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UA1B2/1 War & WKU

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World War I
During World War I but before America's involvement, Western Kentucky University was not very concerned with the war. However, by 1917 Western began to focus on the war. In publications of the *Normal Heights* starting in Aug of 1917, the paper focuses almost entirely on World War I. September 25th to 30th was a Patriotic Week that the school supported and encouraged people to attend the rallies. In the August edition of *Normal Heights*, the Patriotic week was promoted. The whole issue was dedicated to the war, including Wilson's speech where he declared war.

Western supported the war effort, but at the same time it encouraged students to stay in school. By staying in school and getting an education, the students would be of more help than if they were to go off to war. In a letter from Dr. Cherry, he encouraged students to stay in school. Even with the encouragement to stay in school, Western's enrollment decreased. Due to the decrease of students, Western suspended athletics during this period.

While Western wanted its students to stay in school, Western did encourage students to do their part by buying war bonds. In a flyer, it talked about two sacrifices made during war time. The sacrifices were lives and money. For poor people, they had no choice but to give their lives for the country. Rich men could buy war bonds to support the poor men who were fighting. Along with the flyer is a pledge sheet to donate money to the war effort.
The school’s whole focus, at least from the Normal Heights, seemed to be about the war. Western began to offer War Emergency Courses in 1918. These courses included Conversational French, War Service Course in Physics, War Course in Home Economic, War Service Course in Descriptive Astronomy, and War Emergency Courses in Geography. The only other concern was that of teachers and opportunities for them after school. Women began to be urged to consider positions like principal because the men were off fighting in the war. More classes opened for women to help them prepare for such jobs. One example of a class was “Round tables on the problems of the executive.” Before the war, student publications, for example, The Elevator, published stories, poems, and jokes. Through the war, this all disappeared. After the war, Normal Heights began to tell what students were doing and have a focus besides opportunities for teaching.

On August 22, 1918, a telegram was received that stated that a unit of Students Army Training Corps, S.A.T.C., would be started at Western. The S.A.T.C. was to help train the men that would be headed off to war while giving them an education too. Each student was to have 11 hours of military tactics and 42 hours of academics each week. After the war ended, the S.A.T.C. ended. However, in June of 1919, it was announced that Western would begin a Reserve Officers' Training Corps, R.O.T.C. The R.O.T.C. was created to prepare military men and leaders.

World War II

Western was affected by World War II. Many of the yearbooks throughout the war have dedications to those who normally attended Western but were instead serving
their country. The enrollment of western dropped drastically during the war. Enrollment had suffered the previous decade because of the Great Depression but had picked back up before the war started. During the war, it dropped even further. During the school year of 1943 and 1944, less than a thousand students were enrolled all together. The percentages of women attending the school compared to men increased as more men went off to war. At one point during the war, 76.4 percent of the students were women compared to the 53 percent that made up the student population in 1939-40.

In the years before World War II, Western was starting to slowly take on a new shape. For example, the number of chapels per week was reduced and students often found other things to occupy their time. Dr. Stickles gave current affairs talks sometimes during chapel. Once Europe entered World War II, his talks were requested more and would often run over into the next class period.

Students who listened to his speeches knew what was happening in Europe but it did not seem to affect them. All of that changed on December 7, 1941, when Pearl Harbor was attacked and the lives of Western Students were changed forever. Many of the men wondered how this would affect them. Life for men at Western changed drastically as many of them went off to war. On December 12, President Garrett encouraged the young men to stay in school. He said that if the government needed them, they would be called. Many young men volunteered anyway.

During World War II, Western had one Japanese student named James Oshiro. He had started at Western in 1940 as a history major. His brother-in-law provided for him but stooped right after Pearl Harbor. President Garrett talked to the students about
Oshiro. He was given a room and a job in the president’s home. James Oshiro graduated from Western in December 1943.

The war also affected athletics. By July 1, 1943, all of the twenty-nine returning football players were serving in the military. Western had no choice but to suspend football from 1943 to 1945. The basketball team only had two returning members and those were both substitutes from the previous year. The teams record for the next three years was 45-38. Basketball players came and went quickly due to the war.

Vietnam War

On April 1, 1943, cadets were to arrive at Western for the College Training Detachment program that was to start. President Garret felt that by having the C.T.D.s at Western, Western was doing it’s part for the war effort. They were to obtain 5 months of academic learning and military indoctrination. The cadets were to be housed in Potter and West hall making the girls who lived there have to find new housing. The girls who had to give up their dorms felt like they were helping in the war effort, although, they would miss the dorms.

The C.T.D.’s enjoyed life at Western. The only other men on campus were the ones who had been classified as 4F and religious studies students classified as C.O status. The C.T.D.’s created their own newspaper while on Campus called Open Post. The newspaper contained articles about the war and more of the things that interested them as aviation students. The C.T.D.’s had to be very disciplined and adhere to many rules, for example, no walking arm in arm with a young lady, no ladies visiting West Hall, being back by the bugle at 7:45, no sitting in cars and no talking between classes. Even though
the military students worked hard, they enjoyed going to town on Saturday nights. In the little free time that they had, the military students enjoyed to read fiction books for fun. War histories and narratives were their second choice.

During the Vietnam War, student demonstrations came to Western’s campus later than most of the nation although there were protests. When the students joined some of the radical movements of the time they were not as intense as some other schools. Even though things at Western were not as intense, President Downing still feared what might happen. A team of forty to fifty faculty, coaches, and teachers were put into place in case of tense problems. Most of the student leaders on campus were moderate and the students could voice concerns to the Associated Student Government. The requests of the students had increased from previous years.

Many of the early rallies that Western had were not big anti-war protests but students restless in the spring. A demonstration that took place in March of 1962 was because students wanted to go to the NCAA Mid-east Regional tournament and not be penalized for missing classes. This demonstration lasted for eight hours and had around five hundred participants. The next demonstration that took place at Western was a little over a year later in May of 1963, involving five hundred to one thousand participants. The demonstration was due to rumors that Western would be changing the rules of social conduct for Western students. Some of the alleged rules were no holding hands on campus, students’ heads must be in view when in a car on campus, and no talking to men while women were laying out. The Dean of Students, Charles Keown, denied the rules. The next spring, four hundred students marched to the house of Mrs. Pauline Tabor and threw rocks at her windows. Twenty-three students were arrested. According to the
underground newspaper, *The Agitator*, the reason for the demonstration was because Mrs. Tabor ran a house of prostitution. No other papers reported that as the reason. Some newspapers claimed it was a demonstration just because it was spring and things had been quiet for too long. Western’s campus was quiet until 1969.

The Associated Student Congress set up a peace rally for October 15, 1969. The Peace Rally was a moratorium in protest of the Vietnam War that was to be held at college campuses throughout the nation. They asked for teachers to either cancel classes or to use the time for a class discussion about the war. The University did not officially support the moratorium but allowed students to gather at the Old football stadium for speeches. According to the newspapers before the moratorium, they were expecting around 3,000 people for the rally. In actuality, only two hundred to four hundred showed up.

By the fall things seemed to have died down, but after the Kent State affair in 1970, rallies and protests at many campuses began again. A Student activist group called The Volunteers wanted a strike on Friday, May 8 to protest the invasion of Cambodia. Classes went on as usual but attendance was low. The students had a list of issues that concerned them. Some of the issues included that students should not receive college credit for R.O.T.C., no gun or live ammo on campus, and an open speaker policy. On Friday, near the administration building there was a “sleep-in” that had around a hundred people. On May 11, Downing gave the Volunteers an answer to their demands in the form of a nine-page paper. Downing agreed to write a letter to Nixon to express his disapproval of invading Cambodia and that the Academic Counsel would look into the issue of students receiving college credit for R.O.T.C.
The protests were not the only way that Western Students expressed themselves during the years of the Vietnam War. There were many underground newspapers, including *The Apocalypse*, *The Skewer*, and *In-Depth*. In April of 1969, *The Apocalypse* had articles that spoke against the war and also had articles that encouraged people to explore all sides of the issue. The issue also contained a salute to Mr. Moore who dodged the draft and fled to Canada. But not all of the underground newspapers dealt with the war. *The Skewer's* whole tone was sarcastic. The main article in one issue of the paper was about chastity and why males should rededicate themselves to virginity. Three students who helped with *The Skewer* got suspended for an article. Another underground newspaper was *In-Depth*. The main issue for this underground newspaper was for people to vote against the proposed student constitution. Other underground newspapers started in response to *In-Depth*. One of these newspapers, *A Little Bit Deeper*, encouraged students to vote yes to the proposed student constitution.