

At Winthrop, the 'club scene' has changed

Winthrop students in the early 1900s attended classes six days a week and had supervised study every night except Saturday. Dormitory students could not go home from

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NEARBY HISTORY

September to June until 1907, when the state legislature mandated that all state college students must have 10 days at Christmas.

Life was highly regimented back then at The Winthrop Normal and Industrial College of South Carolina, which was an all-girls school until 1974. Dating was almost impossible. One girl wrote a poem about the numerous rules and regulations in which she cleverly remarked, "We can only mention the other gender when using the word amen!"

Still, students had a wide variety of activities. Physical education classes were required. In addition, there were intramural

sports. Every class had basketball and field hockey teams. Freshmen played the specials (non-teaching majors), and the winner of that game played the sophomore team. The winner of the junior and senior class matches then played the other winners. The champions gained the right to fly a garnet and gold banner with their class name on it.

There was field day with numerous track events, and every year there was a tennis tournament with the top tennis players forming an elite group called the Racketers.

Besides sports, there were numerous clubs one could join. The largest club was the YWCA. In 1907, there were 440 girls in the dorm, and 421 of them belonged to the YWCA. The Y was interdenominational.

Around half of the YWCA members were enrolled in Bible study and the other half in mission study (many Winthrop graduates eventually became foreign missionaries).

Another Y group that was popular was the Social Settlement

Committee, whose members worked in Rock Hill's mill villages, known then as the "factory district." The Winthrop students worked with factory youth in what they called Social Saturday clubs.

There were academic clubs and societies. For the intellectuals, the top societies were the Curry Literary Society and the Winthrop Literary Society. They debated each other, held book discussions and put together musicals.

Future teachers in rural schools might choose to join the D.B. Johnson School Improvement Association.

Not only did they adopt rural one-teacher schools around the Rock Hill area, but they also published bulletins on topics such as "Selecting Children's Books." A popular booklet was on plants for school grounds with directions for growing the plants.

Some clubs had only a few members but had their pictures in the yearbook, nevertheless.

There was the Shakespeare Club, with only six members, which seriously studied Shake-

spearean plays and discussed them at meetings. A less serious club for Shakespeare lovers called itself "Pleasant Willy Club" (Willy was Shakespeare), which had 12 members who gave themselves names such as Romeo, Juliet, Hamlet, Ophelia and Portia.

The Terpsichorean German Club had as its motto, "On with the Dance! Let joy be unconfined!" Their Tatler pictures show them dressed in tuxedos with their hair pulled away from their faces into a knot or ponytail. This group took the boys' role in dances.

There were the House of York and the House of Lancaster, made up of girls from the towns of York and Lancaster.

The Buster Brown Club was secretive and met in an attic.

The Nut Crackers had the motto, "Crack, eat, and be merry, for tomorrow we may flunk." They were dedicated to just having fun.

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