

TUESDAY

EARLY MSU

By Steve Waterbury



Former MSU President John Hannah and machine.

Freshmen at MSU used to be fair game for anyone with a hankering for harrassment.

In 1920, the season on freshmen was open and the license was a grade card that showed you had sophomore standing or better.

Freshmen males ranked only slightly above the bovine members of the Agricultural College. Strict enforcement of the unwritten rule that freshmen shall at all times show "proper respect" to upperclassmen sometimes resulted in life-endangering mob punishment.

The editorial columns of the Holcad, forerunner of the State News, reveal a continual struggle to keep the "yearlings" of MAC (we were once Michigan Agriculture College) from becoming "uppyty."

"Fresh, get this straight," fumed a 1920 Holcad editorial, "You are supposed to give at least two thirds of the walk to any upperclassman and when you pass a coed get off the walk entirely and give her the right of way."

The Dec. 7, 1920 Holcad reports that, "freshmen riding with juniors or seniors on the elevator in the Engineering Bldg. have repeatedly rushed on first without offering to close or open the doors.

"Watch your P's and Q's a little more carefully or by spring there is liable to be a grand celebration on the part of the Vigilance Committee," the editorial concluded.

Nor was the student newspaper making idle threats. An earlier issue of the Holcad announced that, "the first public ducking (as opposed to numerous earlier private duckings) held at MAC will be staged Wednesday noon at 12:30 at Farm

.....
Former President Hannah (class of '23) graduated in an era when offending freshmen were publicly dunked in the Red Cedar from Farm Lane Bridge.
.....

Lane Bridge. Two violations of college traditions will be punished at that time.

"The charge placed against these 'fros' by the Sophomore Vigilance Committee is that of 'acting as escorts to coeds on the campus without wearing fresh caps or toques."

"The student council has given full authority to impose fitting punishment to the violators of our sacred college traditions and according to the members of this committee, no violations are going to escape their notice from now on."

Criticism of the Sophomore Vigilance Committee was answered by revealing how much more humane and modern the committee method was as compared to earlier enforcement of "sacred traditions" by mob action.

Such a defense appeared in the November 16, 1920, Holcad. The writer revealed that he had been told upon arrival at M.A.C. that "they nearly kill freshmen at East Lansing."

"The above statement, altho (sic) extreme, came

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an ethnographic study of virgin land

By Barney White

THE UNION

Preface: the following ethnography is the result of a four - year field study. The author initially entered the cultural region more by chance than intent, but subsequently became interested in the native social institutions to such an extent that he has remained ever since.

The truly significant thing about the cultural area in question is that a number of seemingly diverse and distinct social groupings exist in relative harmony in geographical contiguous areas. Certain landforms do provide subtle geophysical boundaries, but nothing of a deterministic degree.

The territory under scrutiny is called by various nomenclatures by the several groups of inhabitants. Some refer to it as the "grill," others as the "Union," while still other groups affect sub-territorial designations such as "the left bank," "the Nark Nook," etc. Ethnic-leaning anthropologists have rather presumptuously dubbed the entire cultural area the "Union grill."

Generally speaking the Union grill is inhabited by six distinct ethnic elements plus cultural overlap areas and minority enclaves including a cross-cultural grouping called the "Union employees."

Tribal names vary even among the individual tribes, so for the sake of clarity I shall utilize the following admittedly artificial designations: Freaks, Boppers, Vets, Narks, Blacks and Marginal Men.

Historically speaking the Freaks appear to be the oldest group in the Grill area. They have no written history as such though they do have an extremely rich cache of myth and fable.

Freak social status is determined on two bases: seniority and "hipness" (this latter designation is somewhat akin to the Latin American notion of "Maschismo"). There are certain ritualized mechanisms for attaining "hipness" including the "acid test," the "cosmic deal" and "the guitar leach." Seniority is based purely on survival.

In Freak society, social position is immediately identifiable by residence arrangement. The most junior and least "hip" freaks must sit at the far north end of the "left bank" (see map). As they

increase in stature they are allowed to move further southward until they reach the penultimate table where only the "old heads" are allowed to sit. For some inexplicable reason the southernmost table seems to be reserved to tribal renegades who have committed the sin of "going straight."

To the south of the "left bank" past the "barrier wall" lies the region of the Marginal Men. This particular grouping is by far the most amorphous on the entire grill scene. The Marginal tribe is comprised entirely of migrants from extra-grill territories. It is not clear why these people have elected to settle in the Union area or why they are apparently able to maintain a sort of social cohesion and co-existence.

There is in fact only one uniting factor in the Marginal Men milieu: they are unable to attain entry into any of the other Union Grill social groupings. The Freaks maintain this is because the Marginal Men are "turkeys" — turkeydom apparently being a kind of negative karma. Interaction between Freaks and Marginal Men is looked down upon by both groups.

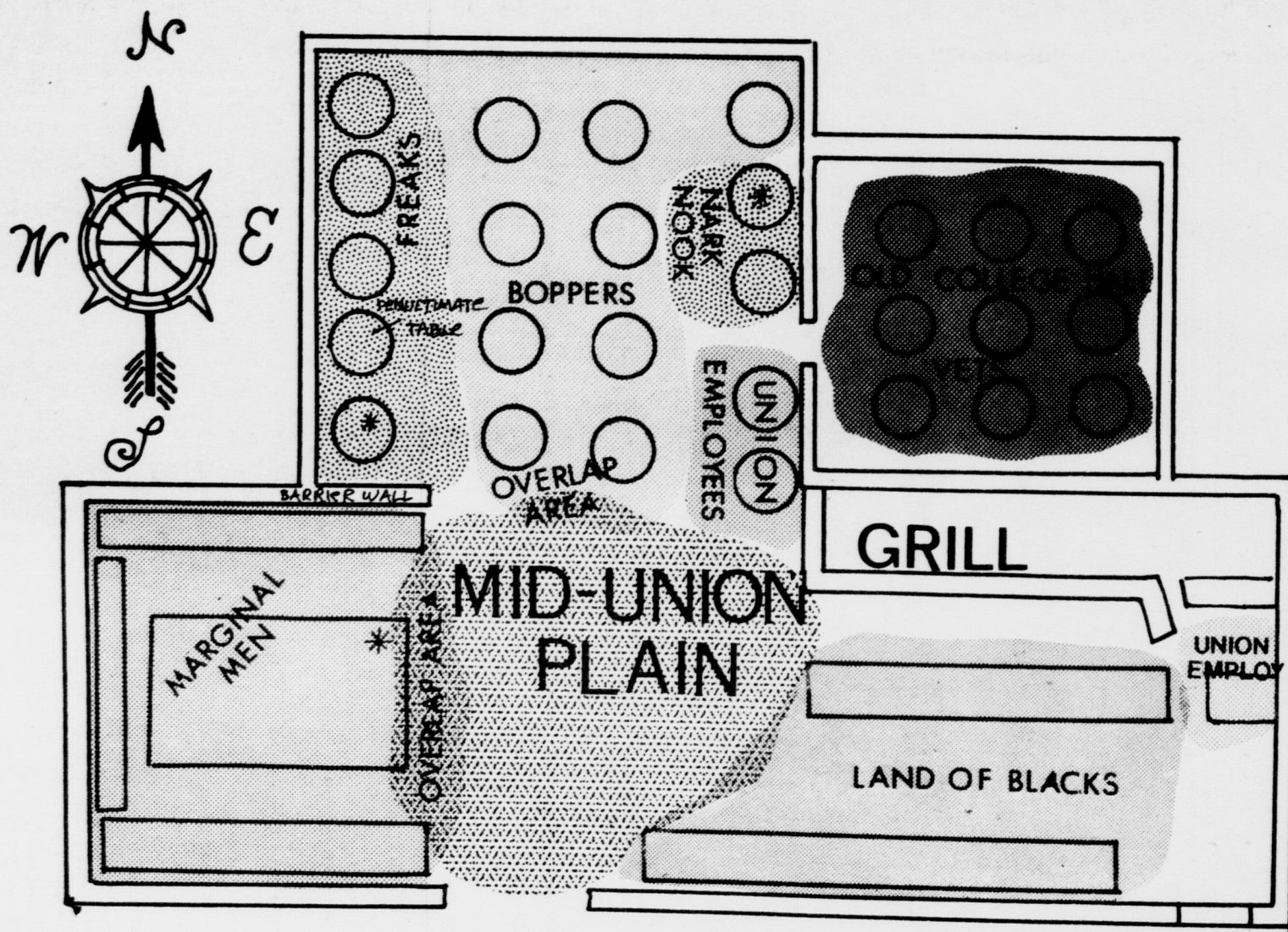
To the east of the Marginal Men across the Mid-Union plains lies the land of the blacks. Due to choice geographical factors — the primary source of food and drink, "the grill," lies in their area — all the other tribes defer with respect to the blacks.

This particular ethnic group does not have the same sort of rigid social structure as do the Freaks. In fact, the blacks conduct their business on a purely democratic basis wherein every "brother" (the typical designation for a full-fledged member of the culture) is considered an equal of the other.

To the immediate east of the Freaks (see map) and to the northwest of the blacks lies the "Nark Nook." This is the smallest of the cultural regions in the Union Grill, but it is also one of the most significant. In fact, the thinly veiled animosity between the Narks and the Freaks is the only intra-cultural conflict of importance in the Union area.

With the exception of the "Vets," every other social grouping considers the Narks to be interlopers who are bent upon making trouble. They are, without a doubt, Vikings of the Union grill being both hated and feared. (A common Freak prayer goes as follows: "From ghosties and

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goulies and long-legged beasties and Narks that go bust in the night, Carl deliver us.")

Apparently the Narks are conscious of the low esteem in which they are held by their neighbors since they attempt to effect costumes that will render them unnoticeable. These consist typically of coats and ties, trench coats and pork-pie hats.

Due east of the Narks lies the mysterious home of the Vets, called by some "Old College Hall." Due to geographical factors (i.e., two walls (see map) the Vets are all but isolated from the rest of the Union grill. They seemingly like it this way.

The Vets Tribe is subdivided into a number of clans whose origins apparently stem from primitive work designations. The largest clan is the "Engineers" with the "Math Majors" running a close second.

The Vets are of a particularly superstitious nature and place much value in totems and other symbols of power. The two most popular tribe symbols are "the flag" and a "ruptured duck." The

latter totem is reputed to have some historical significance.

The last group relevant to our discussion is the "Boppers" or the "Teeny-boppers." At first glance this group would appear to present a classic institution of the cultural diffusionist paradigm. Their territorial preserve is directly adjacent to the Freak lands and the Boppers continually attempt to imitate the Freaks and, in so doing, gain entry into Freak society. Some few are ultimately successful.

According to the tribal legends of the Freaks and the Narks the Boppers originated in some mythical homeland called "East Lansing High School" and migrated to the Union grill in search of peace of mind and, more importantly, a piece of the action. When questioned about this, however, the Boppers deny everything and insist that they have been legitimate residents of the grill "for a long time."

In fact (and not unlike the Boasian school of anthropological thought) the one thing that the Boppers are most intent upon is denying that they are a group at all. Nevertheless, they are easy to

separate from the other ethnic groupings in the Grill by, among other things, certain physical characteristics, including a high incidence of acne.

Epilogue: It is fortunate that certain adventurous souls have been able to record the ethnographies of the Grill dwellers since this scene is already beginning to vanish under the onslaught of civilization. Many of the booths that had provided shelter for the tribal peoples have been replaced with tables of the modern grotesque design. Environmental and cultural shock are already beginning to cause social blurring, their traditional settings having been altered.

It can be argued that this is yet another proof of Harris' cultural materialistic paradigm. I would disagree, however. I am inclined instead to support the thesis that what we have here is yet another example of Prysbiciki's Third Law of Cultural Mobility which states in part: "If there ain't no grins, there ain't no scene..."

Milliken: GOP governor despite Democratic gains

By Jeff Sheler

Gov. Milliken may be a very lonely man for the next four years.

Although he won a hard-fought battle for his first full term as the state's chief executive, he is the only Republican who won a top state office in last week's election.

Democrats held onto the attorney general and secretary of state posts with the reelection of Frank Kelley and the election of Wayne County Auditor Richard Austin. Austin will replace retiring Democrat James Hare who has been coloring license plates since 1954.

Democrats also neutralized Republican control of the 38-member state Senate and kept their 4-vote edge in the House. With the defeat of Sen. N. Lorraine Beebe, R - Dearborn, by 22-year-old Democrat David Plawecki, the Senate in January will be split 19-19.

Perhaps the most significant victory for state Democrats was the election of former governors John B. Swainson and G. Mennon Williams to the state Supreme Court. Swainson and Williams will give the "nonpartisans - but - really - Democrats" an edge in the court - which will be very significant during the upcoming fight over reapportioning the state's congressional districts.

But the governor won't be completely alone. At least he'll have Jim Brickley to talk to - which should be a treat, since Milliken has been without the services of a full-time lieutenant governor for the past 22 months.

Brickley may find himself in more of a key role than most of his predecessors. With the Senate evenly split between the two parties, Brickley as the presiding officer over the upper chamber will cast tie-breaking votes.

Seldom does an issue polarize the Senate into totally partisan blocs, but if a tie should ever occur it will give Republicans a good feeling to

know Brickley will have the final word.

But if Milliken still has hopes for his programs of educational reform, environment and housing, he will have to try harder than ever to woo Democrats in the legislature.

Last week he made it clear that this was his intention. In his declaration-of-victory speech at a news conference Thursday he called for a "cooperative effort" between Democrats and Republicans in the next four years, a task that may not be as difficult for Milliken as it might have been had he been "just another Republican governor."

Milliken's stand on parochialism has won him some influential friends in top Democratic ranks, including House Speaker William A. Ryan, D-Detroit.

The governor, in strong support of giving aid to nonpublic schools, capitalized on the antiparochialism issue during the campaign by coming out against Proposal C a week before his Democratic opponent Sander Levin. Levin was outspokenly against parochialism in the Senate but voice opposition to the proposal because, he said, it went too far.

But Ryan, and other Detroit Catholic Democrats, will remember the support of one likable Traverse City retailer who stood firmly against the proposal which was eventually passed overwhelmingly by state voters.

Far be it from Ryan or any other Democrat to ever openly embrace the governor or his policies without first tongue-lashing him for being a Republican, but when it finally comes down to votes on the issues, Milliken must hope that the past won't be forgotten.

The name of the game is coalition-making, a normally difficult game to play for a Republican governor marooned in a sea of Democrats.

But that is where the voters put Bill Milliken, and now he must try to make do.

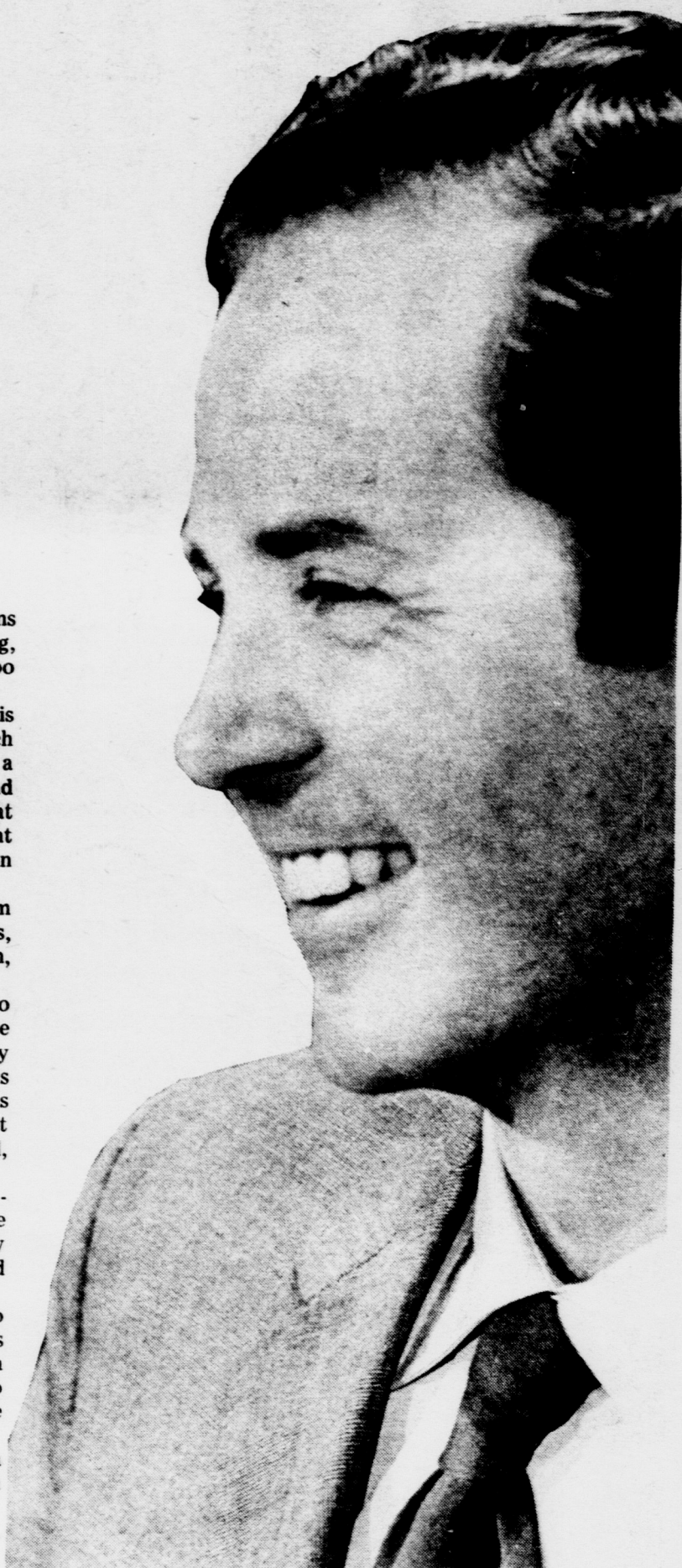


Photo by Don Gerstner

Early MSU

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very near to being a reality upon several occasions. To go into the history of underclass scraps at this institution is hardly necessary.

"The Sophomore Vigilance Committee is an effort to get away from hazing as practiced by the early morning unruly mob and yet to demand the strictest observance of college customs and traditions by the yearling class," the writer concluded.

Aside from concern with freshman intransigence, a typical Holcad of 50 years ago reveals a front page filled with stories on farm crops exhibits, R.O.T.C. activities, sports, J-Hop news, and Farmer's Week announcements.

College authorities had to adopt strict automobile regulations even in the twenties. In one issue of the Holcad they advised student drivers to "sound horn at abrupt turns and avoid driving on sidewalks while turning around."

Some of our present day controversies stem from decisions taken in 1920. A headline in the October 15 Holcad reported, "Faculty Votes to Give 3 Credits Per Term for Military Science."

Recent Spartan football victories appear mediocre when compared to the illustrious feats of our predecessors. In one game, the MAC "Aggies" swamped rival Olivet by a score of 109 to 0.

When 90 points was reached, the cry of "100 points or bust" was raised by Aggie rooters.

Impatience with college imposed social regulations was reflected in the observance of one writer following rumors that "campus couples are to be given a new limitation."

"We already have rules which state how far the wanderers may stray both north and south and east and west, from under the eyes of the watchful deans," the writer said. "However," he added sarcastically, "this leaves two possibilities which we believe should be determined. One up, and one down."

Student unrest also existed in the post World War I generation of East Lansing college students, although the unrest and "agitation" was oriented to such issues as getting the State Board of Agriculture (the forerunner of the board of trustees) to lift the ban on national fraternities.

Even in 1920, one year before East Lansing received door-to-door mail delivery, voices of progress cried out for a "Greater MAC."

In a regular column in the Holcad entitled "Campus Chatter" one forward looking writer endorses the proposed name switch from Michigan Agricultural College to Michigan State College.

After endorsing the name switch, the writer states, "perhaps in the future our Michigan State College will be as large as any in existence."

The column also refers to another matter still of concern to MSU advocates.

"This greater MAC of which we all dream and talk about centers quite largely at the present time about the size of the appropriation that we are granted by the next legislature."

John W. Beaumont, member of the state board of agriculture, was editorially castigated by the Holcad for saying, "I guess we have enough (students) now."

Praise was extended to Whitney Watkins, also a state board member, who was "talking greater MAC in terms of a Western Conference Team and a stadium."

Growth in the number of students at the college was necessary because, the Holcad explained, "schools of 1,500 are not in the habit of supporting concrete stadiums."

Nor was the desire to expand MAC into a larger institution confined to the editors of the student newspaper.

"The alumni of this institution are talking greater MAC in the form of a Union Bldg., a general science course, (and) increased enrollment," the Holcad reported.

Evidently, undergraduate John A. Hannah (Class of '23) allowed himself to be influenced by the Holcad's frequent appeals for a "Greater MAC."

Hannah went on to become president of the University for nearly three decades, almost single handedly building MSU into the multiversity that it is today.

Editors seek contributions

Welcome to the first issue of Tuesday, a new weekly supplement of the Michigan State News.

Editors of Tuesday welcome contributions from students who are not staff members of the State News. Format of Tuesday is designed to include offbeat features, prose, poetry, news articles - practically any area of interest to our readers.

Address contributions to Tuesday Editor, State News, 341 Student Services Bldg., East Lansing.

ROTC was once a mandatory portion of every male student's diet at MSU. In the 1920s, ROTC activities were the front page mainstays of the campus newspaper, the Holcad. With caps askew, cadets above hustle around circle drive in their bells.

