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The Practice of Pinning and Its Production of Gendered, Idealized Images for Women on
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From the moment women entered female-only institutions of higher education during the nineteenth century, collegiate, campus cultures in the United States have promoted gendered, idealized images for young women (Peril, pg. 11, 2006). These imaginary, gendered images sponsored specific characteristics and behaviors that campus cultures expected these young women to adhere to while enrolled. Though perceptions have evolved since the first female students stepped on a college or university grounds, the constant highlighting of the female gender within these patriarchal, dominated institutions has not, and the production of gendered, model images for women has persisted.

When women first entered higher education, campus cultures often varied from school to school along with the specific characteristics and behaviors they promoted. However, this level of variation had changed by the early 20th century due to the rise of a national culture produced by the development of a nationwide media system during the turn of the century. Through this newly formed, national culture, campuses began to generate a standardized system of behaviors and expectations that women on college campuses were expected to follow universally (Bailey, pg. 7, 1989). Additionally, an influx of students during the 1920s and 1930s, coupled with this rise of a national media, allowed for this standardized, peer culture to promote courtship interaction between men and women based on competition through rating and analyzing one's peers (Syrett, pg. 186, 2009). This system of evaluation idealized certain aesthetic and behavioral traits between students to generate a prestigious, model for both men and women to conform to while on campus (Syrett, pg. 188, 2009). Standards of sexual disability and courtship rituals embraced this prestigious prototype and soon a student's dating life depended on conforming to

these idealized images (Syrett, pg. 190, 2009). Although the courtship rituals and characteristics associated with a desirable, female image on college campuses changed over the subsequent decades, new rituals and characteristics quickly took their place. Rituals, such as lavaliering, pinning and “going-steady” produced images for men and women embedded with peer expectations linked to aesthetics and behaviors.

This paper argues that the practice of “pinning” found within fraternity and sorority life on college campuses during the 1940s, 50s and 60s represented a type of courtship ritual embedded with competitive qualities that generated a gendered, idealized image for women on college campuses. Specifically, the work examines the development of idealized, gendered images, particularly for women, produced by pinning through the competitive nature of the courtship rituals found between Greek students on college campuses, the public nature of the practice on college campuses and its formation as a true courtship ritual leading to marriage by members in the Greek system. By analyzing the historical nature of courtship rituals within fraternity and sorority life, this paper demonstrates the profound competitive environment found within Greek relationships and the competitive environment’s ability to create sought after images that promote specific characteristics as ideal or desirable. Additionally, by looking at the public discussion occurring on the Midwestern campuses analyzed, this paper establishes students’ frequent discussion, promotion and reprimand of the practice of pinning through campus publications and their endorsement of certain qualities within the idealized image of the pinned women. Finally, fraternity and sorority life’s institutionalization of the pinning as a true courtship ritual that leads to marriage allowed for the practice and the traits it promoted to link closely to youth culture’s desire to conform to marriage and domesticity and create idealized, images of domestic partners.

Methodology and Research

This paper provides a historical analysis of the practice of pinning occurring on three Midwestern, universities in the United States: Southern Illinois University, Ball State University and Milikin University. The first two institutions are large, state-funded universities that began as teaching colleges but blossomed into multidimensional institutions during the period addressed in this paper (“About SIU”) (“History and Mission”). Milikin University, a small private school in Illinois, started as a Presbyterian-funded, non-secular university in the early twentieth century (“Milikin History”). By documenting the practice at both large, public and small, private institutions, the work attempts to illuminate the widespread nature of the practice in higher education during this period. However, the data collected pertains to institutions located only in the Midwest and customs may differ depending on the region of the country. Furthermore, the work focuses on predominantly historically, white fraternities and sororities on these campuses. Though each campus had multicultural Greek organizations, focusing on one demographic provides an efficient manner of researching the practice. In addition, the paper addresses works from multiple authors on the subjects of fraternity and sorority life, courtship rituals, manhood in the United States and campus images on colleges to illustrate a comprehensive view on this complex practice.

The primary research sources for this paper include the *Obelisk*, the campus yearbook for Southern Illinois University, *The Ball State News*, the campus newspaper for Ball State University, *The Orient*, the campus yearbook for Ball State University and *The Decaturian*, the campus newspaper for Milikin University. This research is ongoing and data compiled from other Midwestern universities, such as University of Illinois, Illinois State and Northern Illinois University, is not complete. Articles highlighting Greek sweethearts in newspapers and

yearbooks serve as the primary source of information for this research. In addition, fraternal songs from *Beta Theta Pi* are utilized to illustrate characteristics fraternity men emphasized within pinned women.

The paper utilizes secondary source information from multiple authors on topics ranging from Greek Life to college fashion. These works provide a historical background for the paper and help illustrate the array of factors that influenced the complex history associated with the practice of pinning. The project references Beth Bailey's book, *From the Front Porch to the Backseat*, which addresses the shifting nature of youth dating and courtship interaction during the first half of the 20th century. The paper also draws heavily on Lynn Peril's book, *College Girls*, focusing on the aesthetic qualities emphasized to college women during the early twentieth century. In addition, George Syrett's book, *The Company He Keeps*, provides a historical background on fraternity and sorority life, helping illustrate gender dynamics within the Greek community. Finally, E. Anthony Rotundo's work, *American Manhood* provides a historical background on gender expectations and desired gender characteristics within society during the turn of the century.

Historical Influences

The Industrial Revolution's effect on American society had profound consequences on broad, cultural dynamics within American life as well as campus life within higher education. This transformation prompted changes in gender relations within American culture and courtship rituals between youth, both throughout the broader national culture and within campus life as well, specifically fraternal and sororal society. This section begins by outlining the effect the Industrial Revolution had on gender dynamics and common conceptions about masculinity and femininity during the turn of the century. It continues by addressing the shifting nature of

courtship rituals due to these newly conceived gender expectations that places the development of the practice of pinning on college campuses within a historical context. Through the analysis of these changes, the paper provides a historical framework that demonstrates the manner in which societal motivations and factors led to the development of pinning and its promotion of an idealized, gendered image of women on college campuses during the 1940s, 50s and 60s.

Industrialization and Gender Dynamics

The industrial revolution that blossomed in the late nineteenth century transformed American life, particularly the gender dynamics between men and women. The development of “national media, a national education system, broader communication and urbanization” from industrialization provided catalysts that ushered in these new societal definitions for men and women (Bailey, pg. 7, 1989). This rapid social change challenged the belief of “separate spheres,” the conviction women possessed “natural” qualities that suited them for home life and men for public life (Rotundo, pg. 22, 1993). The transformation allowed women to enter the public sphere through factory, secretarial and clerical positions traditionally occupied by men (Clark, pg. 27, 2010). This upheaval of traditional gender roles within the workplace led men to promote the now stereotypical “male passions” of competitiveness, aggressiveness and toughness as well as place an emphasis on their physique (Rotundo, pg. 6 & 223, 1993). Conversely, men and society still conceptualized women’s roles as virtuous, moral crusaders despite their entrance into the public sphere (Rotundo, pg. 252, 1993). Women groups, now present in the public, sphere attempted to control the newly stressed passions of men and reiterated society’s moral perception of the female sex (Rotundo, pg. 252, 1993). These new qualities endowed upon both genders manifested themselves within the workplace and courtship rituals, as well as the newly important realm of athletics (Rotundo, pg. 239, 1993).

Developments such as these ushered in by the Industrial Revolution also had a profound effect on campus life and courtship rituals during the twentieth century.

Development of Courtship rituals

The transformation of gender dynamics within American culture during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had an enormous effect on courtship rituals and interactions between young individuals. The movement towards urbanization and industrialization transformed courtship between an emerging youth culture from the “private parlor” to the public realm of dating (Bailey, pg. 13, 1989). By providing a brief overview of both calling and dating and subsequently analyzing the societal factors that led to this transformation between the two, this section helps develop a tangible understanding of the societal influences effecting the practice of pinning as well as a historical understanding of courtship practice during both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The practice of “calling,” prominent during the turn of the century, illustrated a courtship ritual that allowed women to accept or deny male attraction and firmly positioned women in control of social life (Bailey, pg. 15, 1989). Calling occurred in the private sphere of the home and was supervised by mothers or other adults. This female oversight placed the act within the female controlled domestic sphere (Bailey, pg. 15, 1989). Middle and upper class society utilized the practice to promote interaction, which allowed for those with “suitable backgrounds” and socioeconomic status to interact (Bailey, pg. 15 1989). This structure allowed the “upper classes to protect themselves from some of the intrusions of urban life,” specifically the mobility present within this new society (Bailey, pg. 17, 1989). However, this system began to break down due to the push towards urbanization during the turn of the century and by the 1910s, dating had entered the vocabulary of American courtship (Bailey, pg. 16-17, 1989). The reduction of space

for calling to occur due to crowded city life and the invention of the automobile led the middle and upper-classes eventually to embrace new forms of courtship by the 1920s and 1930s (Bailey, pg. 17-19, 1989). The new system of dating, first embraced by the lower class, placed courtship outside of the “private parlor” and allowed for freedom through dates placed within the public sphere (Bailey, pg. 17, 1989). This structure “shifted power from women to men” by removing the act from a woman’s home, where women controlled the action (Bailey, pg. 19, 1989). The practice of dating embraced “competition” and “promiscuous popularity” demonstrated by “the number and variety of dates” a person received (Bailey, pg. 26, 1989). However, the end of the Second World War and the loss of eligible men generated a female panic about male scarcity, and society reconfigured the dating system to adhere to standards that embraced monogamy (Bailey, Pg. 40-45, 1989). These newfound standards touted “early marriage” as the ideal. Furthermore, teenagers began to move away from a dating system based on quantity and moved instead towards dating conventions, such as going steady, which mimicked marriage and signaled monogamous relationships (Bailey pg. 49, 1989). By the 1950s, monogamous relationships became the standard, and men and women were expected to conform to these new cultural norms (Bailey, pg. 49, 1989). This overview of the transition of courtship demonstrates the monogamous practice of pinning’s position within the historical record and provides the necessary background to firmly understand societal factors influencing courtship rituals during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

Historical Development of Pinning on Campus

On the surface, pinning demonstrates a simple exercise: the exchange of a fraternity pin from a fraternal man to a sorority woman, thus allowing college students to confirm their serious affection for one another outside the scope of other monogamous courtship rituals, such as going

steady or formal engagement. However, as an individual dissects the practice more in-depth, it becomes apparent the ritual of pinning is multidimensional and challenging to comprehend without the necessary background information on the practice's development. Understanding the development of the practice on the national stage as well as within the Midwestern universities analyzed, allows for the practice to be firmly placed within a historical context. This positioning provides the crucial background information needed to understand the practice's ability to create gendered, idealized images.

The exact origins regarding the practice of pinning on college campuses are controversial and hazy at best. An issue of the *Ball State News* in 1958 describes a story detailing the beginning of the practice:

“The idea got started about 40 years ago in a small eastern co-ed college. It seems that one evening a winsome young lass named Ima Beastie loaded herself quite heavily with cotton a padding.

Later, when she was out on a date, this undue strain caused one of her shoulder straps to break, whereas she began to cry her date, not knowing she was putting a big front, he offered his fraternity pin as a possible means of repairing the broken strap. Ima immediately accepted it, pinned the strap to her sweater and a new custom was born.”

(Imulse, 1958)

Though no other historical documentation supports this specific account, a description from Marianne Sanua's fraternal history, *One Hundred Years of Zeta Beta Tau*, the first Jewish fraternity founded, describes men pinning and serenading women during the Great Depression (Sanua, pg. 102, 1998). Additionally, national fraternal songs, such as “Beta Sweetheart” by Richard Warner from the Beloit chapter of *Beta Theta Pi* began referencing men sharing of their

fraternal pins during the early 1910s (Beta Theta Pi song book , pg 16). These historical references firmly signal the arrival of pinning within fraternity and sorority life during the early twentieth century. Though the practice made its entrance on the national stage during this period, the spread to other institutions of higher education and adoption across the country took longer.

The historical documents confirm that the practice began showing up on the Midwestern universities analyzed during roughly the same period as described above and into the early 1940s. An April 1925 issue of *The Decaturian* describes the pinning of a woman named, “Betty,” by a Kappa Delta Chi fraternity man during a formal dance at Miliken University (“Kappa delta chi,” 1925). The March 1942 *Ball State News* describes the pinning of a group of women, referred to as “their girls” by a group of men, “The T.C. Boys” (“Modern pepys's diary,” 1942). The descriptions of pinning prior to the end of the Second World War were rare within these campus publications and support of the practice appears to be limited. However, the years following the Second World War through the late 1960s illustrates a drastic rise in the number of accounts of pinning and a heightened emphasis on the practice by fraternities and sororities on each of the analyzed campuses.

The increase in the number of descriptions describing pinning during the years following the Second World War demonstrates a movement by Greek life and university entities at these universities to embrace the practice of pinning. Multiple issues of *The Ball State News* and *The Decaturian* at both Ball State University and Milikin University during this period provide Greek gossip columns that describe recently pinned individuals within Greek society. Columns were also published with topics ranging from the practice’s origins to the pros and cons of giving or receiving a pin. Furthermore, the 1961 issue of Southern Illinois University’s yearbook, *The Obelisk*, references *Sigma Phi Epsilon*, a fraternity on campus, describing their sweetheart as a

pinned woman to one of their members (Obelisk, 1961). During this period, Greek members no longer sparingly mentioned pinning. Instead, they had fixated on the practice and positioned the act as a crucial component of their social lives. Other university departments, such as residence life, also mention the practice and provide descriptions for procedures and rules surrounding the pinning of a young woman within the halls. The 1956 edition of *Happy Halls* from the Association of Women's Residence Halls at Ball State University provides a step-by-step detailed process of appropriate behavior and actions to take when a fraternity man decides to pin and serenade a female resident (Dawson, Atwood & Stobough, pf.19-20, 1956). The publication outlines the appropriate period, which one needs to inform the hall director of a potential pinning, as well as the etiquette for other young women in the hall (Dawson, Atwood & Stobough, pg. 20, 1956). The stated goal of the publication is to ensure "such a memorable occasion" is "plan[ed] carefully" to make assure "this is a perfect night" for the young woman obtaining the pin (Dawson, Atwood & Stobough, pg. 19, 1956). These examples display that by the 1950s and 1960s, pinning had emerged as a central courtship practice on these Midwestern university campuses, and campus culture had seamlessly incorporated the practice into student's social life through Greek society.

The Development of Idealized, Gendered Images through the Act of Pinning

The practice of pinning, found on college campuses during the 1940s, 50s and 60s illustrates a courtship ritual that generated gendered, idealized images for college women entering higher education. Three specific factors are utilized to illustrate this practice's ability to promote gendered, idealized images of women: First, analyzing the competitive development within courtship rituals in fraternal and sororal life over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries illustrates these practices' capability to generate prestigious, gendered images on college

campuses by projecting specific characteristics as desirable for partners. Second, highlighting the public nature and discussion of the practice within Greek life on college campuses demonstrates the ability for the act and the characteristics it promoted to be publically enforced as well as publically chastised to create idealized, gendered images for women to adhere to while at school. Finally, by positioning pinning as a ritual that leads to domesticity and marriage, the practice promotes idealized, gender traits to women wanting to conform to culture norms and pressures surrounding marriage. All three of these analyses illustrate, in a concrete manner, the practice of pinning within Greek life and its capacity to promote gendered, idealized images for women on campuses in institutions of higher education.

Historical Gender Dynamics within Fraternity and Sorority Life

The historical advance of courtship rituals within fraternal and sororal life from the nineteenth century into the twentieth century illustrates the development of the competitive nature of these acts and their capacity to produce gendered, ideal images for women. By analyzing this progress from the nineteenth century into the early twentieth century, this section illustrates the changing factors within higher education and fraternity and sorority life that eventually lead to the promotion of a gendered, idealized image of Greek women on campus during the period. Specifically, the courtship rituals utilized by fraternal men and off-campus women during the early nineteenth century illustrate a movement towards the promotion of individualized characteristics through competitive courtship. Furthermore, the twentieth century exemplifies the total embrace of competitive courtship through the endorsement of courtship rituals that rate and analyze specific qualities of potential partners. The analysis of the progression of courtship rituals in Greek life during these two centuries highlights the development of the competitive nature of the practice due to changes in higher education and

Greek life, as well as this courtship practice's ability to produce model, gendered images of women by idealizing specific traits as desirable to the opposite sex.

Nineteenth century. Interactions between fraternal men and off-campus women during the early nineteenth century began to situate the competitive nature of courtship rituals, which would flourish within Greek society in the subsequent century. During the early nineteenth century, when the founding of fraternal organizations transpired, college campuses, small in number, only admitted young men entering the ministry or young, wealthy students (Syrett, pg. 13-15, 2009). These fraternities typically were homogenous, comprised of white, Anglo-Saxon men, who could afford payment into these organizations (Syrett, pg. 15, 2009). Due to this lack of gender diversity, these men had a limited amount of interaction with women due to their exclusion from male only campuses (Syrett, pg. 15, 2009). However, as historian Nicholas Syrett discusses in his book, *The Company He Keeps*, these college men did interact with women of the same age through the courtship customs of the period (pg. 71, 2009).

During the nineteenth century, young people adhered to the courtship practice of calling and fraternal men were no different (Bailey, pg. 15, 1989). This practice prompted young men to send requests to visit young women at their houses, under the supervision of their families (Syrett, pg. 71, 2009). This courtship exercise allowed women to retain control within the ritual and regulated men to participants instead of actors (Bailey, 15, 1989). These interactions fostered short romances that rarely led to serious commitment by men because men were expected to marry after school when financially stable (Syrett, pg. 72, 2009). In addition, this early form of courtship promoted competition between men based on the level of prestige attached to their family (Bailey, pg. 15-16, 1989). In the practice, the female participant had a choice to receive a call or deny a call from a particular man, mainly due to his social status (Bailey, pg. 15, 1989).

The capacity for women to choose a partner based on specific characteristics linked to his social prestige implanted the beginning competitive nature found within courtship rituals in Greek life during the twentieth century. Although the courtship ritual of “calling” did produce idealized characteristics for men and women to the same effect as later courtship practices, the attributes were often pre-determined based on someone’s socio-economic status (Bailey, pg. 16, 1989). Additionally, it is important to emphasize the fact that even though men acted respectably to women of similar status at their home, they frequently found sexual release with “inferior” women outside their class status, specifically prostitutes (Syrett, pg. 72-73, 2009). Movement toward competitive courtship systems and hyper-sexualized behavior by men during this period set the foundation for courtship rituals during the twentieth century as these practices became much more individualized and less predetermined in the coming century.

Twentieth century. Interactions between fraternal men and women in the twentieth century fully embraced competitive forms of courtship on college campuses that promoted individualized characteristics, which idealized gendered images for women. The movement towards coeducation and the development of sororities on campuses changed the dynamics of courtship within Greek life during the late nineteenth century and had a profound influence on practice during the subsequent century (Syrett, pg. 173, 2009). Furthermore, the years following the First World War spurred a rapid growth of both fraternities and sororities on college campuses due to an increase in enrollment within higher education. (Syrett, pg. 207, 2009).

A major shift that allowed courtship rituals to move towards idealizing specific traits occurred alongside the emergence of sexual competency based on a person’s sexual ability and capability to obtain a date (Syrett, pg. 185, 2009). This movement towards highlighting a person’s sexual prowess manifested itself within emerging forms of masculinity within college

men, particularly fraternity men, and allowed for specific traits to be deemed as desirable (Syrett, pg. 185, 2009). This change also established itself within the emerging campus dating systems that embraced a competitive system of rating and dating between fraternity and sorority members to establish a student's sexual competency and desirability. (Syrett, pg. 190, 2009). This structure allowed for more movement than previous standards by permitting individual attributes, such as charm, looks and styles to factor into a person's appeal to the opposite sex in place of the previous standards centered on predetermined societal attributes, such as class, wealth or family history (Syrett, pg. 190-191, 2009). The promotion of these individual traits allowed for forming courtship rituals to idealize certain attributes within the individual and allowed gendered images to form based on attraction. These societal beliefs manifested themselves, along with other characteristics, as ideal traits desired by the opposite sex and eventually led to standardized images, such as the pinned woman, on college campuses.

The historical development of courtship rituals within campus life, especially fraternity and sorority life, throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century illustrates their ability to promote gendered, idealized images through their embrace of a competitive environment. Through this analysis, it becomes clear that the history of competition within Greek courtship allowed for newly forming courtship rituals to promote gendered, idealized traits based on desire and sexual attraction by the opposite sex. This environment ultimately produced the courtship ritual of pinning and illustrates the practice's very competitive nature and capacity to promote gendered, idealized images.

Public Nature of Pinning and Creation of Desired Traits

The movement of courtship rituals from the "privacy of the parlor" to the public arena of drive-ins within dating created a public space for discussion between youth that brought

courtship and youth interaction to the forefront of culture (Bailey, pg. 3, 1989). Additionally, this public discussion allowed for rules and beliefs to be standardized through the emergence of a national media and an embrace of education (Bailey, pg. 7, 1989). The act of pinning represents a form of this public courtship. The multiple discussions within campus yearbooks, newspapers, fraternal songs and handbooks illustrate the practice's ability to debate, promote, and chastise specific, gendered actions and traits in order to endorse an idealized image of the pinned women. Specifically, Greek members and campus peers publically promoted these gender specific traits, which embrace an idealized image of the pinned woman; public forums included, the campus newspaper's gossip column and the creation of dances that highlighted pinned women and incorporated fraternal songs about pinning. The communal discussion through these mediums illustrated the public effect the practice had on deciding which traits men would deem desirable and which they would deem undesirable in women.

Fraternity and sorority life member's utilized student newspapers to discuss and promote the practice of pinning through gossip columns. This promotion illustrated the public nature of the practice and the effect the exercise had on determining partners within campus culture. As a collective group of organized students on campus, Greeks often utilized campus columns to gossip and notify the larger community during the 1950s and 1960s. In both student newspapers researched, *The Ball State News* and *The Decaturian*, columns titled "Entanglements," "Social News," "Column Coed" and "Beaver Tracks" provided information about fellow Greeks pertaining to recent pinnings, recent unpinnings, engagements, sweetheart elections, dances and possible love interests. By highlighting recent pinnings and unpinnings, the Greek community on these campuses placed the courtship ritual within the public sphere for community members to discuss. Some columns congratulated certain pinned couples and a few responded with

“remorse,” in a humorous way, to the loss of some eligible partners on campus to the practice. For example, in February 1948 article in the *Ball State News* the writer discusses the “loss” of Vera Bradley, the homecoming queen, from the dating domain to the practice (Sam & Jerry, 1948). In addition, the February 1948 issue of the *Ball State News* discusses the advantages and disadvantages of the practice highlighting more benefits than disadvantages (1948). By commending and highlighting this practice, these columns stressed pinned women and placed an emphasis on them, which designated the status of pinned as an attainable ideal for young women entering college.

These columns also utilized the public discussion found in campus newspapers to project specific characteristics and attributes as desirable for women wanting to obtain the status of being pinned. Many columns discussing behaviors and clothing styles appropriate for women during the period were positioned alongside the announcements pertaining to pinnings in both *The Decaturian* and *The Ball State News*. The April, 1961 “Column Coed” by Judy Claycomb in *The Ball State News*, not only describes the recent engagement and pinnings, but also the color choices for the upcoming season, stating the “spring colors are pastel and blazing,” even describing which color works best with a particular hair color (Claycomb, 1961). The authors of these columns make this less-than-subtle connection purposefully to connect the status of the pinned woman to these characteristics. By successfully joining these characteristics with this imagined status, these articles are able to project gendered, idealized traits, both behavioral and aesthetic, through the image of the pinned woman. Consequently, the image of the pinned woman then becomes laced with idealized, gendered traits projecting an ideal, feminine model. The ability of these gossip columns to project these traits and successfully connect them to the image of the pinned woman exemplifies how the public nature of this particular courtship ritual

was utilized to project model, gendered images for women on the college campuses analyzed during this period.

Greeks endorsed public traits and characteristics associated with pinned women through the promotion of the fraternity sweetheart crowned at chapters' formal dances. Students on campus were keenly aware of formal dances, typically held at the end of the school year, and these occasions served as markers of major social events within many institutions (Bailey, pg. 63, 1989). Campus newspapers and yearbooks frequently provided commentary on these events and highlighted dates and awards presented during these formal dances. In the May 1957 issue of *The Ball State News* column, "Formal Season," the author describes the formal dances of multiple fraternal organizations (Borsattino, 1957). Additionally, the January 1941 issue of the *Decaturian* describes announcements occurring at fraternity winter formals, such as *Sigma Alpha Epsilon* ("Social News," 1941). Communal acknowledgement and discussion about these dances positioned the events within the public discussion. The heightened awareness allowed these events to project idealized images through the promotion of the pinned women, specifically through the title of the ideal fraternal sweetheart.

The 1969 issue of the *Obelisk* describes sweetheart candidates anointed at fraternal, formal dances:

"Nine social fraternities at Southern honor girls on campus by selecting them as their chapter's sweethearts. The candidates may be members of a sorority on Greek row or may be independents. They are chosen from the group of girls who are lavaliered, pinned, or engaged to one of the members of the fraternity.

Depending on the particular chapter, the girl's reign as sweetheart may last for a year or for only one term. Crowned in the setting of a ball, banquet or party, the

fraternity sweetheart is usually honored with a trophy, and flowers” (Obelisk, 1969).

This account illustrates the manner in which the sweetheart image was not only publically idealized, but also integrally connected to the image of the pinned women. By anointing these women with the title of “fraternity sweetheart” and honoring them with flowers and trophy, it was assumed other women, whether at the dance or reading about it the next day in the paper, would aspire to attain the criteria expected to become a candidate, specifically being pinned. Consequently, women seeking to become sweetheart candidates or fraternity sweethearts idealized the characteristics connected to the image of the pinned women. Fraternal songs, such as “Beta Sweetheart,” sung after the crowning of the women, provided additional promotion of the practice of pinning by romanticizing the exchange of a pin with images of long-lasting love, marriage and friendship (Beta Theta Pi song book , pg 16). In this manner, the image of the sweetheart was utilized to promote the status of being pinned and the characteristics that the image projected. This illustrates the manner in which fraternity dances, specifically the public promotion of pinned women through the sweetheart candidate, produced gendered, idealized images through the courtship practice of being pinned.

It becomes apparent that the public nature of the pinning projected through campus newspapers and formal dances contributed to the promotion of gendered, model images for women to adhere to on campus. The presence of a Greek community publicly discussing the practice through multiple mediums particularly helped promote these images. Using gossip columns, fraternal dances and the sweetheart title, the practice of pinning promoted specific, gendered characteristics for female members of sororities to conform to while at school.

The Move Towards the Domestic Ideal of Marriage

As discussed earlier, the development of long-standing monogamous relationships between young individuals during the 1940s illustrated a drastic shift from earlier systems that promoted variety and continual dating (Bailey, pg 40-45, 1989). Due to uncertainty surrounding relationships and the paranoia of male-scarcity due to the United States involvement in World War II, young women and men began signaling monogamous relationships through rituals that signified exclusivity with the exchange of items (Bailey, pg. 40-50, 1989). The practice of pinning developed from this drive towards monogamy and became prevalent on the campuses of the Midwestern universities analyzed in this work during the 1940s and 1950s. However, the practice promoted long-term commitment, which differed from other monogamous rituals, such as “going steady” and projected gendered, idealized images through this deviation. Specifically, discussions within Greek life on college campuses during the mid-twentieth century posited the practice of pinning as an act that lead to serious commitment or marriage, signaling the exercise as a true courtship ritual. The placement of pinning as a true courtship ritual allowed for it to connect closely to the conforming desire by young people during the period to enter marriage or domesticity. By linking the practice closely to the desire to conform to marriage, the characteristics promoted by pinning generate an idealized image desired by youth who want to eventually marry and enter the domestic sphere.

Greek newspapers during the 1940s, 50s and 60s describe the practice of pinning as an act which signifies serious commitment and a movement towards marriage. For instance, the January 1951 issue of the *Ball State News* references a common saying heard around campus when describing the pinning and quick marriage proposal of two students, “You’ve heard the saying ‘pin one week, ring the next’—well we have just the case” (Spillers & McClung, 1951). This passage demonstrates the close relationship between pinning and marriage and clearly

situates the practice as an indicator towards serious commitment or marriage. Additionally, another issue of the *Ball State News* reiterates the seriousness of the act in comparison to “going steady by providing this description:

“In high school the girls are seen wearing large, clumsy boy’s rings while the boys wear dainty girl’s rings. This “going steady” is the beginning of young love.

In college the next step often occurs if the fellow belongs to a fraternity. When a girl receives a boy’s fraternity pin, she is said to be “pinned”

Pinning is the most serious step so far. It is a step nearer to the engagement which ultimately leads to marriage. Not only is a frat pin one more symbol of love and possession, but it also has a deeper and a more lasting feeling attached to it. To be pinned is not to be taken lightly. It brings the couple nearer to marriage, a home and a family” (Gothard, 1957).

This passage decisively illustrates the connection between pinning and the movement towards marriage and separates the practice from “young love” rituals, such as “going-steady.”

The understanding that the practice of pinning signaled a movement towards marriage and domesticity is crucial to demonstrating how the practice promoted gendered, idealized images. The years following World War II saw a substantial increase in the amount of marriages and children being born (Bailey, Pg. 41, 1989). Though the period is often designated as the “Baby boom,” others referred to the period conversely as the “Cult of Domesticity” focusing on the movement’s emphasis towards marriage and family life rather than the sheer number of children born (Katz, pg. 96, 2007). Women especially adhered to these new definitions, which associated them closely “with the home, motherhood and child care” (Katz, pg. 96, 2007).

Domestication became an ideal for young women on college campuses during the period as demonstrated through a declaration by Nancy Gothard, a student columnist at *The Ball State News*, “It [pinning] brings the couple nearer to marriage, a home and a family, which is the dream and goal of each of us” (Gothard, 1957). Consequently, by describing the practice of pinning as a ritual that eventually led to marriage, campus culture effectively connected the image of the pinned women produced by the practice to the desire of young women to enter the domestic realm. Traits promoted through the representation of the pinned woman, such as behavior, clothing styles and campus activities, became the ideal for young women wanting to move towards marriage. Therefore, the image of the pinned woman became an idealized, gendered display on college campuses embedded with characteristics connected with feminized, domestic beliefs of the period.

Campus culture’s positioning of the practice of pinning as a true courtship ritual, an act that leads to marriage, allows for the image of the pinned woman to become an idealized, gendered representation for women wanting to attain the status of marriage. Through campus discussion and opinions in newspapers, it becomes clear this practice illustrated a true courtship ritual. In addition, it is apparent Greeks saw this ritual as a movement towards marriage, different from other monogamous indicators present at the time. This combined understanding allowed for the image of the pinned woman to become idealized by women wanting to enter into the domestic realm with feminized, gendered traits.

Conclusion

The emergence of the practice of pinning during the 1940s, 50s and 60s produced a courtship ritual within fraternity and sorority life that projected gendered, idealized images for women on college campuses. By analyzing the historic nature of courtship in Greek life, the

public nature of pinning and the practice's link to marriage and domesticity, this paper illustrates in a solid manner the capacity for the ritual to promote gendered, idealized images for women to conform to on college campuses. Though the effects of these model images on women during the 1940s, 50s and 60s were powerful, the repercussion for future female students were influential as well.

Consequences

As higher education began to enroll more female students during the 20th century, the presence of this image of the pinned woman formed from the courtship ritual of pinning worked to restrict access to this incoming demographic of students, specifically those entering Greek life. This image, coupled with the patriarchal nature of higher education and the fraternity and sorority system designated particular behaviors, clothing styles and activities as "appropriate" for the ideal woman on campus. The pressure to conform to this gendered, model image limited mobility for women on campus and undoubtedly led to a campus experience for women that often alienated those who defied the cultural expectation. This image, and the experiences it generated, effected subsequent generations of female students on college campuses and produced a lasting effect on the female experience on campus. A significant consequence still felt within higher education on contemporary college campuses today.

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