

Abstract

“Where did the band come from?”: Student protest at Miami University in April 1970.

By Justin Bruce Keiser

This thesis tells of the protest events at Miami University in the late 1960s and the spring of 1970. Students protested the Vietnam War as well as local issues concerning African Americans at the university. In April of 1970, two events ratcheted up tensions between Miami students, administrators and local law enforcement. The first was a sit-in at the ROTC building, Rowan Hall, following a peace rally on the lawn of Roudebush Hall. Local law enforcement forcibly removed the students from the building, inciting a riot scene in the streets of Oxford. The second was the great Miami flush-in when Oxford's water supply was purposely drained in support of some student demands. The events of those days in April and the surrounding months and years brought the spirit of the 1960s in America to the quaint campus of Miami University.

“Where did the band come from?": Student protest at Miami University in
April 1970.

A Thesis

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Justin Bruce Keiser

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Advisor _____
(Jeffrey P. Kimball)

Reader _____
(Allan M. Winkler)

Reader _____
(Curtis W. Ellison)

Introduction

Down the drain, that is where the entire water supply of Oxford, Ohio went as a result of a student-led prank sometimes construed as protest at Miami University on April 21, 1970.¹ Students staged a flush-in where the idea was to rid the town of water by turning on anything that used water. This included toilets, faucets, and showers. As a result, the roughly three million gallons contained in Oxford's water towers were drained in less than thirty minutes. The unique prank followed on the heels of a student takeover of the ROTC building six days earlier. As many as 400 Miami students staged a sit-in at Rowan Hall, and approximately 175 were suspended and arrested that night. The atmosphere inside the building was party-like but outside was anything but a party.² During the arrests, untrained law enforcement officials terrorized students using vicious police dogs and random tear gas canisters. The police riot enraged students and challenged the leadership ability of Miami's administration. The Oxford Press would report afterwards, "A week after the shock of its first experience with nasty violence and classroom boycott, traditionally placid Miami University continues in turmoil."³

¹ Miami University is a state-assisted institution of higher learning in Ohio focusing primarily on undergraduate education. Chartered in 1809, it is the second oldest university west of the Allegheny Mountains. In 1970, Miami's enrollment consisted of 10,514 undergraduates and 867 graduate students with 490 full-time teaching staff members. Throughout the years, Miami University has primarily gained fame for three things: one, confusion with "that other university" in Florida; second, the university's reputation as a "Public Ivy"; and, third, producing an incredible line of successful football coaches. *Miami University, Pocket Profile: A Wallet Reference*, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives. Richard Moll, *The Public Ivys: A Guide to America's Best Public Undergraduate Colleges and Universities*. (New York: Viking, 1985). The others were the University of California-Berkeley, the University of Michigan, the University of Texas, the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, the University of Virginia, the University of Vermont, and William and Mary. Bob Kurz, *Miami of Ohio: The Cradle of Coaches*. (Troy, Ohio: Troy Daily News, 1983). Ara Parseghian, Woody Hayes, and Bo Schembechler among others all coached at Miami before moving on to more illustrious coaching positions.

² The students brought in a band and food, prompting the Miami administration to assume that the takeover was planned. The event was, however, spontaneous. The title of this paper comes from Miami President Phillip Shriver's quoted reaction to the band being inside Rowan Hall. Miami University, *Familiar Quotations: A Collection of Passages, Phrases and Proverbs of President Phillip R. Shriver*, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

³ "Miami U. Student Revolt Expands to Affect Village," *Oxford Press*, 23 April 1970.

In spite of these events, Miami University was not a campus of activists. It was not a hub for antiwar activity during the Vietnam era. This was true even in Ohio when other schools like Antioch, Oberlin, Ohio State, Ohio University, and Kent State captured the headlines. Antiwar activity was present on Miami's campus, although tardy and its effectiveness was limited. A popular assessment of the antiwar movement normally involves a focus on elite campuses geographically located on each coast. Former Defense Secretary Robert McNamara contributed to this notion when he commented, "What disturbed me most during my campus visits was the realization that opposition to the administration's Vietnam policy increased with the institution's prestige and the educational attainment of its students."⁴ Terry Anderson in *The Movement and the Sixties* also notes the popular, but limited, assessment of the movement: "Historians have described the rise of student power by examining the events at Berkeley in 1964 and those at Columbia University in 1968 as if little happened during those years on other campuses."⁵ He further adds, "During the mid-1960s the rise of student power was a national phenomenon concerning many more issues than just free speech on one prominent campus."⁶ It is impossible to understand the full impact of student movements at American universities during the Vietnam era without examining the events at schools considered less elite.

Kenneth Heineman's *Campus Wars* (1993) takes on the conventional wisdom regarding the antiwar movement by examining the movement at four state universities. In recent years, extensive literature has appeared recounting the movement at

⁴ Robert McNamara with Brian VanDeMark. *In Retrospect: The Tragedy and Lessons of Vietnam*. (New York: Times Books, 1995), 253.

⁵ Terry Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 89.

⁶ Ibid.

individual schools in locales outside the purview of major media markets that did not rise to national prominence, universities such as Illinois, Iowa State, Ball State, and Southern Illinois.⁷ Histories of Kansas State and the University of Kansas during the era were included in a recent book as well.⁸

Additionally, events that garnered the national media spotlight shape the collective memory of the antiwar movement.⁹ Headline-grabbing events on campuses across the United States reached their zenith on May 4, 1970 when Ohio National Guard troops shot and killed four students at Kent State University, followed ten days later by the killing of two Jackson State students in Mississippi. These events show, particularly in the case of Kent State, that there was much anti-Vietnam War sentiment on college campuses at so-called “less elite” schools. Though racial issues, in addition to antiwar sentiment, motivated the shootings at Jackson State, student-led campus protest movements often combined local and national issues where the war in Vietnam was concerned.¹⁰

The movement against the Vietnam War needed people. The largest group that contributed to the antiwar movement was college students. During the 1960s, college

⁷ Patrick D. Kennedy, “Reactions against the Vietnam War and Military-Related Targets on Campus: The University of Illinois as a Case Study, 1965-1972,” *Illinois Historical Journal* 84 (Summer 1991): 101-18. Clyde Brown and Gayle K. Pluta Brown, “Moo U and the Cambodian Invasion: Nonviolent Anti-Vietnam War Protest at Iowa State University,” and Anthony O. Edmonds and Joel Shrock, “Fighting the War in the Heart of the County: Anti-War Protest at Ball State University,” in Marc Jason Gilbert, ed. *The Vietnam War on Campus: Other Voices, More Distant Drums*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2001). Also, Robbie Lieberman and David Cochran, “We Closed Down the Damn School: the Party Culture and Student Protest at Southern Illinois University During the Vietnam War Era.” *Peace & Change* 26, no. 3 (2001): 316-31.

⁸ Joel P. Rhodes, *The Voice of Violence: Performative Violence as Protest in the Vietnam Era*. (Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 2001).

⁹ Robbie Lieberman and David Cochran., “We Closed Down the Damn School: the Party Culture and Student Protest at Southern Illinois University During the Vietnam War Era.” *Peace & Change* 26, no. 3 (2001): 317.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* and for an account of the Jackson State killings see Tim Spofford. *Lynch Street: The May 1970 Slayings at Jackson State College*. (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988).

and university enrollments grew from sixteen million to twenty-five million.¹¹ While protests were larger on the coasts and in the big cities, the true battle for America's hearts and minds was in the smaller towns in the interior of the country and on college and university campuses throughout the heartland.

Just as an army needs support troops, the antiwar movement also needed support troops, and students of Miami and other Midwestern universities provided needed support, both ideologically by voicing their opposition to military action in Vietnam, and physically by marching on Washington D.C. in the name of peace.¹² This support came in the face of clashes in Ohio and other states with supporters of the country's policies in Southeast Asia. Ohio's sitting Governor, Republican James A. Rhodes, was no friend of the left and the antiwar movement. Rhodes was known to favor law and order, and was praised by some for his heavy-handed tactics against student protestors, to the point that the governor was not punished at the polls for his actions leading to the shootings at Kent State. The Ohio Constitution forced him to vacate the Governorship in 1971; Ohioans reelected Rhodes for two more terms in 1974 and 1978, giving him sixteen years in office. Rhodes was even able to run once again for Governor in 1986 but was defeated by incumbent Richard F. Celeste.¹³

Given contemporary scholars' interest in the antiwar movement's impact on less well-known college and university campuses, a more detailed examination of the antiwar movement on the Miami campus adds a needed voice among current studies of

¹¹ Melvin Small. *Antiwarriors: The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds*. (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 2002), 7.

¹² Taken collectively the middle of the United States contains more voters than the large states on the coasts in California and New York. Looking at the map of the 2000 Presidential election shows this phenomenon. If one wishes to truly capture the spirit of the times one should look toward the interior. In fact Ohio holds tremendous importance when considering that it has gone to the winner in all but two presidential elections since 1900. The anomalies were in 1960 and 1944. www.uselectionatlas.org

¹³ The 1986 Gubernatorial election was a rematch of the 1978 campaign with the opposite result.

the Vietnam War. In 1970, it was not an elite institution. Miami's academic reputation has increased since 1970, but is still not elite. Confrontations between students, faculty, administrators, and law enforcement were not unusual on college campuses during the Vietnam War; what is unique in Miami University's situation is that a major confrontation was late in coming to the Miami campus.

Further, the clash at Miami involved many issues associated with the Vietnam War, particularly those of the mid- to late-1960s: the pleas of African American students coalesced with the demands of antiwar students; both groups cooperated extensively; and the confrontation involved significant disagreements between administrators and students. Vietnam was the catalyst for their protest, but not the only goal. Students sought higher enrollment numbers for minority students at the university, while at the same time speaking out against the campus ROTC program to protest the military component of the war. The events at Miami University in April 1970 were magnified with student deaths at Kent State, begging the question, how close did Miami come to such a confrontation with authorities?

Small Beginnings

The buildup of antiwar activity on the American home-front mirrored the country's military buildup in Southeast Asia. At first, there was little opposition to the government's actions. The movement against the Vietnam War was associated with the peace groups of the 1950s, primarily those concerned with nuclear disarmament, and America's civil rights movement also produced strategy for antiwar advocates. Opposition to the country's policy in Vietnam grew to an example of an American non-violent movement toward change. Opposition to the war came from a mass social

movement, a loose coalition of peace groups regarded as the largest movement of its kind in history.¹⁴ The movement was heterogeneous with thousands of locally organized groups opposed to the war but there was never an extensive national coalition.¹⁵ The diffuse nature and lack of centralization made the movement, as a whole, less effective in actuality than has been considered. Tom Wells, in *The War Within*, posits that an analysis of the antiwar movement's actual power versus its perceived power reveals that while the movement was actually *more* powerful than imagined, it was limited by its quarrels.¹⁶ On the other hand, because of their fractured nature, antiwar groups were more difficult to subvert and investigate. Authorities did not know from which direction opposition to the war would come. Divisions inside the antiwar movement were many. Some activists wanted a negotiated end to the war with American withdrawal. Others perhaps even wanted the communists to win. Many protestors were against war period and wanted the United States out of Vietnam, regardless of the cost to American credibility and standing in the international community.

The initial impetus for campus activism in the 1960s was a revolt against *in loco parentis*, not necessarily the Vietnam War.¹⁷ While students did eventually protest federal policy toward Vietnam, local issues were often at the core of student demands. Beginning with a demonstration against Dow Chemical Corporation in 1967, small

¹⁴ Charles DeBenedetti with Charles Chatfield. *An American Ordeal: the Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era*. (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1990).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁶ Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle over Vietnam*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Kenneth J. Heineman, *Put Your Bodies Upon the Wheels: Student Revolt in the 1960s*. (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2001), 106. The revolt against *in loco parentis* refers to the clash between students and their universities over rules. Universities acted as in place of the students parents to "protect" them. The Free Speech Movement at the University of California at Berkely, beginning in 1964 set the stage for more disagreements over *in loco parentis* during the 1960s on college campuses.

protests had occurred on Miami's campus, but in most cases, counter-protesters outnumbered protesters. Miami's antiwar demonstrations melded with other student concerns, which then seemed radical: dorm-visitation rights; black recruitment; grading policy changes; and changes in university governance to include more student input.¹⁸ To the point, a *Miami Student* article in 1969 complained of Miami denying female students the right to make their choices.¹⁹ Female Miami students had a curfew while male students did not. Miami abandoned the policy by the next school year, changing the rules for upperclass women.²⁰ Freshman women still faced rules, but the rules were more lenient than in the past.

Miami students did not purely concentrate on local issues. They were aware of national issues, perhaps not to the degree as students at other schools. One such issue was protesting Dow Chemical, which manufactured napalm used by the military to incinerate the jungles of Vietnam. Napalm use had become a hot issue in the fall of 1967, when the Wisconsin chapter of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) initiated a campaign against the on-campus recruiting of the chemical company.²¹ On the Miami campus, Students to Educate and Act for Peace (STEAP) planned a protest for November 16, 1967, screening a documentary about the weapon and distributing a flyer expressing their motives and beliefs prior to the protest.²² STEAP characterized

¹⁸ "The Gentle Revolution," Student Unrest Files, Miami University Archives, Oxford, Ohio.

¹⁹ "End Hours," *Miami Student*, 18 February 1969.

²⁰ David Driver, "Upperclassmen Set Curfews; Key System Commissioned," *Miami Student*, 20 September 1969. Students at Southern Illinois University also protested over rules regarding dorm hours. See Lieberman and Cochran, *We Closed Down the Damn School*, 317-18, 323-24.

²¹ Heineman, *Put Your Bodies Upon the Wheels*, 125.

²² Eric Von Klinger, "Demonstration Against Dow Scheduled for Thursday," *Miami Student*, 14 November 1967.

napalm as an “illegal and immoral weapon of atrocious properties.”²³ The group of protestors was small but it was nonetheless a protest. They held signs denouncing the war effort and Dow. A *Miami Student* report afterwards said the protestors numbered around fifty and were vastly outnumbered by bystanders, with the protest lasting for about three and a half hours.²⁴ The scene was generally peaceful, though some spectators hurled some eggs and an orange at the picketers.²⁵

STEAP was not only taking a stand against the American military’s use of napalm half a world away, but was also testing the Miami administration, after the university moved to place limits on what protestors could do. “We have been notified that if we desire to protest the system as we see it, we must conform to the arbitrary rules of the system as the administrators see it.”²⁶ The protestors did push the limit of what was “allowable” by entering Laws Hall, the building in front of which the protest was taking place, foreshadowing the takeover of Rowan Hall that followed three years later. The Dean of Men, William Hollingsworth, issued a warning of suspension to the students who entered the building and asked the students to leave.²⁷ Those protestors wishing to stay in Laws Hall faced repercussions from the university, including suspension. The protestors heeded the warning and left the building.²⁸

²³ “An Open Letter to the University Community,” signed by concerned students, Office of Public Information records, Miami University Archives.

²⁴ “Students Challenge Rules Peacefully as STEAP conducts Antiwar Protest: Sophomore Residence Requirement is Next Target, Declares Steytler,” *Miami Student*, 17 November 1967.

²⁵ “An Orange, Eggs Only ‘Violence’ In MU Demonstration,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 17 November 1967.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Statement signed by William T. Hollingsworth, Dean of Men, Office of Public Information files, Miami University Archives.

²⁸ This confrontation was foreshadowed by “An Open Letter to the University Community,” *Miami Student*, 7 November 1967. Of the limitations placed on protestors, it read, “To subjugate anyone, especially citizens of a *University Community*, to unrealistic limitations and by imposing these limitations, defeat the purpose of a demonstration, is a *Blatent [sic] Denial Democratic Rights* (emphasis in original).

The topic of “student rights” emerged from the Dow protest.²⁹ The students who entered Laws Hall sought to challenge the “feudal king-like sovereignty of our administration,” student descriptions of what they perceived as university attempts to control the activities of its students. Beyond past disagreements about dorm hours, the “student rights” movement sought to give students even more freedom. As the student newspaper proclaimed, “The University must eliminate its interference in the student’s personal affairs, not disruptive to the university.”³⁰ While students continued to demand more influence in university affairs throughout the era of student protest, nothing came from the 1967 push.

The protest against Dow was a success on more than one level. All parties involved seemed to be pleased. A university press release stated, “Those who participated in the November 16 demonstration and those who became part of the event as spectators have shown that it is possible to express firmly-held convictions with orderliness and good will.”³¹ An editorial in the *Miami Student* praised the protesters: “The demonstrators made their point for the day: they turned out in symbolic and peaceful protest of the Vietnam War.”³² The members of STEAP staged a successful demonstration. They made their point against Dow, and tested the university’s policies regarding protest. As a response to the protest, the university revised its policy on demonstrations for the next school year. Demonstrations were further restricted.³³

²⁹ “Student Rights Issue Evolves From Dow Demonstration,” *Miami Student*, 21 November 1967.

³⁰ “Miami’s Machine and Discontent,” *Miami Student*, 1 December 1967.

³¹ Office of Public Information records, Miami University Archives, published as “From President Shriver,” *Miami Student*, 21 November 1967.

³² “Up With Students,” *Miami Student*, 17 November 1967.

³³ “Demonstration, Drug Rules Clarified in Regulations,” *Miami Student*, 6 September 1968. This involved added text regarding spectators at demonstrations and clarification of Miami’s policy on suspension.

Following the Dow protest, Vietnam was still a much talked about topic on the Miami campus. The Miami academic community discussed the progress of the war in forums befitting a University campus. In the spring of 1968, the Student Senate sponsored a Vietnam forum with guest speakers. The lineup of speakers was impressive although they may have had a prowar slant. The lineup included Gen. Maxwell Taylor, David Halberstam, and Strom Thurmond as well as eight others.³⁴ The event was touted as the “largest Vietnam forum ever held anywhere in the U.S. on any college campus.” This was hyperbole for sure, but the event was important for Miami. Demonstrations against the war continued, with a small group of protestors present at the appearance by General Maxwell Taylor. The group handed out copies of a statement prior to the speech, wore black armbands, and walked out of the speech to express their views.³⁵ A similar protest accompanied the appearance of Strom Thurmond.

There were few demonstrations in the fall of 1968 at Miami, fitting the national trend. The antiwar movement and the radical left had placed much emphasis on the Democratic convention in Chicago during the previous summer, and floundered until the Moratorium of October 1969. On the whole, activism on the Miami campus had increased. Apathy for the changes of the 1960s was no longer the prevailing attitude on the quaint Oxford, Ohio campus.³⁶ Small reminders of the war spread during this time. The Cooperative Campus Ministry held a draft workshop in October to train draft

³⁴ “Tickets Go on Sale Monday for Upcoming Viet Forum,” *Miami Student*, 2 February 1968. Other speakers were Walter Judd, Roger Hilsman, Harrison Salisbury, Robert Scalapino, George Kahin, Tran Van Dinh, Robert Evans, Robert Novak, William A. Williams, and T.C. Schelling.

³⁵ “Protestors Leave Withrow as Sign Antiwar Sentiment,” *Miami Student*, 27 February 1968.

³⁶ Eric von Klingler, “Activism at Miami—How Far it has Come,” *Miami Student*, 6 September 1968. The article spoke of Miami’s conservative nature and student attempts to change university policies since 1965.

counselors.³⁷ Draft counselors were to discuss options and advise individuals. The draft workshop, while not really a protest, could be connected to antiwar feelings on campus. As a reminder of the war the homecoming issue of the *Miami Student* printed a Western Union telegram to the family of a killed GI under the title homecoming.³⁸ To some, football was unimportant in the fall of 1968.

Students continually expressed distaste with some University policies. In one instance, student frustration with the administration came to a head over library operating hours. Students wanted the library to be open twenty-four hours a day and held a “study-in” to force the issue, an example of how campus protest in the late 1960s was not always centered on Vietnam.³⁹ Miami students generally wanted to improve the University and make it more hospitable for students. President Phillip R. Shriver met with students and promised to keep dialogue open between the administration and students, though library hours were never extended to twenty-four hours a day, and Shriver’s promised dialogue also failed to materialize fully.⁴⁰ This caused the rift in Miami’s interior community amongst student, faculty, and administrators to only get worse.

Black Student Action Association

During the lull in antiwar activity, Miami students turned to another dominant issue of the 1960s. The Civil Rights Movement brought much activism to America’s streets and served as a guide for the antiwar movement. Without the non-violent displays of protest from the civil rights movement, the protests against Vietnam would

³⁷ Gary Luhr, “CCM Sponsors Day-Long Draft Workshop,” *Miami Student*, 22 October 1968.

³⁸ “Homecoming,” *Miami Student*, 4 October 1968.

³⁹ David Pollack, “Group Holds Study-In As Protest of Priority,” *Miami Student*, 19 November 1968.

⁴⁰ David Driver, “Shriver Promises to Arrange More Dialogue Sessions with Students,” *Miami Student*, 26 November 1968.

not have been as successful. Issues of race and civil rights became important, because Miami University students have always been predominantly white. In fact, minority enrollment at Miami did not reach ten percent of the student body until the year 2001 and that was just the incoming freshmen class.⁴¹

It is somewhat ironic that Miami has had its troubles with racial tensions over the years, most recently in 1998, because Oxford was the site of an important event during the Civil Rights struggle. In June of 1964, the Mississippi Summer Project trained individuals at Oxford's Western College to go south and register blacks to vote. Andrew Goodman, James Chaney, and Michael Schwerner vanished after heading south.⁴² Klansmen killed them as a result of white efforts to derail efforts to register black voters. The Western College for Women merged with Miami University in 1971 and a monument commemorates the experiences of 1964.

Formed to "make the University more responsive to the needs of the black student," the Black Student Action Association (BSAA) first met on Sunday September 15, 1968.⁴³ In addition to the BSAA, the university formed the Office of Black Student Affairs (OBSA).⁴⁴ Both organizations encouraged minority enrollment at Miami and sought to serve minority students. The *Miami Student* stated, "A major black recruitment effort is necessary. This requires a black (man) [*sic*] recruiter, perhaps one of our graduates. Our objective should be a black-white proportion equal to or closer to the black-white proportion in the population of Ohio."⁴⁵ Another 1969 *Miami Student*

⁴¹ "Miami Hits Milestone in Minority Enrollment: Nearly One in 10 First-year Students are Minorities; 86 Percent return to Oxford for Sophomore Year," *Miami University Report*, 25 October 2001.

⁴² Randy McNutt, "Monument Sought for Slain Civil Rights Workers," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 8 February 1999.

⁴³ "Black Student Association Meets for First Time," *Miami Student*, 17 September 1968.

⁴⁴ "Committee Calls for OBSA Formation," *Miami Student*, 7 March 1969.

⁴⁵ "Recruitment Deemed Necessary," *Miami Student*, 7 March 1969.

article summed up the racism implied by the racial makeup of Miami's students, by saying: "Miami University, say its black students and faculty, has always been the one big school in Ohio where upper-middleclass whites could send their offspring and not worry about them having to rub elbows with blacks. Of the University's 11,500 students, no fewer, than 89, and no more than 125 were black in the past academic year."⁴⁶

The BSAA did complain about specific issues, as columns in the *Miami Student* attest. For instance, a black student chosen for the golf team could not play in all of the matches because opponents hosted some at segregated facilities in the South. In 1969, blacks accused the Greek system of being discriminatory,⁴⁷ while the BSAA took their concerns to Miami president Phillip Shriver.⁴⁸ Other concerns regarded the "inclusion of a black student on the cheerleading squad, and possible loss of a scholarship by a foreign student from Africa."⁴⁹ The BSAA also sought the creation of a Black Studies Department as well as the hiring of a black historian. At one point this elicited a walkout of the Black history course taught by the history department.⁵⁰

Another primary concern of the BSAA was additional financial aid to black students. Miami attempted to fulfill the need for such aid with the creation of the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP), created by the Miami Board of Trustees on June 13, 1969, "to enable disadvantaged students of academic promise to attend Miami University."⁵¹ EOP was not a minority program. To qualify for the EOP, students

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ David Pollak, "Black Student Association Meet With President, Makes Requests," *Miami Student*, 26 November 1968. and Helen Katz, "Shriver Hears Black Issues," *Miami Student*, 10 April 1970.

⁴⁹ Helen Katz, "Shriver Hears Black Issues," *Miami Student*, 10 April 1970.

⁵⁰ "Lack of Black Historian Triggers BSAA Walkout," *Miami Student*, 28 February 1969. As a result of the efforts, Dr. Sherman Jackson, a graduate of Ohio State, was hired.

⁵¹ "Statement of President Phillip R. Shriver for inclusion in the brochure relative to the Educational Opportunity Program," Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

needed to graduate from an Ohio high school and have completed ten academic units required by the university. In addition, recipients of EOP monies would be “selected on a personalized basis from among students normally unqualified for admission because of inadequate test scores or high school rank in class.”⁵²

The BSAA wanted the EOP to be used exclusively to increase black student enrollment, a job the EOP could not do. The BSAA sought an expansion of the program, initially planning a student strike on April 20, 1970 with the EOP as a main issue, but after the incidents at Rowan Hall on April 15, the strike was pushed until April 16, 1970 and coalesced with campus antiwar demands. In a letter to President Shriver, Larry Clark, who led the BSAA, outlined his goals for the EOP. Clark wanted the EOP extended to black students who met financial standards but not traditional admission standards, and wanted more EOP funds to flow to black students, even those who did not necessarily need the money.⁵³ Shriver responded to Clark by rebuffing his suggestions. Shriver did not want to weaken the EOP by including students who were financially well off. This was not the goal of the program. Shriver did offer a concession to Clark by considering incorporating “special admission” students into the EOP, asking appropriate university personnel to identify “Black students who have met all application requirements yet who are not in financial need and who are not fully admissible through regular admission standards, but whom they believe to be of unusual promise for consideration for special admission.”⁵⁴

⁵² “Resolution R70-3, Board of Trustees, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

⁵³ Letter from Larry Clark to Phillip Shriver, received on 18 March 1970, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

⁵⁴ Letter from Phillip Shriver to Larry Clark, 30 March 1970, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

The BSAA was an important campus group at Miami leading up to the spring of 1970. Members had genuine concern for the well-being of the university and society, and the BSAA was successful in airing its concerns during the late 1960s and early 1970s. While black student enrollment never reached the levels sought, it did slowly improve. As a result of the BSAA, Miami hired more minority faculty members and the university at least attempted to give more attention to minority affairs.

It was not just the Students

The Miami faculty of the late 1960s was also a factor in the growing controversy on the Oxford, Ohio campus. The creation of two opposing faculty-led groups contributed to campus polarization between political philosophies: the left-leaning chapter of the New University Conference (NUC) and the conservative Voices of Reason. NUC released a proposal for education reform at Miami called “The Gentle Revolution” in the spring of 1969. Among other things, it called for the replacement of freshmen English courses with seminars.⁵⁵ In addition, the group supported the demands of black students on campus and attempts by the BSAA to increase enrollment of minorities. One of the most uncontroversial proposals of the NUC was the creation of a university bookstore to remove profit making from the equation regarding the student purchasing of textbooks.⁵⁶ In a move that clearly showed the group’s political leanings, NUC also called for the elimination of ROTC on the Miami campus. It declared, “By providing buildings for ROTC activities, by granting credit to its courses, by giving its teachers faculty rank, and by numerous other, less visible actions, Miami

⁵⁵ The full version is found in Student Unrest Files, Miami University Archives, Oxford, Ohio. A portion of the proposal is also published in the *Miami Student*, 8 April 1969. Such an idea has never been adopted at Miami.

⁵⁶ A bookstore is now part of the Shriver Center which was formerly called the University Center. The building is the closest thing on the Miami campus to a student union.

tolerates, even sanctions and encourages militarism.”⁵⁷ This request would mirror the ambitions of student protestors in April 1970. The students were not alone.⁵⁸

There was another side to the faculty activism on the Miami campus during this time. Conservative members of the Miami community organized the Voices of Reason as a response to the NUC. They also published a statement in the *Miami Student*. It called for no radical reforms, embraced the status quo, and denounced the left.⁵⁹

Therefore, looking back on the two faculty organizations, the Voices of Reason seems to be the most extreme of the two groups, writing:

We categorically condemn the disruptive and often violent activities of communist, anarchist, and other revolutionary groups which have already succeeded in seriously weakening many of our great universities. The so-called Students for a Democratic Society and its faculty counterpart, the New University Conference, as well as other militant groups, are the principal sources of revolutionary attacks.⁶⁰

Voices of Reason stands out as being against change completely, and saw student protest activity as powered by communism, not a genuine call for societal reform.

However, the student movement at Miami was not a communist movement. Opponents of the movement and the left tended to lump all opposition into one bunch. “For the older generation ‘commie’ became a generic term for anything disliked, anything perceived as anti-American.”⁶¹

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Campus ROTC programs became a point of protest for students and antiwar faculty by 1970. According to Adam Garfinkle, “By 1970 student protest had become an institution without a specific political agenda, an imitation of itself, a social form into which virtually any cause or content, large or small, could be poured. Many of the campus protests of 1970-71 retained antiwar themes, but most now took aim at university policies, ROTC programs, military and corporate job interviewing on campus, and other such matters.” *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995), 191.

⁵⁹ “Voices of Reason Speak up to Rebut Gentle Revolution,” *Miami Student*, 21 October 1969.

⁶⁰ “The University in Time of Crisis: Declaration of the Voices of Reason at Miami,” *Miami Student*, 26 September 1969.

⁶¹ Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties*, 14. Indeed some liberals distanced themselves from communists. “Peace liberals opposed cooperation with Communists because they feared for their

While Miami's establishment embraced the Voices of Reason, the university frowned upon the authors of the Gentle Revolution. They were harassed, not given promotion, and some decided to leave the university. Six individuals who signed the Gentle Revolution filed complaints with the university relating to salary increases and promotion.⁶² The Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, a standing division of the University Senate, investigated the complaints. It found that, "Economic sanctions are a clear violation of academic freedom, and have no place in a university."⁶³ President Shriver attempted to play both sides of the issues by agreeing with the overall points in the report while taking issue with some of the details, and the Board of Trustees put off dealing with the situation for over a year.⁶⁴ Ultimately, the Board refused to grant any salary restitution to the four professors who logged complaints, despite the findings of the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities.⁶⁵

One of the employees involved decided to leave Miami for a position at the University of Maryland. Anthony Paul's raise was only \$200 (\$943.93 in 2002) after completing his Ph.D. His recommended raise was \$1300 (\$6135.56 in 2002).⁶⁶ Upon researching the situation, Paul found that Miami also gave other signers of the Gentle

credibility within U.S. politics and distrusted Communist claims over the primacy of peace." Charles DeBenedetti, "On the Significance of Citizen Peace Activism: America, 1961-1975," *Peace and Change* 9, no. 2/3 (Summer 1983): 9.

⁶² "Report Assails use of Economic Sanctions," *Miami Student*, 13 February 1970. Four of the faculty members followed through with their complaint. They were: Robert Deming and Roland Delattre of the English department, Robert Meredith of Religion, and Ralph Stone of the History faculty.

⁶³ "Report to the Senate: Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities," 12 February 1970, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives. The complaints were filed in September of 1969, a ruling was not reached until October of 1970.

⁶⁴ Shriver's ability to be diplomatic perhaps contributed to remaining as Miami's president until 1981. The Vietnam Era was not kind to university administrators and Shriver managed to ride out the storm with surprising success.

⁶⁵ "Faculty R & R Views Sanction, Trustee Decision," *Miami Student*, 13 October 1970.

⁶⁶ "Paul Explains Reasons for Leaving," *Miami Student*, 13 February 1970. Inflation adjusted figure found at <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>.

Revolution similarly abnormal pay increases. Paul resigned from Miami's faculty not only because of his perceived monetary loss but also because of larger issues.

Anyone familiar with my activities at Miami, where the easy road to financial success is acquiescence or collaboration in the interests of the established powers, knows that I could hardly have expected to make much money there. What is most disturbing in these events is that it is now an established and acknowledged policy at Miami that salaries, promotions, and who-knows-what-else are used to control teachers' expression of their beliefs about how the University should be run, and that this policy is implemented in closed procedures from which the victim has no recourse.⁶⁷

Situations similar to that of Anthony Paul continued at Miami despite calls from the administration for the college campus to remain apolitical. But the politics of agreeing with the administration was acceptable at Miami; anything against it was not.

The Crescendo

One of the most successful events of the antiwar movement was the nationwide Moratorium on business as usual held October 15, 1969. Melvin Small argues in *Antiwarriors* that this event affected the Nixon administration's decisions that fall regarding the progress of the war in Vietnam. The Moratorium was a contributing factor to President Nixon's decision not to escalate the war as intended in November of 1969.⁶⁸ William Burr and Jeffrey Kimball argue that the impact of the Moratorium was subtler and that Nixon had already decided against operation Duck Hook (which was the intended escalation).⁶⁹ Moratorium planners originally envisioned expanding the Moratorium by one day each month until the war ended. The Moratorium was not just

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Small, *Antiwarriors*, 111-12.

⁶⁹ "Nixon's concern was that they [antiwar protests] would erode confidence in his leadership and blunt the impact of Duck Hook upon Hanoi." Further, if he went ahead with Duck Hook it would look like he did so because of the protests. Nixon couldn't move up the start of Duck Hook because it would complicate the situation with North Vietnam. William Burr and Jeffrey Kimball, "Nixon's Secret Nuclear Alert: Vietnam War Diplomacy and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Readiness Test, October 1969," *Cold War History* 3, no. 2 (January 2003): 126.

an antiwar march on Washington. It showed that antiwar sentiment was beginning to permeate American society and was a series of coordinated local events.

The essential idea—really its genius—was to develop a way that allowed and encouraged ordinary people all over the country to participate in an “action” against the war without having to travel anywhere, without having to break the law, waving Vietcong banners, or shouting obscenities at police.⁷⁰

It was a success largely because the media treated it sympathetically.

Miami students held rallies in support of the nationwide Moratorium. Prior to the Moratorium day, organizers distributed a flyer around campus stating that, “Ending the war in Vietnam is the most important task facing the American nation.” It also spoke of problems caused by the war both in Southeast Asia and the United States.⁷¹ Students initially sought the cancellation of classes to coincide with the Moratorium and marched on the president’s residence to demand a greater voice in University governance.⁷² University administrators refused to support the cancellation of classes for October 15, 1969.⁷³ The *Miami Student* ran a full-page ad promoting the event on the back of the October 14 issue. A schedule of events was also printed.⁷⁴ Events included a teach-in and memorial service to honor the war dead. Miami President Shriver continually emphasized that classes were to meet as scheduled. In addition to the Moratorium activities, the university received a bomb threat on the ROTC building from the

⁷⁰ Adam Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement*. (New York: St. Martins Press, 1995), 173.

⁷¹ “Call for a Vietnam Moratorium,” Office of Public Information records, Miami University Archives.

⁷² Thom Hall, “Student Guild Created; 2000 March on Lewis Place,” *Miami Student*, 3 October 1969.

⁷³ John Prickett, “Shriver Turns Down Request to End Classes,” *Miami Student*, 3 October 1969.

⁷⁴ Moratorium Schedule,” *Miami Student*, 14 October 1969.

Weathermen faction of the Students for a Democratic Society.⁷⁵ Nothing came of the threat.

Despite the threats, Miami students held peaceful Moratorium activities. The university made facilities available to the protestors and this contributed to a peaceful atmosphere.⁷⁶ The teach-in attracted the largest number of students, with a reported crowd of six hundred students. The press reported that, Professor Reo Christenson spoke at the teach-in and opposed the war on moral grounds.⁷⁷ Even with the publicity surrounding the Moratorium, the vast majority of Miami students did not participate. Antiwar protests at Miami were small and were slow to begin. In spite of the administration's ban on class cancellation, some classes did not meet. The Student Senate compiled lists of faculty members who had announced the cancellation of classes in advance of Moratorium day.⁷⁸ It is unclear if punishment ensued.

Students also held Moratorium activities for the month of November. Classes met as scheduled in November just as in October. Miami also closed facilities to the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC), so the university was even less accommodating. Despite this, the group continued to distribute literature in conjunction with the STEAP.⁷⁹ An additional component of the November protests was the initiation

⁷⁵ David Pollack, " ROTC Building Bomb Threat is Reported," *Miami Student*, 14 October 1969 and " SDS Vows to Level ROTC Building," *Dayton Daily News*, 12 October 1969. The Weathermen, originally called the Weather Underground, were a violent faction of SDS that split off in 1969. Ironically, one of their leaders, Bernadine Dhorn, was a former Miami University student. The Weathermen were behind a bombing at the University of Wisconsin as told in Tom Bates. *RADS: The 1970 Bombing of the Army Math Research Center at the University of Wisconsin and Its Aftermath*. New York: Harper Collins, 1992.

⁷⁶ "Moratorium Peaceful as Miamians Protest War," *Miami Student*, 17 October 1969.

⁷⁷ Gary Luhr, "Christenson Condemns Conflict as Ultimate in Human Degradation," *Miami Student*, 17 October 1969.

⁷⁸ David Driver, "Shriver Wants Lists of Profs Ignoring Directive," *Miami Student*, 28 October 1969.

⁷⁹ "SMC Barred from Using Facilities," *Miami Student*, 11 October 1969.

of a “free university” to educate about the war and issues surrounding it.⁸⁰ There was a large antiwar march in Washington associated with the November 1969 Moratorium, which may have helped mute antiwar protests in Oxford, due to large numbers of Miamians traveling to Washington to participate in the march. Four busloads of Miami students drove to Washington to participate.⁸¹ The November antiwar protests were the last rallies at Miami until the spring, because of wintry weather and school breaks, though SMC planned an upswing in protests for the middle of April 1970.⁸² It was these gatherings that led to April’s Moratorium rally and the takeover of Rowan Hall that became the flashpoint for student protest at Miami University.

Rowan Hall

April 15, 1970 began peacefully on the Miami campus with an antiwar rally in front of the administration building, Roudebush Hall. It was national Moratorium day. Since its inception the previous fall, the Moratorium had faded from national headlines. In mid-April, national headlines focused on the ill-fated moon mission of Apollo 13. Miami students still planned to observe the day regardless of Apollo 13, because the war was a more important issue to them. To many people at the time it seemed odd to care so much for three astronauts stranded in space while so many more Americans were dying each day in the jungles of Southeast Asia.

Organizers planned a full day of activities including “free university” classes dealing with aspects of the war. University classrooms hosted events, and there was a lunch at the hub, a campus landmark, in the middle of campus. Faculty attendees

⁸⁰ “Barney Beins, “Antiwar Groups Plan Three Days of Protest,” *Miami Student*, 11 October 1969 and “Free University Classes Highlight Local Activities,” 18 November 1969.

⁸¹ Helen Katz, “Miamians Treated for Tear Gas,” 18 November 1969.

⁸² Helen Katz, “Spring Antiwar Programs Set, Support Pledged at Conference,” 20 February 1969.

represented a number of departments, though (perhaps not surprisingly) political science and history faculty outnumbered instructors from other disciplines. SMC planned the free university for the hours of 8:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M. and then a peace rally in front of Roudebush Hall, scheduled from 2:00 to 4:00 P.M.⁸³

Between three and five hundred students gathered for the rally on the lawn of the administration building.⁸⁴ There were speeches about Vietnam and civil rights during the rally. One speech by Leonard Harris, a black graduate student in philosophy, focused on racism at Miami rather than the planned "Racism and Vietnam."⁸⁵ At about 4:00 p.m. as the rally was beginning to break up, Alan (Dusty) Steytler proposed a march to the ROTC building as a more appropriate form of protest, because ROTC programs produced junior officers who led combat troops in Vietnam. (Steytler was head of the Student Mobilization Committee, which had planned Moratorium activities on the Miami campus.) Steytler had been enrolled at Miami since 1965 in order to avoid the draft, and was associated with antiwar activity on campus for many of those years.⁸⁶ Steytler is quoted as stating that, "I remember I was irritated that this thing was nothing more than lollygagging around on the quad on a nice spring day ... So I said that if they really wanted to demonstrate their feelings about the war and the military, we should march over to the ROTC building."⁸⁷

Three hundred students heeded Dusty Steytler's call to walk to Rowan Hall, the ROTC armory building, and stage a sit-in. ROTC officials had overheard the call for the sit-in and had locked the building before the students arrived. In order to stage the sit-

⁸³ *Free University Class Schedule*, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

⁸⁴ Miami University, *Diary of Disruption*, 1, Student Unrest Files, Miami University Archives.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁸⁶ James Pilcher, "Miami Averted Bloodshed," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 4 May 2000, A6.

⁸⁷ Alan Steytler in James Pilcher, "Miami Averted Bloodshed," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 4 May 2000, A6.

in, protestors broke into the building. The sit-in occupation began at around 4:15 P.M., when about twenty people entered Rowan Hall.⁸⁸

The events of the day did not catch Miami by surprise. Because of disturbances at other campuses across the country, the university had a plan in place to deal with the student takeover of buildings. It was a policy that threatened a student's ability to remain enrolled at Miami, which, in turn, affected their draft status. As early as June 1968, the Miami administration had notified parents of students about the policy.⁸⁹ A few months prior to sending the parental notification, a memorandum authored by President Shriver, circulated among university administrators. It stated: "Procedure in the event of civil disobedience involving entry into Miami University buildings or denial of access to such buildings or their component parts,"⁹⁰ and outlined procedures in the event of such a takeover. The administration planned to threaten students with suspension and expulsion for non-compliance. An administrator would read two warnings to occupying students. Shriver also established a line of succession for administrators. If the president was not on campus, someone had to be in charge. Significantly, according to the emergency plan, neither the Oxford police nor the Butler County Sheriff's department would be involved in any campus disturbance. The Sheriff's department was most definitely involved at Rowan Hall, although the university claimed not to request assistance from county authorities. Wallace Miller, who was

⁸⁸ *A Report of the President's Commission to investigate the Events of April 15, 1970*, 1, Student Unrest Files, Miami University Archives.

⁸⁹ Letter from Phillip Shriver to parents of Miami University Students, 28 June 1968, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

⁹⁰ Memorandum to The Council of Deans from Phillip Shriver, 11 May 1968, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

Superintendent of Safety and Security at Miami, stated that the University did not call the sheriff.⁹¹

The university accused the students inside of trespassing, because they did not have permission to occupy the Rowan Hall after hours. During the evening, there were numerous requests by student government leaders and administrators for students to leave the Rowan Hall area.⁹² The first statement warned of possible suspension; the second actually expelled the students still present in Rowan Hall. Students at the scene heard both statements. At one point in the evening, Dr. Robert Etheridge, Miami's Vice-President for Student Affairs entered the building and stated that, "If you remain here, your educational career may be in jeopardy; more specifically, you will be subject to peremptory suspension."⁹³ University officials believed when faced with the end of their educational careers, the students would capitulate. The students' resolve was, however, more powerful than that. Etheridge also stated to the students that, "You have made a point," and noted that another campus building, Hall Auditorium, was open to further continue a peaceful dialogue. The Miami administration was willing to listen, but listen on its own terms. Some students refused to acquiesce. Eventually, about half of the original gang of students left Rowan Hall. Those who remained were nonviolent and in a jovial mood. Indeed, the atmosphere was partly-like, a band played rock music and food arrived.

The students who did not leave Rowan Hall faced arrest and expulsion from Miami. Meanwhile, a large throng of student, faculty, and community onlookers had

⁹¹ "Butler Sheriffs Offer Aid; Students Arrested Politely," *Miami Student*, 21 April 1970.

⁹² Students were warned nine times to leave the building. Phillip R. Shriver, conversation with the author, 11 April 2003.

⁹³ "Miami University---STRIKE," *Miami Student*, 16 April 1970.

gathered outside to observe the goings on. At first, only the Highway Patrol, the Oxford police, and campus police forces were involved. The officers went in the building and arrested approximately 175 protestors. The situation was still well under control. The protestors reacted to the arrests by making their bodies go limp, so the officers had to work harder to remove students from the building. A rented church bus was initially used to hold the arrested protestors. The situation probably would have remained nonviolent except that once the protestors were loaded into the bus; it would not start, further complicating the situation. Pleas of assistance went out to area law enforcement agencies, and by nightfall, officers from at least fifteen agencies arrived to buttress the Oxford and university police departments. Among the responders was the Butler County Sheriff's department.

Officers began to remove the sit-in students to awaiting U-Haul trucks and miscellaneous vehicles.⁹⁴ Events then spun out of control into what some called a police riot. Law enforcement officers—more specifically, the sheriff's department—reacted violently to the on-looking crowd. Untrained for proper crowd control, the deputies botched their attempt to manage the situation. They randomly shot off tear gas and used ferocious police dogs to clear the area, chasing the crowd into nearby dormitories and also into uptown Oxford, while arresting others, including faculty onlookers.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ The trucks were unsafe and not equipped to transport prisoners. Of the trip from Rowan Hall to uptown Oxford an arrested student, Peter Oberlink stated, "Due to the lack of proper ventilation, breathing was difficult... [and] movement impossible." At least one Oxford citizen was arrested for questioning the legality of the transportation. *The SCAR Report: The Findings of the Select Committee on the Abuse of Rights*, Student Unrest Files, Miami University Archives 22-23.

⁹⁵ Richard Momeyer a member of Miami's Philosophy faculty was arrested for inquiring about an officer's badge number, which was then listed on the arrest report. Interview with Richard Momeyer, 4 February 2003.

The tactics used by law enforcement were disproportionate to the crime, especially regarding the innocent onlookers. According to the Student Health Service Report, the university hospital treated 63 students for tear gas, 4 for dog bites, and one for a scalp wound.⁹⁶ The Butler County sheriff's department drew the brunt of criticism. Being untrained for crowd control, the deputies did not manage the situation adequately. The department itself did not have many trained deputies; so many officers at Rowan Hall were so-called "special deputies," either political contributors to the sheriff or people who wanted to be deputies but for whatever reason could not.⁹⁷ Further complicating the situation, the highway patrol denied using tear gas.⁹⁸ There is a bit of irony in that the students inside Rowan Hall were not violent, but the law enforcement officials outside were.

Did University officials and law enforcement agencies overreact to the situation? It is quite possibly the case that they did. President Shriver always wanted the University to remain free from politics. In his State of the University speech to open the 1970-71 school year Shriver revisited this policy: "We must resist every effort to politicize the University, to make it an advocate of political causes, to compel it to stake out a position on any side of any political issue regardless of how righteous that issue may seem to be."⁹⁹ This was part of the reasoning behind forcing the students out of Rowan Hall.

⁹⁶ Student Health Report: Wednesday night, April 15, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

⁹⁷ Interview with Jim Blount, 19 February 2003.

⁹⁸ This was affirmed in a letter to Phillip Shriver from John M. McElroy, Executive Assistant to the Governor, 30 April 1970, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

⁹⁹ *The State of the University at the Opening of the 1970-1971 Academic Year: An Address by President Phillip R. Shriver before the Senate of Miami University Oxford, Ohio on September 18, 1970*, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

The students inside Rowan Hall were merely trying to bring awareness to their issues and gain supporters. Ironically, they were able to win recruits because of law enforcement actions. What harm could the students have really done in Rowan Hall overnight? The building could have been monitored and a major confrontation could have been avoided. However, Miami administrators feared an arson attempt. ROTC buildings were a target on campuses and Miami's had been threatened before. Students needed a confrontation, and the authorities gave them exactly what they wanted.¹⁰⁰ The Butler County Sheriff's Department even helped them out by recklessly shooting off tear gas and using police dogs to make arrests. Instead of being put into police cars, law enforcement loaded students into unsafe U-haul trucks. If only the original detainee transportation, the bus, had started, most of the ugliness surrounding Rowan Hall would have been avoided. Students also had their pictures taken, effectively radicalizing the Miami campus in support of their cause. To be fair, Miami administrators had to react to student-led actions against university authorities, and attempted to do so by following the previously approved plan of action in the case of student takeover of a building. Administrators cannot be blamed for following procedure even though the action taken turned out to escalate the situation. Miami cannot be blamed for the reckless brazen attitude of Sheriff Carpenter and his "special deputies."

¹⁰⁰ At the University of Chicago, a similar incident took place in early 1969. Students staged a sit-in at the Administration building. The administrators decided not to call the police. They decided to find the leaders of the sit-in and discipline them. Eventually the demonstration lost momentum. The administration did not give the students the confrontation they wanted. Charles O'Connell who was the Dean of Students states, "I think students would have preferred to have a paddy wagon pull up and to be photographed while they were being put in it." The situation was slowly diffused because students lost interest in the sit-in. There are three first hand accounts of this in Joan Morrison and Robert K. Morrison. *From Camelot to Kent State: The Sixties Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001. first published New York: Random House, 1987), 234-46.

If anyone at Rowan Hall overreacted, it was the Butler County Sheriff's department. The policemen showed up in Oxford resenting the "privileged" students and wanting to punish them; these "civilian cops" were not about to let the students stay in Rowan Hall. The Sheriff of Butler County at the time was named Harold Carpenter. Carpenter was first elected in 1968, following a career as a police detective in Hamilton (the county seat) for sixteen years, and was known as an outstanding officer and detective, having solved some high profile murder cases.¹⁰¹

Carpenter's record as a successful law enforcement official, however, did not prevent him from testing the bounds of honesty. In 1976 he pled guilty to two counts of federal income tax evasion, was forced to resign as sheriff, and eventually was sentenced to eighteen months in prison.¹⁰² Later that year, Carpenter also pled guilty to four counts of embezzlement of public property. For that offense he was given ten years probation.¹⁰³ There were numerous other allegations against Carpenter during his term in office, but nothing else was proven. He unsuccessfully ran for Sheriff once again in 1980.

The Aftermath of Rowan Hall

Following the events at Rowan Hall, Ohio Governor James A. Rhodes deployed 568 National Guardsmen to the NIKE missile base outside of Oxford.¹⁰⁴ Constitutionally barred from serving three consecutive terms as governor, Rhodes was

¹⁰¹ Most of the information about Sheriff Carpenter was supplied in an interview with Jim Blount on 19 February 2003. He was editor of the Hamilton newspaper in the 1970s.

¹⁰² "Carpenter awaits federal court sentencing: Butler sheriff admits tax Evasion," *Hamilton Daily News Journal*, 2 March 1976.

¹⁰³ "Ex-sheriff ordered to pay county \$35,000: Carpenter gets probation," *Hamilton Daily News Journal*, 28 December 1976.

¹⁰⁴ Tom Dudgeon. *Ohio's Governor of the Century: James A. Rhodes, Ohio Governor 1963-1971 and 1975-1983*. (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio Editorial Enterprises, 1991), 86. This cost Ohio taxpayers \$19,657.44.

a candidate in the Republican senatorial primary against Robert Taft, Jr. It is clear that Governor Rhodes sent the Guard to campuses hoping for a jump in his approval ratings. Political pundits in the press chronicled this: "Every political poll that has been taken in this highly political year shows that the adults of Ohio are incensed and angry about student unrest. The polls show that voters, especially those older voters who control Republican primaries, are eager to have police put down student riots with a maximum show of force."¹⁰⁵ The election was May 5, 1970, the day after the shootings at Kent State. Rhodes trailed Taft substantially in opinion polls leading up to the election, however the final tally was much closer than anticipated.¹⁰⁶

Though the National Guard was sent to the Oxford area, troops never entered town, and the Guard was deployed for only one day. Miami president Shriver announced its departure at a press conference on April 17, 1970, going on to declare that the situation had stabilized.¹⁰⁷ The gubernatorial election was still a few weeks away, and university administrators did not request the Guard's presence. According to a university investigation of the events surrounding Rowan Hall, "At no time was there any direct communication between University officials and the Governor of Ohio."¹⁰⁸ However, any communication between Miami and the Governor would have passed through the Highway Patrol. Governor Rhodes did make a short visit to Oxford on April 17, but many regarded the visit as a political stunt.¹⁰⁹ In addition to the Guard, the

¹⁰⁵ Jim Fair, "Gov. Rhodes at Miami U: Swapping Kids for Votes," *Dayton Daily News*, 20 April 1970.

¹⁰⁶ See Jim Fair, "What to Do About the Kids?," *Dayton Daily News*, 6 May 1970. The final tally had Taft winning by a margin of only 467,866 to Rhodes' 464,701.

¹⁰⁷ *Statement by President Phillip R. Shriver, Miami University, at Press Conference, 2:00 p.m. April 17, 1970*, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Miami University, *A Report of the President's Commission to Investigate the Events of April 15, 1970*, Student Unrest Files, Miami University Archives, 9.

¹⁰⁹ Thom Hall, "Students Faced with Conflicting Reports," *Miami Student*, 17 April 1970.

highway patrol had also been in Oxford following the incidents on April 15, and it left as well.¹¹⁰

The next day, following the arrests and suspensions, a student coalition led by campus antiwar groups and the Black Student Association (BSAA) called on students to strike classes. The strike continued the saga of the Rowan Hall sit-in. The demands were: (1) support Black demands, (2) reinstate suspended students, with assurance against reprisals for any strike participants, and (3) the establish a committee “to investigate all (original emphasis) activities of ROTC and determine whether or not it is necessary for the functioning of Miami University.”¹¹¹ To inform uninvolved students, coalition leaders printed a list of demands in the *Miami Student*.¹¹² As can be seen by the students’ demands, campus protests primarily focused on local issues, with realistic goals, the emphasis being on issues of singular importance to the Miami campus. If

¹¹⁰ “Police, Guard Leave MU Area,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 18 April 1970.

¹¹¹ *Diary of Disruption*, 5.

¹¹² “The Strike is On,” *Miami Student*, 16 April 1970.

We the people of these United States of America (students at Miami University), in order to form a more perfect society with Liberty and Justice for All, make these following demands.

1. 1. Extend the Educational Opportunity Program to increase the black enrollment (currently 1.1 percent) a.) A goal of ten percent of the total enrollment (Oxford Campus) be made up of black students by 1973-74. This should increase yearly until the overall population of blacks reaches the proportion of blacks in the state (15 percent). b.) A plan of supportive services (tutors, etc.) be designed for the increase in students.
2. 2. Each academic department set aside at least one graduate assistantship for black students.
3. 3. Each academic department hire at least one black professor in the academic year 1970-71, and that in subsequent years the number be in some reasonable proportion to the size of each department. (Presently there are only eight black faculty members, i.e. non-graduate students.)
4. 4. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Faculty Council on Human Relations be reformed to evaluate:
 - a.) a.) The Office of Black Student Affairs.
 - b.) b.) The Educational Opportunity Program.
 - c.) c.) The recruitment of black faculty.
 - d.) d.) What has and has not been done in regard to its report and recommendations to the Faculty Council in May 1969.
1. 5. All students involved be immediately reinstated and no reprisals taken against anyone involved with the strike.
2. 6. A committee be formed to evaluate the ROTC programs.

students had demanded an end to the war in Vietnam as a part of their goals, it is unlikely that a small group of Miami University students could have enacted such a change. While the end of hostilities in Southeast Asia may have been a goal of the Miami student movement, the goal was an unrealistic one and better left unstated. The only military aspect of the students' demands concerned the ROTC at Miami University. If the protests were solely about local issues, it is unlikely that student actions would have resulted in the takeover of the ROTC building.

Some give Miami president Phillip Shriver credit for controlling the situation in Oxford following the takeover of Rowan Hall. A *Cincinnati Enquirer* article stated, "Many credit his faith in students and a bravery that bordered on recklessness in avoiding a tragic end."¹¹³ Phillip Shriver remained in relative control of Miami's campus and events did not spiral out of control. To calm the situation, Shriver attempted to meet with Miami students, a difficult proposition considering the radicalized nature of the Miami campus following the events at Rowan Hall. On April 16, Shriver addressed an estimated crowd of 4,500 in Withrow Court (the former basketball arena) after rain forced a planned rally inside. While considerate of demands for more black students at Miami, Shriver was, not surprisingly, unsympathetic to the idea of not punishing arrested students. Miami gave suspended students seven days to appeal for reinstatement. Shriver urged students to be "responsible members of this university community."¹¹⁴ Students inside Withrow Court, for the most part, did not find Shriver's statements to be particularly appealing. Perhaps the Miami administration did an excellent job of talking to students

¹¹³ James Pilcher, "Miami Averted Bloodshed," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 4 May 2000, A6. Such a statement is in definite contrast to how Kent State President Robert White is remembered. President White and other Kent State administrators relinquished control of campus to the National Guard.

¹¹⁴ *Diary of Disruption*, 5-6.

but not listening to them. Attempts were made at dialogue after the student arrests, but why was there not dialogue while the students were in Rowan Hall? Regarding the student demand for ten percent black enrollment, Shriver said the following day, "I cannot guarantee that, but there is no question that every effort will be made."¹¹⁵

Meanwhile the student strike was still going on. Activists on campus called on students to skip classes. The *Dayton Daily News* called the strike fifty percent effective and stated that, "there were as many students carrying picket signs as carrying books on the Miami campus."¹¹⁶ According to some, the fifty percent figure was high. Others saw the figure as closer to thirty-five percent.¹¹⁷ A dean also reported to president Shriver that attendance was quite good.¹¹⁸ Students, however, did vote in a referendum. Students overwhelmingly voted to give Rowan Hall participants amnesty, 2,436 to 636 with another 1,614 students opting for temporary reinstatement, and also voted to support black demands by a tally of 3,142 to 1524.¹¹⁹ Miami did not follow through on most suspensions handed out the night of April 15, but arrested students still faced penalties.

The exact number of arrested and suspended students varies from report to report.¹²⁰ Despite the lack of a specific number of arrests, the group of students

¹¹⁵ David Majesky and Helen Katz, "Shriver Describes Police Actions as Standard Operating Procedure," *Miami Student*, 17 April 1970.

¹¹⁶ Jim Nichols, "Miami U. Strike in Third Day," *Dayton Daily News*, 18 April 1970.

¹¹⁷ Letter from Dr. Robert F. Shrader, Assoc. Prof. Industrial Education Department to Board of Trustees, 22 April 1970, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

¹¹⁸ Phone message for Phillip Shriver stating, "Dean Limper reports the following estimates on class attendance in the departments of his division: Geology-75% in freshmen classes near normal in upper division classes, Spanish-75%, Zoology-95% in upper division classes, 65%-85% in freshmen classes, Psychology-70%, Sociology-90%, Geography-75%, Aeronautics-90%, English-full to 65% attendance, Religion-75%-90% (based on one prof's estimates only).

¹¹⁹ "Miami Students Vote for Protest Amnesty," *Dayton Daily News*, 18 April 1970.

¹²⁰ The number varies from about 140 to over 180. The *Cincinnati Enquirer* reported the number at 140. Courts gave the students probation and \$50 fines. "Fines are Suspended; 140 Now on Probation," *Cincinnati Enquirer*, 21 April 1970.

referred to themselves as the Miami “176,” and published a statement in the *Miami Student*. The “176” stated that the protest at Rowan Hall was essentially non-violent, a position borne out by a university investigation of the events, stating the students only caused “\$229.78 in damages and missing articles.”¹²¹ The “176” also did not approve of President Shriver’s policy of having the student appeal their suspensions as part of “due process,” stating that they wished to appeal their suspensions on the principal that the punishment did not fit the crime. Vice President Etheridge announced the possibility of suspensions at a time when about five hundred students were in Rowan Hall. Up to the point when law enforcement moved into Rowan Hall students could leave without being punished. Some three hundred fifty students were allowed to leave and were effectively given amnesty.¹²²

During the course of the student strike, students not only missed class, but they also formed picket lines around campus. In an attempt to make the strike more effective, leaders asked union truck drivers to honor a picket line blocking the university commissary, limiting food deliveries to cafeterias. By the third day, the strike was only partially effective, and leaders discussed more drastic measures. According to one source, the strike leadership permitted the idea of a flush-in to take hold.¹²³ However, coalition leaders disavowed any prior knowledge of the flush-in after it occurred.

¹²¹ *President’s Commission*, 17.

¹²² “Statement of ‘176’,” *Miami Student*, 21 April 1970.

¹²³ Fred Halstead. *Out Now!: A Participant’s Account of the American Movement Against the Vietnam War*. (New York: Monad, 1978), 533.

Who Needs Water Anyway?

Fortunately for the Miami community, the National Guard was not outside Oxford when Miami students staged a rather original prank as a method of protest.¹²⁴ A flush-in was only one of the ideas proposed during the day. Others involved checking out all the books in the library, or a possible attempt to tie up telephone lines.¹²⁵ For whatever reason, these earlier ideas were abandoned in favor of the flush-in. The idea was to turn on everything that could deliver water at precisely the same time, twice -- at both 6:00 and 8:00 P.M. Thus, the great Miami “flush in” happened twice, not just once. Participants turned on faucets and showers and flushed toilets as well. Reports differ as to how long it took to empty the water supply, with estimates ranging from fifteen to twenty-five minutes.¹²⁶ It is clear that the event was highly organized and involved many students.

The press reported that students “exhausted the 2,000,000-gallon main reservoir and the 300,000-gallon tank in mid-village.”¹²⁷ The water had to go somewhere. It could not all go down the drains because the drainage end was just as overwhelmed as the supply end. As a result, water seeped up from underground and ended up in

¹²⁴ It is possible that Miami could be known for its unique forms of student protest. In addition to the “flush-in” of 1970, Miami University lore has recorded the events of January 1848’s “snowball rebellion.” Campus shut down for several days after students blocked the entrance to “Old Main” (the main building on campus and the original Miami building). The entrance to Old Main was blocked on two consecutive nights, highlighted by the second evening’s events, when student troublemakers placed wood used to heating the University inside piles of snow used to barricade the doors of Old Main. Students dismantled desks and benches and threw them into the mix, and also proceeded to nail the building’s windows shut in protest of the policies of Miami’s conservative Presbyterian presidents. As a result, Miami expelled nearly fifty students, all members of Greek organizations on campus. The Miami administration at the time had banned secret societies, contributing to the strong Greek community presence in the “snowball rebellion.” Phillip Shriver, *Miami University: A Personal History*. (Oxford, Ohio: Miami University Press, 1998), 94.

¹²⁵ “Flush-in Empties Oxford Reservoirs,” *Cincinnati Post*, 22 April 1970.

¹²⁶ “Restore Water In Oxford After ‘Flush-in’ Tuesday,” *Hamilton Daily News Journal*, 22 April 1970. (15 minutes) *Diary of Disruption*, 15. (20 minutes) Shriver. *Miami University: A Personal History*, 210. (25 minutes)

¹²⁷ “Flush-in Empties Oxford Reservoirs”

resident's houses, in the basements. This was not tremendously inconvenient for the students because they did not own houses. But it did inconvenience students on campus because it became necessary to cut-off water to campus buildings to allow city water pressure to restore itself. This had the benefit of assuring that a repeat performance of the prank did not occur. Students, as well as residents, could not take showers, go to the bathroom, or get a drink of water, sending a message because the flush-in affected *all* students, not just the radical ones. An indifferent student was quoted as stating, "The water situation and other occurrences now are turning students away and what once was concern for the issues (black demands on the administration) is quickly becoming dissatisfaction for the entire strike."¹²⁸ Others called the water prank "childish." The inconveniences experienced by residents were nothing compared to the possibility of fire. If a disaster had struck Oxford the evening of the flush-in, the fire department would have been virtually helpless because of the lack of water.

Ultimately, Oxford restored its water supply, but the interruption in service was not without its costs. The flush-in cost Miami University over \$5000. A sizeable portion of the cost was the charge for the water. The University had to pay Oxford for those three million gallons of water. The cost, estimated at \$2,761.20 (\$13,031.93 in 2002) was substantial.¹²⁹ The flush-in brought to a close the radical stage of protest at Miami in the spring of 1970 because a strange thing happened as a result. Unfortunately for the student coalition, the flush-in had the unwanted consequence of reducing its support within the Miami-Oxford community and weakening its bargaining power with the

¹²⁸ "Public Opinion Poll Discloses: Majority of Students at Miami Indifferent to Recent Moratorium," *Hamilton Daily News Journal*, 28 April 1970.

¹²⁹ "Flush-in By Students Costs Village," *Oxford Press*, 7 May 1970. Inflation adjusted figure found at <http://www.westegg.com/inflation/>.

university administration. A student recalled, "That night I called my roommate from another rally we had, and she was hysterically demanding her water back."¹³⁰

The flush-in de-radicalized Miami's campus as much as Rowan Hall radicalized it. It is ironic that this occurred, because police tactics used at Rowan Hall and Governor Rhodes' policy of mobilizing National Guard units to quell on-campus dissent had galvanized Miami students against the university's administration.¹³¹ Thus, goals on each side in each instance were inversely realized. President Shriver called the flush-in "violence of a despicable sort."¹³² After the event, the coalition of antiwar students and the BSAA denied having anything to do with the flush-in. The coalition wrote to president Shriver, "This strike is against the administration. Turning off water turns off students."¹³³

After the drainage

Tensions from the sit-in at Rowan Hall and the flush-in were exacerbated by the shootings at Kent State that led to the closing of the university. The student strike continued until April 22 when the coalition of student groups declared a moratorium on the strike itself.¹³⁴ The coalition called for a period of negotiation. This served several purposes. Students returned to class and many professors discussed the issues of the student strike.¹³⁵ It also showed that the student coalition was willing to reconsider its demands and work with administrators. The university senate held a special meeting

¹³⁰ Halstead, *Out Now!*, 534.

¹³¹ "Rhodes and Lawmen Help Radicalize Miami Campus," *Dayton Daily News*, 19 April 1970.

¹³² Phillip Shriver, *An Address by President Phillip R. Shriver of Miami University Before the University Senate April 25, 1970*, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

¹³³ Correspondence from student coalition to Phillip Shriver, 22 April 1970, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives. The coalition also did not condone the taking of books from the library for the purpose of disrupting education, calling the administration building with hopes of disrupting communication, and the shutting off of electricity.

¹³⁴ *Diary of Disruption*, 17.

¹³⁵ "Miami U. Strike Ends," *Dayton Daily News*, 23 April 1970.

on April 25 to deal with the demands of the Miami “176.” President Shriver gave a well-received speech at the meeting.¹³⁶ Shriver began by recounting the events of the previous ten days. He then addressed the student demands. Most notably he was concerned with the demands for more black students and faculty on campus. The university had been working on progress in these areas in years leading up to 1970. Regarding black faculty members, Shriver noted that the university had 12 during the 1969-70 school year compared with 5 the year before.¹³⁷ Black student enrollment had also increased from 89 to 151 with hopes for 250 the next fall and black graduate assistants had increased from 2 to 11.¹³⁸ Miami was showing signs of progress, but real progress was not going to happen overnight. The speech was an attempt to get the Miami campus “Back to Normal.”¹³⁹

The War in Vietnam and the Kent State shootings

Normalcy was not to be, as President Nixon ordered an invasion of Cambodia that began on April 30, 1970. The invasion came at a time when American involvement in Vietnam was supposed to be decreasing. U.S. involvement in Vietnam had been growing since the early 1950s, making the conflict the longest continuous hostilities in American history. Americans were initially behind a war against communism in Southeast Asia. In the beginning, the war was peripheral. As historian Michael Beschloss observed,

In 1965 most of us [Americans] knew or cared little about Vietnam and had not the remotest idea that LBJ’s war could ultimately kill 58,000

¹³⁶ *Diary of Disruption*, 21.

¹³⁷ Shriver, *An Address*. Also there were only 2,280 black Ph.D.’s in America at the time.

¹³⁸ *Ibid*.

¹³⁹ “Miami ‘Back to Normal;’ Student Hearings at End: Task Force Studies Events; Shriver Indicates Position,” *Oxford Press*, 30 April 1970.

Americans, grind on for 10 years and culminate in America's first defeat.¹⁴⁰

As the war progressed, some segments of the American public, including students, began questioning the validity of fighting a war in Vietnam.

Direct military involvement in Vietnam began after the Tonkin Gulf incident in August of 1964. Details of the incident are murky and fraught with controversy. The American destroyers *Maddox and Turner Joy* were on a secret intelligence-gathering mission. There was a first attack on August 2 and a second attack on August 4. The second attack possibly never occurred, but nevertheless the events proved to be America's trigger for entering Vietnam with increased military force. The Tonkin Gulf resolution overwhelmingly passed Congress and gave President Lyndon Johnson authority to wage an undeclared war in Vietnam.¹⁴¹ Only two Senators, Wayne Morse and Ernest Gruening, voted against the measure, and the resolution was not fully debated. Had it been, and had proper questions asked, the resolution might not have passed by such a large margin.¹⁴² Congress in effect gave its war making power over to the executive branch of government. Other Senators voted for the measure not as a sign of support for greater American involvement but to object to an attack on American warships. Among this group was Albert Gore Sr. of Tennessee who saw the resolution referring more to freedom of the seas than combat in Vietnam.¹⁴³ Congress had, in effect, given its war-making power to the executive branch.

¹⁴⁰ Michael Beschloss, "I Don't See Any Way Of Winning," *Newsweek*, 12 November 2001, 58.

¹⁴¹ Spencer C. Tucker, *Vietnam*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1999), 108.

¹⁴² An analogous contemporary congressional bill could be the so-called Patriot Act passed following the September 11 terrorist attacks that limits civil liberties of American citizens.

¹⁴³ Robert C. Hodges, "The Cooing of a Dove: Senator Albert Gore Sr.'s Opposition to the War in Vietnam," *Peace & Change* 22, no. 2 (April 1997): 138.

Soon after the resolution's passage, American involvement increased in Vietnam. Operation Rolling Thunder was the beginning of sustained bombing in the north, starting on March 2, 1965. President Johnson was positive about his Vietnam policy in public, but privately he remarked to secretary of Defense Robert McNamara after beginning bombing that, "I don't think anything is going to be as bad as losing, and I don't see any way of winning."¹⁴⁴ Brian VanDeMark describes the aftermath of Johnson's bombing decision as "the opening of a floodgate, [it] unleashed a torrent of new and fateful military pressures."¹⁴⁵ Operation Rolling Thunder did not cut off supplies flowing into the South from North Vietnam as designed. Marines soon followed and the United States found itself involved in another ground war in Asia.

American involvement in Vietnam increased rapidly through 1968. By that year, America has deployed over 500,000 ground soldiers in the country, and American government reports indicated that the United States was winning the war. In January of 1968, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong waged the Tet offensive, sending a message to American citizens that U.S. forces were no closer to victory in 1968 than they had been in 1965.¹⁴⁶ Backlash from the Tet Offensive and a growing anti-war faction in the Democratic Party contributed to Lyndon Johnson's decision not to seek a second presidential term. The 1968 presidential election ended with Richard Nixon victorious after he pledged to end the war. Nixon sought to strengthen South Vietnam while withdrawing U.S. forces through a process called "Vietnamization." Nixon,

¹⁴⁴ Beschloss, 59.

¹⁴⁵ VanDeMark, 92.

¹⁴⁶ Terry Anderson, *The Sixties*. (New York: Longman, 1999), 103.

however, desperately wanted to win the war and oversee “peace with honor.”¹⁴⁷ The 1970 invasion of Cambodia was a critical component of Nixon’s Vietnamization as United States troops sought to destroy communist sanctuaries along the Cambodian-Vietnamese border. This was the setting that Kent, Ohio residents and Kent State University students found themselves in on the weekend of May 1-4, 1970.

On May 1, students held a noontime antiwar rally in an area of the Kent State campus known as “The Commons,” resulting from opposition to the invasion of Cambodia. A group of students buried the constitution near the victory bell, rung for student gatherings and after sporting team triumphs. Later that evening, trouble spilled out of Kent’s bars. Revelers caused damage to businesses and Kent city officials were alarmed.¹⁴⁸ On Saturday May 2, heightened tensions still existed in around the campus. Kent Mayor LeRoy Satrom called Ohio Governor James A. Rhodes and requested the National Guard. Troops arrived at about 9 p.m. Students set fire to the ROTC building that night and it burned to the ground.¹⁴⁹ The following day, Rhodes visited Kent. He was running for a Senate nomination at the time and wanted to appear tough towards protestors. He called the students, “the worst type of people in America.”¹⁵⁰

On Monday May 4, Kent State did not cancel classes. The university tried to remain open and function normally. Students sought to have another rally at noon, also on The Commons, but the National Guard forbade the rally. When a group of students

¹⁴⁷ For a greater understanding of Nixon’s Vietnam policy see Jeffrey Kimball, *Nixon’s Vietnam War*. (Lawrence, Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 1998); for a debunking of peace with honor see Larry Berman, *No Peace, No Honor: Nixon, Kissinger, and Betrayal in Vietnam*. (New York: Free Press, 2001).

¹⁴⁸ “Critical dates, events in the KSU tragedy,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 30 April 2000, J3.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

assembled in defiance of the Guard's order, students were warned and told to leave the area. When the students refused, Guard members began shooting off tear gas in an attempt to break up the crowd. The guardsmen, not trained in crowd control, and, as a result, the situation was chaotic. Guardsmen pushed students from The Commons continually lobbing tear gas canisters at them. The students threw them back as well as rocks and other projectiles. Whether in confusion or premeditation, Guardsmen opened fire on the students at 12:24 p.m. In 13 seconds, 61 rounds were fired. Four students--Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, William Schroeder, and Sandy Scheuer--lay dead and nine others were wounded. The university closed and student evacuated Kent later that afternoon.¹⁵¹

Miami's Response to Kent State

Ultimately, Kent State became the symbol of the antiwar movement during the Vietnam Era. Roughly 4 million students at 1,350 universities, outraged by the actions taken by the Ohio National Guard, took to the streets in protest.¹⁵² In response to the tragedy, Miami cancelled classes on May 5, 1970. It was a day of reflection and dialogue. President Shriver held meetings with students throughout the day. During the night, a firebomb exploded outside Roudebush Hall causing \$250 in damage.¹⁵³ Classes resumed on May 6, though the campus was described as uneasy.¹⁵⁴ That night, students gathered to protest the war in an event called the "Rally at the Water Tower." The crowd initially met on campus and grew throughout the night, eventually making its way to uptown Oxford, winding through campus, and stopping at the sundial,

¹⁵¹ Ibid., J4.

¹⁵² Heineman. *Put Your Bodies Upon the Wheels*, 176.

¹⁵³ *Diary of Disruption*, 30, This was also told of in Jim Nichols, "Bomb Mars Campus Protests," *Dayton Daily News*, 6 May 1970, and "FireBomb, Vandalism Strike Campus, Town," *Oxford Press*, 7 May 1970.

¹⁵⁴ Miami University, "Report on the Closing of Miami University," *Miami Alumnus* (May 1970).

a campus landmark. President Shriver met with the crowd and promised two more days of cancelled classes.¹⁵⁵ By the next morning the situation had changed. Overnight violence erupted, and seven fires were set around campus. President Shriver decided that he could no longer ensure the safety of Miami students. Shortly after 10 a.m., Miami officially closed. Students were to be out by 8 p.m.¹⁵⁶

Miami University closed on May 7 for the next eleven days in response to Governor Rhodes' request that any university in Ohio experiencing unrest should close.¹⁵⁷ Rhodes did not want to send the National Guard out to protect state property after what occurred in Kent. His heavy-handed approach toward student protestors was popular with voters, but increased militancy could become unpopular very quickly. During the closure, university officials met and prepared for Miami's reopening. Students returned to campus on Sunday May 17. Classes began once again the following day. President Shriver received much correspondence during the eleven days Miami classes were not in session, with the vast majority favoring reopening the university, and many letter writers were upset at Shriver for letting so-called "radical students" take over campus and shut down the university.

There were several changes on Miami's campus following the reopening. First, the university started a faculty marshal program, and divided it into two separate parts: crowd control and firewatch. Faculty members were present in uptown crowds following Miami's reopening, in a conscious attempt to prevent another major confrontation between students and law enforcement. Firewatchers sat in academic buildings at night to report possible fires. About 900 students, staff, and faculty volunteered as part of the

¹⁵⁵ "Decision to Open Miami Still Under Discussion," *Oxford Press*, 14 May 1970.

¹⁵⁶ *Diary of Disruption*, 33.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 31-33.

program.¹⁵⁸ Academic changes were also in store for Miami. Students had missed classes and were now behind. Would they have to make up the work or would administrators or faculty make concessions to them? This became a point of contention in the days and weeks following Miami's reopening. Initially, the University Senate prepared guidelines for classes following the reopening. Incomplete grades were unacceptable and course requirements were not curtailed. The most important point was that students would have the option of choosing between a letter grade and "credit-no credit." A credit-no credit system is essentially a pass/fail grading system that does not affect a student's grade point average.¹⁵⁹

Oxford and the Miami campus did not remain calm after the students returned. The events of the previous month were too much to forget. On the night of May 18 there was another "rally at the water tower." President Shriver visited the rally twice and faculty members kept watch to lessen the possibility of serious trouble. Shriver talked with the students that night and made a popular concession. Students could settle for credit-no credit in their courses, receive credit based on their work up to that point, and would not have to complete classes as originally planned. Students could then choose to attend "alternate university" classes.¹⁶⁰ That night the crowd in uptown Oxford forced the rerouting of traffic due to its large size. The situation was quite tense.

The next night similar crowds once again assembled in uptown Oxford, with no major incidents, though the crowd did manage to alter traffic for the second night in a

¹⁵⁸ "One response to crisis: University Marshal Program," *Miami Alumnus* (September 1970). Incidentally, Kent State had a faculty marshal program in place when the shootings occurred. The faculty marshals kept the situation from escalating after the National Guard fired their weapons.

¹⁵⁹ Open letter to all Miamians from President Shriver, 16 May 1970, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

¹⁶⁰ The alternate university grew out of the free university started as part of Miami's Moratorium observances.

row.¹⁶¹ During these two days, however, it was rumored that Miami would close once again, but the grading concession made by President Shriver helped calm the situation. Some students took their grades and left, but others stayed. The university did not function properly the rest of the term. On May 20, Oxford City council called for a 9:00 p.m. curfew to avert another confrontation between law enforcement officials and students as in April. Students were not to be out past that time. This action relieved the campus more than any grading concession could. President Shriver also sent a letter to Miami students in which he requested that students “avoid forming crowds in the uptown area of Oxford or on the campus.”¹⁶² While students still gathered before curfew time and a few were arrested for violation each night, the university and Oxford calmed in the weeks leading up to commencement ceremonies held June 14. Neil Armstrong gave the commencement address and spoke of flights to the moon, not the war in Vietnam.

University Investigations

There were two internal university investigations of the events at Rowan Hall and the immediate aftermath. The Select Committee on the Abuses of Rights (SCAR) consisted of five students, two faculty members, and one administrator.¹⁶³ President Shriver also named a ten-member task force to look into the events of April 15, 1970. The President’s Commission had two administrators, four students, and four faculty

¹⁶¹ For a story about these two nights see, “Uptown Area Milling Throng Twice Blocks High Street,” *Oxford Press* 21 May 1970.

¹⁶² Letter to Miami students from President Shriver, 20 May 1970, Phillip R. Shriver papers, Miami University Archives.

¹⁶³ *The SCAR Report: The Findings of the Select Committee on the Abuse of Rights*, Student Unrest Files, Miami University Archives.

members on it.¹⁶⁴ What follows is a summary of each respective report's conclusions. Sheriff Carpenter did not cooperate with either investigation.

The SCAR Report

The Select Committee on the Abuses of Rights (SCAR) report investigated the abuse of rights on the part of authorities concerning the events at Rowan Hall on April 15, 1970. It took a skeptical view of police actions that evening. The report pointed out that being present at the events in question possibly biased the opinions of committee membership.¹⁶⁵ In organizing the events of April 15, 1970, the SCAR report divided the events into three separate timeframes. The report referred to these as "Rowan I," "Rowan II," and "Uptown."

The SCAR report consisted of 151 allegations by students, faculty, Oxford residents, and police.¹⁶⁶ The report began with an examination of what it refers to as "Rowan I," events that took place during the time student protesters were being told to leave the building or risk expulsion but before the arrival of the first law enforcement officials. This section sought to solve a seemingly unsolvable question, namely, "How did the violence begin?"¹⁶⁷ This question was largely unresolved. The report blamed the outbreak of violent police action and student opposition on a small group of individuals on either side, but no specific persons.

From various eyewitness accounts, the committee came to some conclusions about "Rowan I." Among them was that the police forces from outside of Oxford were

¹⁶⁴ "10 Are Named to Investigate Campus Events," *Hamilton Daily News Journal*, 28 April 1970. also, *A Report of the President's Commission to Investigate the Events of April 15, 1970*, Student Unrest Files, Miami University Archives.

¹⁶⁵ *SCAR Report*, 1.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 1-2.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 8.

under no central control. More importantly, the committee found major fault with the police action because the police did not warn the crowd that, “Violent methods of crowd dispersal were about to be employed.”¹⁶⁸ While this may be true, administrators warned students to leave the building. Also, the “violent methods” used by police were non-lethal methods. Since no deaths occurred one could come down on the side of the police. However, law enforcement authorities were not trained for the situation, and in all likelihood caused more harm by chasing bystanders around Oxford than students would have caused had they been left alone inside Rowan Hall.

The SCAR report defined the next section of violence as “Rowan II,” stating that this portion of the protest started at approximately 11:30 P.M and describing the events as a “massive grenade-launched tear gassing.”¹⁶⁹ Officials had arrested most protestors by this time. “Rowan II” was an attempt to disperse the crowd of innocent bystanders gathered to watch the protests and police actions. Diane Ramsey, a sophomore student expressed an innocent sentiment, “Why can’t I be on a sidewalk of M.U. at night-with a number of *peaceful* people-without being tear gassed and bitten by a dog?”¹⁷⁰

The SCAR report concludes that “Rowan II” should never have happened and that it was a result of police aggression. If the purpose of “Rowan II” was to disperse the crowd, the actions did not come off as planned. Authorities used the tear gas in an inefficient manner and fired gas so it would trap students and not let them disperse. A student stated that police had already fired tear gas beyond them when “they then fired short of us to block our forced exodus toward them. In effect, we were trapped between

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 8-9.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 9.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 10.

the gassed areas.”¹⁷¹ The SCAR report regarded law enforcement officials as “ill-trained” and “unprofessional.”¹⁷² Following the forced dispersal of people around Rowan Hall, incidents occurred in uptown Oxford as well. The SCAR report also reported incidents taking place “Uptown” and placed occurrences between the hours of 12:00 and 1:00 A.M. on April 16.¹⁷³

Policemen attempted to clear students from the streets by once again using tear gas and police dogs. This resulted in agitating previously non-involved students. “Students who had not been radical before the incidents uptown began started gathering in clusters, shouting at police, re-grouping, scattering again.”¹⁷⁴ The incidents uptown also affected innocent bystanders, even those who were not close to Rowan Hall during the initial protest. Lawrence Besselman, a senior, reported being in a bar and leaving to get to his car. Overcome by tear gas fumes, he paused to regain his senses while walking to his car, officers told him to move along. When he did not do so quickly enough, the officers unleashed a dog on him. Mr. Besselman was arrested for disorderly conduct while attempting to reach his car and go home.¹⁷⁵

Many of the statements regarding “Uptown” reported actions taken by police against a crowd of students at the Phi Delta Gamma Fraternity House. It seems students were pushed from uptown took and refuge in the fraternity house rather than head all the way back to campus. “When the people reached the Fiji (Phi Delta Gamma) House ... they began to head into the house and lawn to escape the pursuit of

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 11.

¹⁷² Ibid., 18.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 19.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 20.

the dogs and police.”¹⁷⁶ If this was the case it is understandable that police would follow especially when the police involved could have been from out of town. The SCAR report concedes that police, “May have assumed that the Phi Delta Gamma House to be University property since its architecture is similar to that of all other University buildings.”¹⁷⁷ Nonetheless, police and police dogs assaulted students on non-public property the night of April 15, 1970.

In the end, the SCAR report made five recommendations as a result of its investigation. The first requested more discretion in calling law enforcement agencies to campus. The second was a warning to radicals; it recommended that they involve themselves in legal protests because the police could do anything they wanted in a presumed “emergency situation.”¹⁷⁸ The third recommendation went out to local law enforcement agencies as the committee asked them to obey the law and act in a “sane, rational manner” in order that students would do so as well. Taxpayers drew the fourth recommendation. It was a request to pay police officers more in order to attract a more professional group of individuals to the occupation. The final recommendation was to the area residents who had signed a petition supporting the police actions during the takeover of Rowan Hall. Very telling, the SCAR report assumed that the residents did not have a complete account of the incidents when they signed the petition.¹⁷⁹

It was not only the SCAR report that criticized police tactics. Area newspaper editorialists also questioned the tactics used.¹⁸⁰ While there was criticism by students, others were on the side of the police, stating among other things that the student

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 21.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 23.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 26.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ “Sheriff Target of Most Criticism by Students,” *Cincinnati Post*, 22 April 1970.

provided provocation for the use of force.¹⁸¹ Because law enforcement officials did not cooperate with the SCAR report, it suffered from flaws. The *Miami Alumnus* did contain statements from a Highway Patrol Commander and the Butler County Sheriff. Justifying the actions taken the Highway Patrol official stated, "Violence by segments of the thousands of students encircling the building and attacking the vehicles and their occupants caused physical danger to the students themselves as well as the troopers."¹⁸²

The President's Commission to Investigate the Events of April 15, 1970

Miami President Phillip Shriver formed a commission to investigate the Rowan Hall incident on April 27, 1970. The commission had to report its findings a little over than a month later. The report was produced quickly and possibly missed key a few key elements because of its rapid production. Nonetheless, the President's Commission examined aspects of the protest of April 15, 1970 from multiple viewpoints (administration, faculty, student, and law enforcement participation) and reached several conclusions, among them, "Each person inside Rowan Hall was given the opportunity to leave to building up until the time of his arrest."¹⁸³ This was the case. The University also gave several warnings to student protestors inside the building. Further, arresting officers entered Rowan Hall through the north entrance, while "at the same time, Oxford Police and University Security officers were stationed at the south door and ordered to allow free exit from the building but to allow no entry."¹⁸⁴ Also, law enforcement officials were alerted to the possibility of using bullhorns to provide better

¹⁸¹ "Sheriff: Dogs Too Fine for 'em," *Dayton Daily News*, 24 April 1970. and "Report on Miami: Should've Gassed Sooner: Sheriff," *Dayton Daily News*, 24 April 1970.

¹⁸² Miami University, "Report on the Closing of Miami University," *Miami Alumnus* (May 1970).

¹⁸³ *President's Commission*, 25.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

communication to the crowd, while those arrested should not have been taken to uptown Oxford for this incited more disturbances. In the end, the Commission called for a central command post, and a staging area for stand-by forces. These suggestions could have avoided the difficulties surrounding the Rowan Hall protest.¹⁸⁵

It is unfortunate that neither investigative committee received cooperation from Butler County Sheriff Harold Carpenter. His department and deputies attracted most of the complaints logged against law enforcement after the arrests at Rowan Hall. The sheriff's actions afterwards were nearly as bad as the actions the night of April 15. Both he and his deputies should have been held responsible for their out-of-control actions.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 26.

The final recommendations of the President's Commission were:

1. All members of the University community seriously evaluate their purpose, actions, and presence in crowd situations.
2. The University re-examine the need for and operation of substitutes for Peremptory Suspension.
3. The University establish and publicize a rumor control center.
4. The University continue the use of faculty members from throughout the University for assistance in tense crowd situations and encourage broader participation by faculty.
5. The University establish, with student advice and counsel, guidelines for future acceptable actions of dissent and protest expression.
6. "Rap" sessions involving students, faculty, administrators, and trustees should be held at regularly scheduled intervals – sessions at which requests may be presented and discussed but where decisions are not expected. Participants should be willing to give responsible answers as well as to ask questions.
7. The University evaluate the adequacy of Miami University Security forces in terms of number, equipment, facilities, and role.
8. The President seek legislation to clarify the command relationships among law enforcement agencies on the University campus.
9. The University continue to develop workable relationships with public officials and agencies that may be called into the Oxford area during campus emergencies.
10. The University give increased attention to relations between the University community and the Oxford community, but the Commission does not presume to offer specific recommendations.
11. The Commission makes no recommendations concerning the behavior of individual law enforcement officers or agencies.

Conclusions and Lasting Impressions

The national antiwar movement changed after 1970, as American involvement in the Vietnam War was winding down.¹⁸⁶ This was true on the campus of Miami University as well. There were antiwar gatherings at Miami after 1970 but a confrontation like that at Rowan Hall never occurred again. There was little recognition of the one-year anniversary of the incidents. Attendees were sparse at a teach-in and a rally was cancelled.¹⁸⁷ Apathy, however, did not continue on campus. When President Nixon announced the mining and naval blockade of all North Vietnamese seaports in May 1972, Miami students reacted by spontaneously taking to the streets.¹⁸⁸ Demonstrations lasted for days, but nobody, not even the Butler County Sheriff, forced a confrontation. The crowds dwindled in the weeks following Nixon's announcement. However, a small number of students continued to hold vigil on the lawn of Roudebush Hall until the school year ended. The students were not as unified in 1972 as they were in 1970.¹⁸⁹ The Miami administration and local law enforcement learned from 1970 because students largely were left free to protest in 1972, just two short years following the events at Rowan Hall. Nixon's peace with honor came in January 1973 without much fanfare to Miami.

Students did lobby for change after the war but did not do anything as significant as taking over a campus building and running Oxford out of water. At one point Miami students sought to decriminalize marijuana by placing an ordinance on the November

¹⁸⁶ Aspects of the movement fell into the mainstream. Congress began limiting President Nixon's ability to wage the war the way he saw fit. Congress also limited economic assistance to South Vietnam and Southeast Asia after American withdrawal.

¹⁸⁷ "Anniversary Uneventfully Remembered," *Miami Student*, 16 April 1971.

¹⁸⁸ "1500 Participate in Midnight March," *Miami Student*, 9 May 1972.

¹⁸⁹ "Rowan Hall and Roudebush—1970 and 1972," *Miami Student*, 12 May 1972.

1975 ballot that would have made “casual possession of marijuana (four ounces or less) an offense comparable to a parking violation.”¹⁹⁰ It would involve a fine of \$5. Attempts to legalize casual possession of marijuana did not come to fruition, though Miami students did succeed in changing Oxford’s liquor laws by using a referendum.¹⁹¹ They also attempted to alter Miami’s no-car policy.¹⁹²

The tumultuous events of May 1970, forced Miami University to shut down in as a result of the tragedy at Kent State University. Miami, however, was the only state university in Ohio to reopen and complete the semester. In the end, only one student was convicted of wrongdoing in the Rowan Hall protest: Alan (Dusty) Steytler was held responsible for the move from the lawn of Roudebush Hall to Rowan Hall. He served two months of a four to six year prison term for breaking and entering.¹⁹³

With that, the history of protest at Miami University during the spring of 1970 is told, though in abbreviated form. The events that unfolded on the university’s Oxford campus were important to the antiwar movement, particularly at the local level. The students of Miami University and the residents of Oxford, Ohio became a small part of the national movement. In summarizing the student protests, the University’s Office of News and Public Information had the following to say. “Miami has had its first major occurrence with student unrest. Although it should not have been unexpected in this

¹⁹⁰ “Oxford Marijuana Test Vote Approaches,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 6 September 1975.

¹⁹¹ Before 1979, Oxford was partially a dry town. Residents could only purchase beer with 3.2 percent alcohol in bars. The vote in November 1979 legalized the sale of regular beer, wine and liquor by glass. Two votes in the previous ten years had failed. Jim Gardner, “Liquor Issues Pass; Voter Turnout High,” *Miami Student*, 10 November 1979.

¹⁹² Miami has always placed limitations on student automobiles. Miami students formerly were not allowed to have cars at all. The parking situation on campus has never been good but has been alleviated somewhat in recent years. Remnants of the car rule still exist, however the rules have been liberalized since the late 1990s.

¹⁹³ “Miami Averted Bloodshed,” *Cincinnati Enquirer*. 4 May 2000.

era of campus disruption, it did strike with a vivid and shattering reality that one finds difficult to imagine even when prepared.”¹⁹⁴

In the years after Rowan Hall, black student enrollment increased at Miami. However, the enrollment never reached the levels called for by the BSAA. The numbers of black faculty members increased as well. The most lasting change resulting from the events of April 1970 dealt with ROTC. In the years before 1970, ROTC cadets paraded through campus (Rowan Hall was in the middle of campus), and as antiwar sentiment grew, cadets were often jeered and even had things thrown at them. Rowan Hall no longer houses ROTC (it is now an art building). ROTC moved to the north end of campus and is now located in Millett Hall, the basketball arena, and is essentially hidden from the rest of campus in an attempt to avoid another confrontation similar to that of April 1970.

The events at and around Rowan Hall also forced residents and students alike to think about the Vietnam War, and conversely, opposition to it. Regardless of whether people were in agreement with the thoughts of Miami students inside Rowan Hall or with law enforcement officials outside the building, the events surrounding the takeover of Rowan Hall brought awareness to the situation of the Vietnam War and local issues at Miami. Is not that the point of protest? While methods vary, dissent is a natural occurrence in a democratic republic such as the United States. As long as the First Amendment to the Constitution gives American citizens the right to gather in opposition or in agreement with a given policy, gatherings will occur and awareness will be a goal. During the Vietnam Era, the federal government went to great lengths to limit opposition

¹⁹⁴ *Diary of Disruption*, 57.

to the war. The FBI under J. Edgar Hoover conducted surveillance of Americans in the COINTELPRO program.¹⁹⁵

In light of what happened at Kent State University and Jackson State College, how close did Miami come to a violent confrontation? The ingredients were present on campus. Antiwar sentiment and the pressures of local issues at Miami led to student action against Rowan Hall, causing administrators and law enforcement to react, creating a bad situation that could have been worse. Fortunately, events did not spin out of control in Oxford like in Kent. Miami University was fortunate that bloodshed was averted.

¹⁹⁵ James Kirpatrick Davis. *Assault on the Left: The FBI and the Sixties Antiwar Movement*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger, 1997.

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