The 1980’s: Interviews with Carroll’s Women on Gender Politics

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Purpose

► The Historical Record
  ► Swartout - *Bold Minds and Blessed Hearts: The First Century of Montana's Carroll College*
  ► Bingham - *It All Began with Nurses: A Case Study of Coeducation at Carroll College, 1943-1961*
  ► Oliverio - “The Dominican Sisters of Carroll College (1925-1961)”

► Social Justice
  ► Faludi - *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*
  ► Do Faludi’s observations hold true for women at Carroll?
Methodology

- 6 interviews total
- Participants contacted via phone or email
- Script of questions
- Non-anonymous
- Location of participant’s choosing
- 1.5 - 3 hour interviews
Opportunistic Discrimination

- Threats from students happen in private
- Sexism takes advantage of already-existing hierarchies
  - Seniors → frosh
  - High-ranking administration → new hires
  - Established faculty → newer faculty
- Sexism was less likely
  - In public settings
  - Where women are equal to or rank above men
Fighting Back, Knuckling Down, and Watching Each Others’ Backs

- Most sexist behavior is thwarted with stern rebukes.
  - Bonus: public resistance

- When sexism cannot be directly challenged, it becomes an endurance run.

- Other women are moralizing and insulating factors against sexism.
Hindsight isn’t 20-20

- Difficult to remember things that happened almost 40 years ago when they didn’t seem noteworthy at the time
  - Many participants frustrated with their memories
- Self-identification as a “feminist” not ubiquitous at the time
- According to Faludi, media was running interference at the time
Future Directions

- Other time frames
- Other axes of marginalization
- Narrow focus to specific departments
- Non-traditional or transfer students
- Adopt more neutral language
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