to produce the complete Christian character.” Many historians argue that early American private colleges offered liberal culture more adamantly than the religious education that
the students were promised. However, the development of the Catholic educational system was necessary in order to avoid educating young Catholics in the Protestant schools that were available.

The development of the Catholic education system emerged from the new immigrants to the New World. Colleges were sometimes founded in areas where there was not the population for the schools in the hope that students would attend—either indigenous people or children of the pioneers. Pioneers, as they made their way West, often had a strong attachment to the traditional religion of either their home in Europe or their home on the East coast. The bishops and priests who moved west were working to establish an educational system where they could accomplish "the task of keeping the faith alive in the hearts of the people entrusted to their care. . . . It was their firm conviction that young men who were trained to live up to the Catholic ideal of life would become loyal citizens of their country and useful members of society." Training young men to be Catholics was arguably the most important reason that the colleges were founded, whether the college was founded in Maryland, Michigan, the Oregon Territory, New Mexico, or Montana.

One sees this concept in the founding of Carroll College in Helena, Montana. The initial dream of having a Catholic diocesan college in Helena, Montana, started with Bishop John Baptiste Brondel of the Diocese of Montana. In 1884, he stated: "I desire to build a college for boys." The college "would meet the spiritual, as well as the academic needs, of the Catholic student." Bishop Brondel built a grammar and high school in 1890, but due to lack of support, it closed in 1902. Upon Bishop Brondel's death in 1904, the Reverend John Patrick Carroll became Bishop of the Diocese of Helena,
formerly the Diocese of Montana. Bishop Carroll also longed for a college in Helena. He reopened the high school in 1905, made it a boarding school in 1906, and in 1909 laid the cornerstone of St. Charles Hall with President William Howard Taft to establish a Catholic college in western Montana. In the fall of 1910, Mount St. Charles College commenced classes. The college prospered in the first part of the 20th century as an all-male institution. Mount St. Charles College became Carroll College in May 29, 1932, under the direction of Bishop George J. Finnigan in order to honor Bishop Carroll. Bishop Carroll’s dream of a men’s college had finally become reality.

*Foundations of Catholic Colleges for Women*

Women’s education began much later than the men’s colleges, but once started, grew at a significant rate. Society did not have avenues for women to follow in order to reach higher education. In Puritan New England, any education beyond being able to read the Bible was considered unnecessary for women. Southern women were educated to match their social status. For the most privileged, this usually meant attending finishing school in Europe. When schools began to develop for women, they did not start with colleges as the male system had, but developed from elementary education and slowly built from there. In 1727, one of the first Catholic schools for women opened in New Orleans, Louisiana. The Ursuline Academy of New Orleans’ curriculum consisted of the basic reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as catechism, sewing, and fine needlework. Historian Edmund J. Goebel argues that this school was “the ‘mother school’ of Catholic secondary education for girls in the United States.” One of the most important schools that led to the foundation of Catholic women’s colleges was the
Visitation Convent in Georgetown. In 1832, the curriculum included literature, languages, and music; later it added mathematics, philosophy, and chemistry. In addition to the Visitation Congregation, the Sisters of Loretto in Kentucky, the Religious of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis, and the Sisters of Charity in Maryland, all contributed to the education of women by the progression of their curriculum in their respected schools. The Sisters of Charity played an important role in the development of higher education for women in western Montana and their school eventually led to the admittance of women to Carroll College in Helena.

As the 19th century wore on, there was an increase of immigrants in the United States. Many of the immigrants were Catholic, and to support the growing population, more dioceses and schools were founded. Several religious communities began to focus entirely on the education of women. Although the curriculum was based on preparing women to run their home in an efficient and respectable manner, they were elated to take the occasional course in logic, ethics, or Latin. These schools laid foundations for the later women’s colleges.

The early colleges for women were born out of the academies that preceded them. In 1896, the first four-year Catholic college for women was established. The College of Notre Dame of Maryland conferred its first degrees in 1899. Four more colleges were founded by 1905, fourteen more by 1915, thirty-seven between 1915 and 1925, and in the next five years, nineteen were established. By 1955, 116 Catholic colleges for women had been established in the United States. The College of St. Angela in New York State (1904) acknowledged that higher education of women to be “such stimulation and promotion of the physical, intellectual and moral growth and
development, as shall result in complete womanhood. The college ideal of its graduates is that of a woman of culture, of efficiency and of power—a woman capable of upholding the noblest ideals of the home and of the Church, and possessed of the training that shall make her an efficient worker in society and the professional world." By 1913, the college offered a graduate program in both liberal arts and science programs.

Most historians writing on the early 20th century have not analyzed the growth of women’s colleges. Historian Philip Gleason, on the other hand, emphasizes the impressive expansion of the women’s system. He states: "Women’s colleges deserve particular attention on account of their spectacular growth." Gleason studies Mary Aloysia Molloy, a woman who was a major advocate for the growth of women’s colleges. She believed that women needed a standard education that would allow them to enter the teaching field. Molloy argued that Catholic women were attending non-Catholic colleges in order to receive their state certification. She maintained that the Catholic schools needed to improve their systems in order to give women a Catholic education while at the same time giving them a teaching certificate. She also argued that "weak, inefficient, ‘so-called colleges for women’ were worse than useless. They ‘cast obloquy’ on all of Catholic higher education and drained resources away from the parochial schools, which were the most fundamental element in a full system of sound religious education. Women’s religious communities that could not maintain a ‘standard’ college ought to stick to parochial school work rather than add to the existing competition between feeble academies that had no business calling themselves colleges." Her activism helped to improve the educational system for women and potentially helped in the move to co-educate.
The moves that Molloy called for did not become reality until economics dictated the changes. It was expensive for teachers to attend colleges that were up to Molloy's standards. Gleason states that for six nuns to attend a good college for a teaching certificate, it would cost six thousand dollars—the salary of thirty teaching nuns. Parochial schools began to train their own nuns because of this high cost. In addition, they began to admit laywomen and conferred teaching certificates both to the religious and laity. Convents and academies were now no different then the colleges for women that were springing up throughout the country.\(^{21}\)

The need for a sufficient education also led to the development of summer schools at men's colleges and the move for coeducation. The summer schools offered curriculum to women that was similar, if not identical to the men's curriculum. This change contributed to the move to co-educate Catholic schools due to the similar education that students were receiving in the summer schools. In addition, women were offered admission to many state schools for teaching certification and nursing programs. With the rise of attendance at state schools, religious institutions needed to co-educate.

**Coeducation of Catholic Schools**

Historian Edward J. Power believed that women were admitted to men's colleges “for professional reasons rather than for liberal purposes.”\(^{22}\) According to his research, of the eighty-four Catholic colleges originally built for men, only fifteen of those were admitting women on an equal status with men in 1955. Schools had slowly begun to admit women to their programs as the century advanced. The coeducation of each college played an important role to the development of the higher educational system.
Non-Catholic (usually public) schools often offered the education that many women wanted. This led to the desire by many Catholic leaders to create their own advanced education, but the lack of faculty and administration led to the need for coeducation. Gleason argues that women’s colleges were actually in opposition to the coeducation of schools. Men’s colleges “went coed” without consulting women’s colleges, as well as offered lower tuition to women in order to increase involvement. Most American colleges began to co-educate following World War II. The growth of nursing programs and the overall desire to educate women allowed for coeducation. In addition to this, the twentieth century showed a decline in sisterhood, which directly affected the communities that conducted all-female education.

Historian William P. Leahy argues that coeducation “spread for various financial, social, and intellectual reasons. It saved money, eliminating duplication of facilities and teachers. Its advocates further argued that educating men and women on the same campus fitted more naturally with American life, where both sexes associated freely. They also insisted that coeducation had a refining effect on male and female students and that it improved academic performance.” It seemed inevitable that the students would be educated together; however, it also sparked a resistance based on the belief that coeducation “would lead to moral lapses or that they would introduce distractions to serious study.” Certain students and teachers thus opposed women’s participation in the men’s college.

Many Catholics resisted the idea of coeducation. Although written in 1957 and directed at younger schools, the Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of Religious on Coeducation, a church doctrine, exemplified the ideals that influenced the American
Catholic population. It stated: "Coeducation offers certain advantages because it could be considered a continuation of proper family life. . . . Nonetheless, if considered from the practical viewpoint, namely the way in which this form of education is usually put into effect, the dangers stemming from its inherent practices—particularly during the age of puberty—are without a doubt far greater than the possible advantages."  

Coeducation, however, was seen as the "lesser evil" in the event that a student would attend a secular or Protestant school.  

Sociologist Andrew M. Greeley stated: "many of the older members of the religious orders resent the coeds and think their admission to the campus was one more step in the direction of deterioration of the traditional values of their own style of education."  

The conflict between supporters and resistors of coeducation was cause to find resolution. Men and women were usually educated separately, and this difference changed the scope of the institutions on both an academic and social level.

In the following chapters, Carroll College in Helena, Montana, will be used as a case study in order to see the changes that were made in a men's college as women began to attend the institution. As the Sisters of Charity School of Nursing grew and developed in Helena, it became beneficial to work with Carroll College in order to offer the best curriculum possible. Struggles developed at Carroll College just as they had at the national level. Full acceptance of women developed over time, however, and the changes that were made produced what the college was to become.
NOTES


2Power, 8-11.

3Power, 13

4Thomas Clap, quoted in Power, 15.


6Sebastian A. Erbacher, quoted in Power, 35.

7Erbacher, quoted in Power, 37.


9Dorroh, 3.

10In 1903, the Diocese of Montana determined that two separate dioceses would serve the people of Montana more efficiently. It was then divided into the Diocese of Helena and the Diocese of Great Falls.

11Dorroh, 5.

12Carroll College *Hilltopper*, 1947.

13Power, 176-7.

14Edmund J. Goebel, quoted in Power, 177.

15Power, 177.

16Power, 178.

17Trinity College in Washington, D.C., was the only exception and was founded without an academy. Power, 183.


Gleason, 92-93.

Gleason, 95.

Power, 143.

Gleason, 227.

Gleason, 319.


Leahy, 68.


Frison, 17.

CHAPTER TWO

NURSES AND CARROLL COLLEGE: INITIAL STAGES OF COEDUCATION, 1943-1948

Bishop John Patrick Carroll founded Mount St. Charles College in 1909 as an all-male high school and college. Its early years provided young men with a quality Catholic education in preparation for the seminary. During World War II, however, Carroll College almost closed its doors to education entirely because of the decline in student population and the lack of financial resources. With the work of Carroll’s president, Right Reverend Emmet J. Riley (1932-1951), Carroll College was able to continue education with the implementation of the Navy V-12 program (forerunner to the ROTC program). Riley, along with Congressman Mike Mansfield of Montana, aided in bringing the program to the college. On July 5, 1943, the V-12 program commenced.1 Earlier that same year, as men were training for war, women were encouraged to serve their country as nurses.

The Sisters of Charity Central School of Nursing opened in western Montana in 1943. In 1946, the School of Nursing combined its curriculum with Carroll College’s curriculum to create the Department of Nursing Education at Carroll College for the fall semester of 1946. For the first time, Carroll College offered a Bachelor of Science degree to women.2 The enrollment of women alongside their male counterparts changed the environment of Carroll College. They were actively participating in academic and social activities with their peers, both male and female. As the school developed a
coeducational system, women became an integral part of college life. Although the women encountered resistance from some teachers and students, they still flourished, creating the opportunity of quality education for several generations of women.

The Sisters of Charity Central School of Nursing

As the war waged in Europe and Asia, the nation began to call for an increase in candidates for nurses and doctors. Congress had allotted $3.5 million dollars for nursing education in the school year 1942-1943.\(^3\) In January of 1943, Carroll College, in conjunction with the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, Kansas, Schools of Nursing (St. James’ Hospital in Butte, St. John’s Hospital in Helena, and St. Vincent’s Hospital in Billings), established an independent nursing education program.\(^4\) The bulletin for the Sisters of Charity Central School of Nursing declared, “To Serve Your Country – in War and Peace – Become a Nurse.” The school had a capacity of 475 students; such a small school divided into three separate units insured an adequate preparation for professional nurses.\(^5\)

Reverend Mother M. Francesca of Kansas believed that the Catholic community of Montana needed to establish the school in order to educate its nurses in a Catholic hospital. In addition, she stated: “All Montana hospitals are crowded to the limit and it is only by each school’s sharing in the burden of educating more students that we can hope to release the graduate nurses needed to care for our men in service.”\(^6\) Just as Catholic schools were started around the country to offer a religious education, the Central School of Nursing defined its purpose by maintaining: “Since Christian charity and sound principles must ever animate and guide the student or graduate nurse of a Catholic
institution, every opportunity is given the undergraduate to imbue herself with a truly
Christian spirit while she is acquiring knowledge and skill in the theories and practices of
her profession." On January 30, 1943, the Central School of Nursing began its first
session.

Applicants needed a high school degree to meet the education requirements for
admission. However, if a student had completed courses for the science curricula in the
top two-thirds of her class, she was given preference. Before acceptance, the women
were required to complete several psychological and aptitude tests to determine the
ability of the women to join the nursing profession. New classes were admitted to the
Central School of Nursing in January, June, and September.

Upon acceptance into the School of Nursing, a woman registered at the St. John’s
Unit in Helena. A nurse’s first four months, known as the “preclinical period,” were
considered an intense nineteen credits that included basic sciences such as Anatomy,
Physiology, and Chemistry. Both regular and special faculty at Carroll College taught
these courses. Following completion of the first semester, students were evaluated on
their performance and, if satisfactory, were admitted as full members of the student body.
In the second semester, the woman was to report to a Unit School, either in Butte,
Helena, or Billings, to begin her hospital experience.8

Class work, as well as clinical hours, supplemented different divisions of the
hospital that included: “medical, surgical, operating room, diet kitchen, obstetrics,
pediatrics, out-patient and emergency.”9 Students were required to maintain an eighty
percent average for all three years. Grades were of such high importance that any tests
that scored less than seventy-five percent were to be retaken. Upon completing the three-
year program, women were eligible for junior status at a college. Arrangements could also be made through the Montana State Hospital in Warm Springs, where a nurse could complete another semester course in Psychiatry.\textsuperscript{10}

Student life at the hospital was not much different than that of life at Carroll College during the same time period. Students were required to attend mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. If a student was not Catholic, her religion was respected and she was allowed to attend her own church. During the course of the semester, the religious aspect of the institution was emphasized through retreats for spiritual direction. Religious clubs were also formed for this purpose. Formal and informal dances, which often included the male students of Carroll, were held. Teas, picnics, and parties were a regular occurrence within the school. Leadership and participation in the school activities was considered a contribution to school spirit and highly encouraged by the administration. However, with these luxuries came social responsibilities. A pamphlet for the school stated: “If, in the judgment of the administration, a student’s attitude is not conducive to the best development of the student herself, or that of other students, even though she commits no specific act of insubordination, she may be dismissed as unfit for nursing responsibilities.”\textsuperscript{11}

Residence halls were located near St. John’s hospital. First semester nursing students resided in Francis de Sales Hall. This hall was connected to the hospital. It consisted of recreation rooms, kitchens, and bedrooms. The main residence of the Helena students was Immaculata Hall. Immaculata was located on the campus of the Helena Unit, near St. John’s. The three-story building housed administrative offices, the library, classrooms, and two floors of bedrooms. The heart of the school revolved around this
Immaculata was used as a residence hall for both the nursing students and Carroll students until 1961 when Guadalupe Hall was built.

\textit{Establishment of the Department of Nursing Education}

In fall 1945, President Riley wanted to make an extension program through Montana’s hospitals by “offering a five-year program leading to the B.S. degree in Nursing Education.” He began a personnel search for a Director of Nursing Education. Riley was looking for a woman who held her master’s degree in nursing education, as well as having sufficient experience in collegiate level nursing education and collegiate administration. After inquiring at many schools about graduate students to recommend, Sister Mary Geraldine, Executive Dean at St. Louis University School of Nursing, suggested a member of the current staff at the St. John’s School in Helena. Miss Beatrice Hruska received her Bachelor of Science degree from St. Louis University in 1940. Sister Mary Geraldine believed: “As a native of Montana, [Hruska] would have an added interest in the expansion of your program and we believe gives promise to assume the responsibilities inherent in directing it.”

Hruska was named Acting Director for the 1946-1947 school year. Her duties were to include the organization of the program, both scholastically and clinically. She was responsible for teaching Nursing History to the pre-clinical students as well as several courses in the degree program. Hruska dealt with contracts with faculty, transcripts of students, and was in charge of press releases regarding the Division of Nursing Education.
Fig. 1. Nursing Students Receiving Scholarships, 1950. Photo Courtesy of Helena Diocesan Archives.
Carroll College and the Sisters of Charity School of Nursing finalized the contract for the Department throughout the spring of 1946. Carroll’s Nursing Education Department was to be structured in accordance with the local, regional, and national nursing associations. Both the college and the Sisters were responsible for recruitment and had shared responsibilities on the Advisory Committee. Carroll was in charge of administrative responsibilities, as well as the conferring of degrees at the end of the program. The Sisters provided financial compensation of four dollars per class hour for classes taught by Carroll faculty. Labs were to be paid at half the rate of lecture hours. Also, activity fees were to be paid to Carroll in order to cover the cost of extracurricular activities that the nurses could attend as students and entitled the students to a copy of the school’s newspaper, The Prospector. This agreement between the two schools was temporary and only valid for the academic year of 1946-1947.17

Following the contract and the promise of a new program, it was time to begin recruiting for the academic year. Bishop Joseph Gilmore and Rt. Rev. Riley sent letters to schools throughout the Diocese of Helena and to many Catholic high schools. One letter to the clergy and laity of the Diocese on May 11, 1946, stated:

Carroll College will open its doors for the thirty-seventh academic year on Saturday, September 7. Of special interest to the young women in your parish is the announcement that the college, assisted by the Sisters of Charity Schools of Nursing in Billings, Butte, and Helena, will open a department of Nursing Education this fall. At a time when Catholic hospitals throughout the nation are pleading for trained nurses, teachers, and administrators, to enable them to carry on their work of mercy, Carroll is providing qualified young women with a splendid opportunity to obtain the nursing certification and collegiate degrees required for entrance into this personally beneficial and socially essential profession.18

The college commenced its thirty-seventh academic year on September 7. Through both the Bishop’s and President’s recruitment, thirty-five students, with thirty-one in the Pre-
Clinical course and four Registered Nurses, inaugurated coeducation with the males of Carroll College.19 The first two semesters were spent at Carroll College while taking classes in “English, basic sciences, philosophy, religion, and introductory nursing subjects.”20 This was followed by a thirty-month clinical period that took place at one of the affiliated hospitals. Following completion of the clinical period, the students were given a certificate of Registered Nurse. Students who desired a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing Education attended classes at Carroll for three more semesters in order to prepare for teaching or administrative positions. During the course of the semesters, the nurses completed approximately fifty credits in sciences and liberal arts.21 The first classes of graduate nurses studied with the “Pre-medical” students. However, the larger nursing classes in the following years would take classes within their segregated program.22

On July 16, 1947, Riley declared in a letter to the Reverend Mother in Leavenworth: “the Department of Nursing Education at Carroll College . . . has just completed its first year with colors flying, and . . . promises to develop into an educational program in which we can both take pride.”23 The Department had finished its year, but many changes were needed. Among these was the naming of a new director holding a Master’s degree. This was due to the requirements of accreditation agencies and as a result, Hruska moved on from the program in 1947. Also, Riley believed that the women of the program needed a guidance counselor to “inspire the interest and confidence of young people” at each of the hospitals.24 After the necessary changes, the nursing program proceeded in its next year.
Carroll proved to be ahead of its time by graduating women from its curriculum. Coeducation was generally not accepted in the United States until the 1920s. It was much slower amongst Catholic institutions. Often, bishops would not grant permission for the diocesan colleges to admit women. Slowly, Catholic colleges added nursing and education programs that led to the increasing number of women in the college. Carroll College conferred degrees on Madeline Sampson and Rosaleen Mullen as its first women graduates from the Department on Nursing Education in May of 1948. By the mid-1950s, women were receiving degrees in several departments at Carroll. Over the next decade, the academic, social, and spiritual life of the college changed due to the ever-growing presence of co-eds. This culminated with the decision to build a female residence hall on the Carroll campus in 1961.
NOTES

1 Dorroh, 63-64. For more information, see June Hagen, “The Navy V-12 Training Program At Carroll College, 1943-1945” (honors thesis, Carroll College, 1995).

2 The Prospector (Helena, Mont.), 30 April 1946.


4 Programs to train nurses already existed at the regional hospitals. By combining with Carroll, the Schools of Nursing were able to offer diploma programs rather than just apprenticeship programs.


13 Emmet J. Riley, Helena, to Lois Blanche Corder, Iowa City, 30 November 1945, “Nursing-Personnel Policies Instructors” folder, Box 29, Carroll College Archives.

14 Emmet J. Riley, Helena, to Lois Blanche Corder, Iowa City, 30 November 1945, “Nursing-Personnel Policies Instructors” folder, Box 29, Carroll College Archives.
15Sister Mary Geraldine, St. Louis, Mo., to Emmet J. Riley, Helena, 30 December 1945, “Nursing-Personnel Policies Instructors” folder, Box 29, Carroll College Archives.


19The Registered Nurses were women who were merely working for their Bachelor of Science Degree. They had already graduated a nursing program, whereas the other students were just beginning nursing courses.

20*The Prospector* (Helena, Mont.), 30 April 1946.

21*The Prospector* (Helena, Mont.), 30 April 1946.

22Madeline Samson of Helena, interview by author, 8 November 2003, Helena, tape recording.


CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPLETE COEDUCATION, 1948-1961

Although Carroll College had become a co-educational institution with the establishment of the Department of Nursing Education, the college did not officially admit women on an equal status with men until 1952. Local women had been attending Carroll's summer school, but had not been admitted for the regular academic year. According to Archbishop Raymond G. Hunthausen (former student, 1939-43; faculty, 1946-1957; president, 1957-62), the transition was a natural change.¹ Gradually, as the women attended classes as nursing students and summer school students, the college realized that there was a growing demand for admittance to degree programs. Throughout the 1950s, programs slowly admitted women and in 1959, Carroll graduated twenty-one women—fourteen in Nursing Education, two in Medical Technology, two in History, and three in English.²

The 1950s brought about many changes to the Carroll College campus. Carroll was no longer a male institution. Students, faculty, and the administration needed to adapt accordingly. Student activities increased, women were elected to student council, and coeducational classes filled students’ schedules. Ultimately, members of the Carroll College community gradually adapted to the idea of a coeducational institution; however, the women did not always encounter friendly or supportive colleagues and faculty. In addition, the increase of female students on campus called for a residence to
accommodate those without homes in the area. Under the direction of President Hunthausen, an on campus dormitory became a reality.

Activities throughout the 1950s

As women became more prominent on campus, so did co-ed activities. Dances and socials filled Carroll’s activity calendar. Formals, semi-formals, and casual dances were held at Carroll, in the community, and at Immaculata Hall. Mrs. Madeline Samson, one of the first two women to graduate in 1948, explained about the dances, “I think they had a fit when we had dances. And some of those guys weren’t exactly sober which was something new here.” Women also helped write and edit the Prospector, the college newspaper, and the Hilltopper, the college annual. Glee clubs were formed for the women. The cheerleaders were no longer males. Men did not always have to perform women’s roles in plays. Even though men led the student council, at the beginning of the Nursing Department’s second year women were elected to represent their interests on the council. In 1949, the college began the tradition of “Campus Queen,” a tradition that is still practiced today with the election of the Homecoming Queen. Sports also became an activity for women; Jewell Gronley became the first woman to participate in athletics at Carroll as a member of the golf team in 1947. Each residence hall was represented on the student council. Teas, dances, sports, and more kept the women busy when coupled with tests, lectures, and study groups.

One of the clubs that had the greatest impact on female students was the Associated Women Students of Carroll College, created in 1959. It was created in order to “give the women students as a group a voice on Campus and to unite all the women

29
students connected with Carroll College. It mirrored similar organizations found on other Catholic college campuses. On September 25, 1959, the AWS held its first meeting. Including women from Siena, Dean, and Immaculata Halls, as well as day students and nursing students in Butte and Billings, AWS aimed to offer a stronger representation in college decisions for female students.

Initial Reception of Women at Carroll College

With the enrollment of women at Carroll College, the men found the change to be very positive. It was much easier to find a date to the Pre-med Ball with women attending the same classes. Hunthausen believed that the coeducation of Carroll was nothing new to the men of the school. Most had attended co-ed high schools, so their adjustment to an all-male institution, such as Carroll, was the real challenge. He stated that the novelty of having women enter the institution had worn off by the end of the first semester. Father William Greytak (former student 1948-52; faculty 1956-present) stated that the women were always a strong presence on campus throughout the 1950s. He thought that the women had a “socializing aspect and civilizing impact.” It made the men more aware of their actions. He noted, “women have a way of taking off the rough edges.” In addition, the women brought with them a talent, ambition, and a commitment to high standards. Greytak’s female students were, and remain, strong academically. Hunthausen and Greytak offered a positive outlook that appeared to be representative of the student community. However, not all faculty and male students adapted well to the presence of female students.
Some teachers resented teaching females and some male students disliked sharing their privilege of higher education with the women. Madeline Samson told a story of one priest: “now this man had been in Rome for quite some time and in some other places where women were not. . . . They told me I’d get in trouble [if I took the class], so I thought, well, I’ll go. . . . I told them I was comin’ and to save a seat for me, which they did. So, I just walked in and sat down. . . . He was at the board and he turned around and kept his chalk in his hand and he said, ‘no females need to think they’re gonna get any [special treatment].’ He was trying to tell me that I wasn’t gonna get anything special because I was a woman that came to that class.” Some priests were so uncomfortable with the introduction of the women that when a woman would pass them in the halls, the priests would move closer to the wall, pull their robes in close to their body, and turn their shoulder away from the passing women. The women began to “walk through in the middle” just to see the priests wrap their robes around themselves. Also, a letter from Cal G. Bifoss, Professor of Biology, to President Riley told a story of how some male students would blame their poor academic performance on the women:

two women and a couple [of] young men bestirred themselves most diligently, putting in overtime at regular intervals to get ahead of the complexities of the course. The indisposed and antagonistic elements on one of those occasions accused these of “polishing the apple for a good grade.” One lady kept her mouth shut but the other answered: “I have waited a long time for this opportunity and I am investing precious time and money in it and intend to get all I can out of these opportunities.” The antagonist’s spokesman continued to add to the embarrassment of the ladies by saying: “We had it nice here before the women got here. We could do our work any time. We could come down nights in our slippers and have lots of fun working.” She replied: “If that’s what’s worrying you, don’t mind me. You may come down even in your pajamas” . . . I assured her that we were very glad to have the women and liked their contributions. She added: “We know this is a men’s college. But we women have a job to do too and we need certain preparations.”
The women flourished despite these attempts to disregard their aptitude as students. Their success is shown in the sheer number of female students who gained their degree from Carroll College.

*Carroll College Women's Housing: The Construction of Guadalupe Hall*

Residence halls for women were absent from campus for the first fifteen years of co-education. Immaculata Hall was utilized at the hospital for the first groups of nursing students. Most of the women’s campus necessities and activities were found in Immaculata Hall. The library, administrative offices, and some classrooms were part of the residence hall. Each day, the women were bussed from Immaculata Hall to campus for several classes. However, as the population of women grew, residence halls were needed in order to accommodate the growing population. Through the mid- and late 1950s, women were housed in Siena Hall and Dean Hall. Siena and Dean were both renovated mansions several blocks away from campus that accommodated the women. Students who were married could live in the Carroll Village two blocks from campus. In 1961, Carroll opened the doors of Guadalupe Hall, a female dormitory on the north side of campus that provided living for all the women attending the college.

Siena Hall and Dean Hall, on the corner of Madison and Gilbert, offered solitude for students who attended the college. The Sisters of Saint Dominic, from Speyer, Germany, governed the halls. These sisters had been at Carroll since 1925; their primary task was to meet the “culinary, domestic, and minor medical needs” of the students and priests both on the college campus and at the female residences. Most women walked to school from their home, unless they had a ride, most likely from a boyfriend. The women of Siena and Dean, although far from campus, kept the students up to date on
Graduating Seniors at Carroll College, 1948-1959

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<td>1968</td>
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<td>46</td>
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</table>

Table 1. Numbers based on graduation photos in O'Connell Hall, Helena, MT. Figure does not include nursing students. *Numbers for 1961-1963 were unavailable.

Graduating Seniors at Carroll College, 1975-1980

<table>
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<th>TOTAL</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Numbers based on records from the Carroll College Registrar, Helena, MT.
events at the residences. Each issue of The Prospector, the college newspaper, printed a column about the women, from hall leadership to the women who attended a tea the previous weekend.

Carroll Village was a residence much closer to campus that offered World War II veterans and their families a place to live. As a result of the G.I. Bill, Carroll College was admitting several veterans to the college. The Carroll College Hilltopper described the Village by stating: “Transferred from the government to the college in the late summer of 1948, the village has offered low-priced housing to the families of veterans who are attending classes at the college. Under the direction of a mayor and councilmen elected by themselves, the villagers continue their important contribution to Carroll life.” Consequently, the availability of housing and schooling to male veterans led to the attendance of their wives, and in the future, their children. Although not a resident of Carroll Village, Madeline Samson and her husband were both veterans and following the war were able to attend Carroll College.

Ultimately, the residence halls that housed Carroll’s women proved to be too small. A discussion regarding the construction of a new residence hall on campus began in the 1950s. Under the direction of Rt. Rev. Raymond G. Hunthausen, the decision to build a female dormitory was announced in 1959. Carroll had prided itself on being a residential campus for the men, and due to the recent commitment to coeducation, the dormitory was a natural part of the growth Carroll was experiencing. The hall was part of a larger design to build a Campus Center, a residence hall, and several landscaping projects. Hunthausen, along with Charles Mandeville, traveled throughout the northwest in order to find buildings to model the new dormitory after.
Fig. 2. Siena Hall, 642 Madison. Photo Courtesy of Helena Diocesan Archives.
The final issue of *The Prospector* for the 1958-59 academic year declared: “The proposed girls dormitory, which is to be started this year, will be “L” shaped and will hold over 150 girls and six faculty members. The Building will contain a chapel for the girls and large attractive lounges. On each floor of the dormitory there will be a laundry for the use of the girls. In the basement also, when it is completed shall have a large room for recreation and dances.”¹⁹ Moreover, the building was to be built out of brick and topped with a red roof in order to match the other buildings on campus. Over the next two years, the college finalized its blueprints and financial responsibilities.

In the spring of 1960, Carroll College was granted the monies for the new campus buildings. The Federal Housing and Home Finance Agency of the Community Facilities Administration, under the guidance of Senator James E. Murray, loaned the college $1,040,000 (repaid in a forty-year period) for the campus center and dormitory. Just over $620,000 was allotted for the women’s dormitory. Upon receipt, Hunthausen stated that construction was to begin as soon as possible in order to complete the projects by the beginning of the 1961-62 academic year.²⁰ On May 22, 1960, at 3:15 p.m., President Hunthausen, Most Rev. Joseph M. Gilmore, the bishop of Helena, and Helena Mayor Mrs. Wanna Thompson broke ground for the new residence hall.²¹

Waddell Construction, supervised by Glen Clevenger, stayed on schedule for the completion of the Guadalupe Hall.²² In the fall of 1961, the first wing of Guadalupe Hall opened its doors to its first residents. The second half of the original planned “L-shape” was built several years later. The September issue of *The Prospector* highlighted the “convenience, comfort, and consideration” of the women’s dormitory on campus:

Your life at Carroll College will be a busy life, so convenience is a big factor. Guadalupe Hall has an ideal location—it is situated in the heart of campus, and
yet, it is only three blocks away from a supermarket. . . The beds are convertible to day couches at the touch of a button. The furniture is well matched and study lamps are furnished. . . The downstairs lounge had the type of formal atmosphere which will make you proud to entertain visitors there. In your own recreation rooms, you will be able to let down your hair and play games, cards, piano or whatever strikes your mood. . . You must be considerate of your roommate; this extends even to such great sacrifices as not popping your gum during study hours if she finds it annoying.\(^{23}\)

The residents seemed excited about their new living space. As the first female students to live on campus, the women forged a new character of Carroll College.

There were mixed opinions, however, regarding the move. The April 14, 1961, issue of *The Prospector* interviewed women, and one administrator, regarding the move. Junior Joanne Keane believed: “Next year will involve a lot of adjusting. We’ll have all four classes living under one roof and the girls from the different classes will get to know one another better. Also, it will unify the classes by letting the girls take a more active part in activities and club meeting on campus. Another good thing is that the girls won’t have to walk so far.”\(^{24}\) With a more pessimistic view, sophomore Carol Haulk stated: “I think the girls will miss the home-like atmosphere and close relationships at Siena and Dean. The new dormitory will make us feel like we are at school 24 hours a day in that we won’t be ‘going home’ every evening after classes.”\(^{25}\) Sophomore Pattie Price did not approve of the move either: “I personally do not want to move. I don’t think we’ll make as many close friends as we now do but we’ll know more girls. Our present dorms are more homey.”\(^{26}\) Lastly, Father William Greytak, Dean of Discipline, jokingly exclaimed: “What? Girls on campus? Haven’t I enough troubles already?”\(^{27}\)

By offering women adequate housing, Carroll College was able to increase its population significantly. Rather than keeping women in small dorms that housed no
more than thirty students, Guadalupe Hall housed over 150 students. The state of the art Guadalupe Hall attracted more and more female co-eds to create the current college. The second wing added to Guadalupe Hall doubled its occupancy. The dormitory remained all female until 2003 when it was changed into a co-ed residence.
Fig. 3. Guadalupe Hall, approximately 1961. Photo Courtesy of Helena Diocesan Archives.
Fig. 4. Guadalupe Hall Reception Desk. Photo Courtesy of Helena Diocesan Archives.
Fig. 5. Guadalupe Hall Living Quarters. Photo Courtesy of Helena Diocesan Archives.
Fig. 6. Guadalupe Hall Recreation Room. Photo Courtesy of Helena Diocesan Archives.
Fig. 7. Guadalupe Hall Formal Recreation Room. Photo Courtesy of Helena Diocesan Archives.
NOTES


10. Samson Interview, 8 November 2003. Although Samson attributed this action to the reaction to women on campus, the priests were not necessarily reacting to the women. Most of the priests at Carroll were not extremely friendly to any students, regardless of sex.

11. Cal G. Bifoss, Helena, to Emmet J. Riley, Helena, 22 January 1950, “President to and from Faculty” folder, Box 4, Carroll College Archives, Jack and Sallie Corette Library, Carroll College, Helena, Mont.

12. Siena Hall and Dean Hall were at 642 Madison Ave, Helena, Mont.


15. *The Prospector* (Helena, Mont.)


17. Samson Interview, 8 November 2003. For more information on the veteran students of Carroll College, see June Hagen.

The decision to name the new dormitory was made on a car trip to Kalispell, Montana, when Hunthausen suggested to Bishop Gilmore that it should be named after Our Lady of Guadalupe, patron saint of the Americas. Later, as bishop of Helena, and Archbishop of Seattle, Hunthausen continued his commitment to Latin America through the establishment and upkeep of a Guatemala Mission from the 1970s to present day. Greytak also noted the commitment Carroll College had to Mary through the construction of the Grotto, the naming of Guadalupe, and the raising of a Mary statue on campus at the same time. Hunthausen Interview, 15 April 2005. and Greytak Interview, 15 April 2005.
CONCLUSION:

CARROLL COLLEGE AS A MODEL OF COEDUCATION

Following the completion of the second wing at Carroll College would face many more changes in the years to come. The 1960s brought new social challenges to the college, just as they did throughout the nation. Vatican II, the Vietnam War, and the women's liberation movement affected the college in numerous ways. Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 led to the dramatic expansion of women's sports at Carroll. It stated: "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 educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance." Finally, in 1976, the women of Carroll College became a majority of students and since 1980 have almost consistently made up around sixty percent of the student body.

Ultimately, Carroll College would not exist as it does today without the implementation of coeducation. By looking at Carroll, one can observe the patterns that were in place throughout the nation regarding coeducation. Schools slowly admitted women to specialized programs, then added women to regular classes, and finally realized both the financial and social benefits of fully admitting women to higher education. In the wake of World War Two, the Catholic community needed to work together to provide programs that fulfilled the demand for nursing and teaching certificates.
Many public schools began to admit women to their institutions in the beginning of the twentieth century. Edward J. Power maintained that part of the reason for developing coeducation in Catholic schools was the threat of women attending public school systems.  

For example, Montana State College in Bozeman questioned the development of the Sisters of Charity Central School of Nursing. The administration at Montana State College at Bozeman had proposed a cooperative effort with the Sisters of Charity in 1942. However, Mother M. Francesca opposed the union because she “believe[d] it [was] essential for the continuance of our Catholic Hospitals” to educate young nurses in a Catholic system. When Carroll College and the Sisters of Charity Central School of Nursing combined their efforts, they offered a Catholic education to the women of Montana.

In addition, religious communities often collaborated to educate women. It was natural for American Catholic women to attend schools through religious communities, which aided in the process of coeducation. With the development of the Department of Nursing Education, the Sisters of Charity provided the opportunity for women to attend classes at the all-male Carroll College. This opportunity played a major role in the gradual development of a coeducational institution. By joining curricula, the programs drew students from throughout the diocese. The Catholic women of the region now had a school to attend that was religious and academic.

Coeducation brought many advantages to the school. It helped increase attendance, and therefore, increased income. This was a trend observed by historian William P. Leahy. He believed that coeducation was spread primarily for the financial benefits. Archbishop Hunthausen stated that although the admittance of women
strengthened Carroll financially, money was not a primary motive for adopting
coeducation at Carroll.\textsuperscript{5} In addition, Leahy believed the women had a “refining effect”
on the campus.\textsuperscript{6} Father William Greytak also noted this aspect as a “civilizing impact” at
Carroll College.\textsuperscript{7}

Carroll College, as one of the first Catholic institutions to become coeducational,
offered an important story that mirrored national trends and served as a model for schools
to follow. Women have flourished in the coeducational institution for over fifty-five
years. Despite all the challenges that female students faced, especially in the early years
of coeducation, it can be assumed that most female Carroll College alumni would agree
with Madeline Samson about their time at Carroll: “Did I like it? Yes, I loved it!”\textsuperscript{8}
NOTES


²Power, 143.


⁴Leahy, 68.

⁵Hunhausen Interview, 15 April 2005.

⁶Leahy, 68.

⁷Greytak Interview, 15 April 2005.

⁸Samson Interview, 8 November 2003.
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