

The Way We Were

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In 1914, Tommy Schoonmaker added a three lane bowling alley to his barber shop and the Ideal Bowling Alley and Pool Rooms on Main Street, making it “Durham’s only amusement place.” Bowling proved to be a popular pastime for the students and the brothers of Sigma Alpha Epsilon were soon challenging other groups to bowling tournaments. In 1920, Helen Bartlett, the new director of physical education for women, was looking for ways to expand the program, especially during the winter months and mud season, when field sports were not an option. She reserved the bowling alley during the regular class periods and the women received credit for playing the game. The women enjoyed the change of pace from the regular classes of gymnastics, dance or basketball. And, since the bowling alley was in a public building, they did not have to change into the abhorrent gym uniforms they normally had to wear.

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Written by Mylinda Woodward '97, UNH Archives Assistant

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