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The Resistance:

Student Protest and the University of New Hampshire in May 1970

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Professor Jason Sokol, Advisor
“The basic purpose of a university has always been not solely to provide an encounter with stockpiles of knowledge, but to enable the young to discover and pursue new questions, to develop a spirit of critical inquiry and to test accepted propositions. This theoretical definition of the university’s function should now become, as the students see it, the literal one; and the results are as unsettling as they are promising and enormously exciting.”

-Norman Cousins, *Saturday Review*
Introduction

In May of 1970, the University of New Hampshire had armed National Guardsmen stationed less than two miles from campus awaiting their chance to quell any disturbances that may arise. The student body president had been charged with criminal contempt and students had made plans to bring anti-war conspirators to campus. University administrators were on high alert as students had been organizing protests on issues ranging from the United States’ involvement in the Vietnam War to infringements on students’ first amendment rights. On several occasions hundreds of students had gathered in the heart of campus making it evident that they wanted to strike. These events and the intense bout of student activism were mirrored in campuses across the nation at this time.

The student population in the United States has proven to be a reliably politically active body, particularly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Young people have gathered and organized to challenge existing forms of authority and bring about change at several pivotal moments in history. With the ability to connect and communicate through countless channels and systems, students are capable of garnering support for the causes to which they are committed. The communities created in the environments of living and learning together allow students to coordinate easily. When society as a whole confronted difficult problems, students often gravitated to those issues. Therefore, students on college campuses were easily engulfed in strong activism especially in the mid to late twentieth century, when issues like the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement became societal flash points.

Larger campuses including the University of California at Berkeley, the University of Wisconsin at Madison and Columbia University have amassed considerable studies dedicated to
their histories of student activism. They are viewed as central locations with rich narratives of student activity. The history of student activism on the University of New Hampshire campus should be given the same consideration. With its rural location and relatively small student body, it is easy to look elsewhere for historical evidence. However, students on the University of New Hampshire campus exhibit the same dedication and drive as others. This paper attempts to relate and situate the events that took place at the University of New Hampshire among those that occurred at more recognizable institutions. As a New Hampshire native and a current UNH student, I had to search to uncover the history of our state and its institutions relative to the student movements of the 1960s and 1970s, as it is often overlooked. I hope to highlight how efforts made during this period by students at UNH contributed to the shifting of American culture and created long lasting effects in the American political arena.

Following a period dominated by what many saw as complacency and stagnation in the 1950s, the youth culture in the United States began to drastically change during the 1960s. Concerns about civil rights and the Vietnam War brought about a new era of student activism that captivated the attention of the United States. Some of the larger demonstrations pushed student issues to the forefront of American media. The 1960s brought forth an unstoppable wave of student protests. With issues regarding civil rights, the employment of free speech and opposition to the Vietnam War, students demonstrated in large numbers throughout the decade. Students wanted to change some of the fundamental aspects of American life. By banding together to form the political movement known as the New Left, young people pressed for a participatory democracy where all Americans would have a direct say in governmental affairs.

Furthermore, they were frustrated with the injustices faced by African Americans. Efforts were directed at working to improve racial relations and to grant equal opportunities to African Americans in the South through sit-ins and marches. Youth organizations including the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee rose to prominence during the course of the Civil Rights Movement. The involvement of young people alongside notable figures like Martin Luther King, Jr. was crucial. Students also wished to address other issues including poverty and the liberation of college students. Concentrating on the unfavorable policies instituted by college administrators was also a major focus for the student movement.

The issues surrounding the Vietnam War in particular created deep divides among the American people. Those who took the strongest disliking to the large-scale military intervention in Vietnam were American students. This foreign civil war was not worth risking their lives and they felt it did not concern Americans. With the draft looming over their heads, students took a particular disliking to the Selective Service System. Their generation was the population from which the system would choose men to be sent off to wage war in Indochina. With graduating from college being the only boundary separating these young men from draft eligibility, students took hold of this “avenue for direct resistance to war on an individual level” and made the draft resistance a key focus of the antiwar movement.² This led students to wage protests, rallies, and demonstrations across the United States. As a result, memories of the Vietnam War era at home are dominated by student unrest. The energy and enthusiasm exhibited by young people creates this dominance in memory. Author Mark Edelman Boren summarizes this spirit in his history of student protest titled *Student Resistance: A History of the Unruly Subject*. He writes, “at the heart

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of the student movement were individuals seriously engaged with, idealistic about, and committed to their causes—willing to take them beyond hanging posters on dormitory walls, and coffee shops or classroom discussions.”

Students have the unique ability to organize more quickly due to the communities they establish by living and learning together over the course of several years. During this formative time in their lives they are experiencing and interacting with new people and new ideas. Their motivations and interests are shaped by these interactions. College students are in the privileged position to then take their education and utilize it to address the issues relevant to them. Along with being young and energized, these students had unique opportunities and environments that allowed them to challenge the status quo and ultimately change the institutions they were destined to inherit.

Throughout the 1960s student demonstrations on campuses across the United States continued to gain traction and support. The 1968 election of Republican Richard Nixon further complicated the circumstances. Nixon was outspoken against the previous administration’s war efforts saying, “The policy of the previous administration not only resulted in our assuming the primary responsibility for fighting the war but even more significant did not adequately stress the goal of strengthening the South Vietnamese so that they could defend themselves when we left.” In his November 1969 speech titled “The Great Silent Majority,” Nixon outlines his policy to address the shortcomings of the previous administration. This policy, dubbed “Vietnamization,” was a plan to withdraw American combat ground troops as they were replaced by trained South Vietnamese forces. However, President Nixon then authorized the bombing of Cambodia later in

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1970. Vietnamization ultimately proved unsuccessful, as it did not stop the fall of Saigon in April of 1975 and the unification of north and south Vietnam. The simple promise of withdrawing troops on an undetermined timeline was not enough. Students across the United States were looking for a push, a tipping point, something to bring about the significant change they had been campaigning for over several years. Sadly, the shootings at Kent State University in May of 1970 would prove to be that needed catalyst.

Part One: The Confrontation at Kent State

Kent State University is a public institution that sits in Northeastern Ohio. It was a mostly quiet campus amidst the chaos of the 1960s. However, after President Nixon’s declaration in late April of 1970 that the United States had invaded Cambodia, things began to change. The first week in May of 1970 brought unfathomable violence and tragedy to campus. Former Kent State student and eyewitness to the shootings, Ellis Berns, compares the campus prior to the shootings to the University of Wisconsin, a campus famous for large demonstrations. He says, “Kent seemed like small potatoes. It really wasn’t the kind of activity—although you knew there was a bit of an undercurrent that was going on. But nothing like how it crescendoed out of control, but not expecting anything severe or anything that eventually happened on the May 4th weekend.” The infamous events of that weekend would influence campuses across the

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United States, notably the University of New Hampshire, and would become one of the largest defining moments of the student antiwar movement.

Kent State students began protesting over concerns regarding President Nixon’s war policies as well as fighting for a greater African American presence on campus. Many of the actions of protest in the days leading up to the massacre were not violent. Rather, they were symbolic actions to demonstrate the hope that had been lost by this generation of students in the political system and their future. A day after President Nixon’s speech, Kent State students gathered in the heart of their campus, the Commons. Steven Sharoff, a history student, organized the rally and began the demonstration. Standing on the concrete backing of the victory bell that sits in the Commons, Sharoff declared, “I charge the Nixon administration with lawlessness in regard to Cambodia. I will now perform the deeply sorrowful task of burying the Constitution, which is being used to persecute true friends of liberty like the Black Panthers and the Chicago Eight. Nixon acted without the approval of Congress or the people… We now declare the Constitution dead.” He then took the copy of the constitution and buried it in the ground while the crowd responded with excitement. Three to four hundred students gathered at this time, making it Kent State’s largest protest rally of the year up until that point. Additionally, students distributed flyers and rallied peacefully elsewhere on campus. This outward act of protest against the United States government would only be the beginning of how Kent State students would display their animosity towards those who students believed were dictating their future.

On the evening of Friday May 1st, students took to the streets of downtown Kent to air their frustrations. Things quickly changed from what appeared to be a crowd of young people

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getting slightly too rowdy late at night to outward public disturbances and the defacing of property. Student Carol Mirman describes the actions of her fellow students. She says:

Somebody brought a barrel and started to put things in there and they lit a fire in the barrel. More and more people gathered, and some started talking about the war and people were drinking and… people started to block off the street… I remember distinctly an elderly couple in their car stopped in traffic and they were surrounded by students. And students started to rock the car…It went from there. Some people began to run down the streets and throw rocks and break windows.⁸

Police were called in to quell the disturbances. The mayor of Kent, Leroy Satrom, declared a state of emergency in the early morning hours in an effort to close the bars and have police clear the streets. This action only further agitated the crowds. The situation escalated and hostility grew. In his narrative piece titled 13 Seconds: A Look Back at the Kent State Shootings, author and journalist Philip Caputo says, “between 12:30 and 1:00 am the vandalism has taken on a definite political corporation: “establishment” businesses, like the bank and the gas company have been targeted.”⁹ By the early morning hours, the crowds finally dispersed, and it was estimated that $15,000 of damage had been inflicted on local businesses that night.¹⁰ Now with a damaged downtown area and circulating rumors, the Kent city police were not properly equipped to handle this escalation of events. Mayor Satrom called the governor’s office asking for assistance in efforts to deescalate the mounting tensions. An Ohio National Guard unit was sent to the campus almost immediately.

The arrival of the Ohio National Guard on Kent State’s campus was in and of itself a series of confusing and unanticipated events. Originally called for by Mayor Satrom, the Ohio

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⁹ Philip Caputo, 13 Seconds: A Look Back at the Kent State Shootings (New York: Chamberlain Bros, A Member of Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 2005), 44.
¹⁰ Ibid, 45.
National Guard was summoned to help monitor any uprising that may occur in the city of Kent and particularly on Kent State’s campus. At the time, university officials had no indication that soldiers would soon arrive and actively be patrolling the campus. When speaking with Lieutenant Barnette, the Ohio National Guard liaison officer from the 145th Infantry Regiment, university vice president Robert Matson was surprised to hear that the Ohio National Guard unit was put on alert. He says that the university had not been consulted and this was the first of him hearing this news. He also explained that Kent State’s riot contingency plans indicated that university officials would only seek aid from the Ohio National Guard if absolutely necessary.\footnote{Joe Eszterhas and Michael D. Roberts, \textit{Thirteen Seconds: Confrontation at Kent State}, 73-74.} Despite the lack of communication between university officials and government officials, the Ohio National Guard stationed themselves on campus.

The presence of soldiers posted across campus left many Kent State students feeling apprehensive and unsettled. A young woman at the time named Linda Cooper-Leff describes the conversations she had with her friends who lived on campus during this occupation by the Ohio National Guard. She says “They said, “Well, it was really strange. We had walked over to the library and an armored personnel carrier came up and told them they had to disperse because there were more than three people walking across campus to go to the library.”\footnote{Craig Simpson, \textit{Above the Shots: An Oral History of the Kent State Shootings}, 70-71.} Kent State University had become a militarized zone and the students would not stand for it.

Kent State can be described as having a “core of dedicated activist students” but that does not imply that they had a radicalized campus.\footnote{Philip Caputo, \textit{13 Seconds: A Look Back at the Kent State Shootings}, 45.} However, one of the events leading up to the shootings on May 4th, continues to be a point of contention in public opinion regarding whether or not students had become radicalized. On Saturday May 2nd, the Reserve Officer
Training Corp (ROTC) building on Kent State’s campus was set aflame. By 9PM the building was fully ablaze. A mass of demonstrators and spectators gathered as the Kent fire department was called in. Protestors squashed the firemen’s efforts to extinguish the flames by slashing the fire hoses and throwing stones at the firemen. The firemen then abandoned their efforts and the ROTC building was left to burn. The Ohio National Guardsmen were stationed on Kent State’s campus at this time and were successful in dispersing the crowds before further build up occurred. Former Kent State student Ruth Gibson witnessed these events. Having served as chairperson of the Kent Committee to End the War in Vietnam in both 1967 and 1968, her feelings on this matter were pretty straightforward. When asked during an interview in 1980 about how she felt when seeing the ROTC building burning, she responds by saying,

I felt pretty good about it. I didn’t really feel gleeful in particular, but I understood why the building was burning. It was a symbol in everybody’s mind of direct oppression: the direct threat of having to go into a war that you didn’t believe in, that you didn’t want, that you didn’t think your country should be involved in. Right there was a tangible symbol of the military inflicting itself upon us, with the campus being used for the purpose of recruitment, for funneling young males, for garnering support for programs which were not in the best interest of people in this country.¹⁴

The sentiments expressed in Gibson’s statements rang true in the minds of the majority of Kent State students at this time. Although this act was more intentional and dangerous than the previous day’s burying of the Constitution, it still was viewed as a response that was symbolic of how discouraged students were during this time. This triggered a series of violent events on the Kent State campus that no young student could have imagined.

On the fateful morning of Monday May 4th, 1970, hundreds of students began to gather at Kent State University. What originally began as a peaceful protest with speakers

denouncing the presence of the Ohio National Guard and President Nixon’s authorization of American troops interfering in Cambodia, quickly took a turn for the worst. By noontime, over three thousand students had congregated on the campus’s common. Ohio National Guard General Robert Canterbury ordered students to disperse.\textsuperscript{15} With a bullhorn calling messages to the crowd Canterbury yelled, “This assembly is unlawful. The crowd must disperse at this time. This is an order!”\textsuperscript{16} The students refused. Attempts were made by the guardsmen to use tear gas to clear the area, but students retaliated by throwing stones.

The Ohio National Guard report detailing the situation states that the crowd continued to rapidly grow in size, and it was presumed that the order to disperse would be entirely ignored.\textsuperscript{17} The guardsmen then regrouped to take a more drastic approach. Even in the moment, there was confusion among the Guardsmen. General Canterbury claims that the “situation was extremely dangerous. I felt I could have been killed”. However, Captain Raymond Srp refutes this position by saying that “I didn’t feel danger and I was right in the middle of it.”\textsuperscript{18} The situation was quickly escalating with confusion occurring on both sides.

Author Craig Simpson writes, “At about 12:24pm… Troop G turned in unison, lowered their weapons and began firing. The soldiers fired sixty-seven rounds in thirteen seconds.”\textsuperscript{19} Students fell to the ground, ducked behind cars and trees. Student Ellis Berns replays the moments prior to and after his friend Sandra Scheuer was shot. He recalls,

We dove for cover, and I remember waiting until I felt like it was safe to get up. Until we felt like the shooting was over…I remember I had my arm around her, and she was laying on her stomach face down. I remember calling out to her, “Sandy, it’s over. Let’s go, let’s

\textsuperscript{16} Joe Eszterhas and Michael D. Roberts, \textit{Thirteen Seconds: Confrontation At Kent State}, 152.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid, 154.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 161.
\textsuperscript{19} Craig Simpson, \textit{Above the Shots: An Oral History of the Kent State Shootings}, 93.
“And then I looked…she was hit…the bullet had not just grazed her but had severed a carotid artery. So there was a lot of blood. I remember trying to administer first aid. I’m not a doctor. But there was just blood all over. And she was totally unconscious…I remember calling out for help, calling an ambulance, which seemed like an eternity…I have heard that she actually had a heartbeat to the hospital, but I can’t attest to that at all. In my mind, she had died right there.  

Four students lay dead and several others wounded at the conclusion of the altercation.

The immediate aftermath of the shooting was a frenzy. A large portion of the Kent State University student body was traveling back and forth to the local hospital visiting fellow injured students. The campus was shut down and classes did not resume that semester. The community outside of Kent State worked hard to resume some semblance of their day to day lives. However, the students did not have that luxury. Public opinion was divided. While some viewed the guardsmen’s actions as an appropriate response to the student unrest, many concluded that that unrest did not warrant the killing of four students. Simpson writes, “The shootings… were not justified against students on Monday and certainly were not justified as a final response to a series of events in Kent and on campus that began downtown on Friday night.”

Those also at the center of the altercation, the Guardsmen, battled amongst themselves over what had occurred. Some believed that they were in imminent danger and responded in a way that would protect their own lives. Others understood that the students may have been rowdy, but they were unarmed and not making any direct advances towards the soldiers. The nature of the order to fire and who issued it is also up for debate. One of the Guardsmen who was hospitalized after collapsing from hyperventilation after the shooting confided in the 107th Armored Cavalry Regiment chaplain John Simmons, telling him, “I’m supposed to be getting out of the Guard tomorrow. Can you imagine that? Tomorrow. And this had to happen on my last

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21 Ibid, 57.
The events that occurred on May 4th, 1970 were unimaginable from almost all perspectives and would cause institutions and communities across the United States to take notice of the significance and progression of the student antiwar movement. An unprecedented wave of student strikes at colleges and universities would follow as the aftermath of this tragedy.

Word of the Kent State University shooting spread quickly. It reached Durham, New Hampshire by the early hours of the following morning, Tuesday May 5th, 1970. A bulletin had been sent out over the airwaves of the University of New Hampshire’s radio station WUNH alerting students. UNH students were shocked and appalled by such news. Small gatherings and protests had been taking place on the campus as a part of the National Student Strike for some time. However, the Kent State killings would ignite a much more intense and larger wave of activism on the campus.

Chapter Two: UNH: The Chicago 3, Contempt Charges & Community

On the evening of Tuesday May 5th at 7:00pm, just a day after the Kent State shootings, five hundred people gathered on the President’s lawn to discuss several issues including the “powerlessness of UNH students, the war, the extermination of Black Panthers by the US government and the murder of 4 Kent State College students in Ohio.” Tensions were mounting and students made it clear that they wanted to strike. The rally later turned into a march across campus that ended in downtown Durham. By then, the number of demonstrators had grown close to two thousand people. Plans were set for students to rally again at 8:00 am the next morning on Thompson Hall lawn. This rally also turned into a march to gather support.

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22 Joe Eszterhas and Michael D. Roberts, Thirteen Seconds: Confrontation At Kent State, 180.  
23 Mayflowers, directed by Gary Anderson (2010; New Hampshire: nhmovies.com). DVD.  
Students were seeking to initiate a mass strike that would not only receive attention from university officials but government officials as well. Jan Clee, chairman of the Whittemore School of Business and Economics, read a telegram at this rally that was to be sent to President Nixon, New Hampshire Governor Peterson, and New Hampshire Senator McIntyre. It read, “We the students, faculty and administration at UNH gathered in front of T-Hall protesting in the strongest possible terms, the violence of the American military forces at home and abroad and the four of our community who have been killed.” It was apparent the student movement taking shape at UNH would grapple with several democratic issues, various forms of authority and reaching compromise within the community. These events would be the beginning of almost a month of demonstrations taking place on the University of New Hampshire campus.

The cry for striking across the UNH campus grew stronger as the days went by. Almost every day, there were meetings, negotiations and demonstrations of faculty and students. A daily pamphlet was created by students to keep students informed. Titled the Strike Daily, this publication outlined a plethora of information for students involved in the strike. Each issue would feature news regarding strikes taking place on campuses across the country including those in Texas, Wisconsin and Washington, DC. It would also highlight campuses located closer to home including Dartmouth College, the University of Vermont, and Brandeis University. The front of the pamphlets would be decorated with political cartoons and thought-provoking messages to help draw in readers (Figures 1-4). In addition to news, the Strike Daily would also have detailed schedules of upcoming events and meetings taking place at UNH. Several issues included letters, op-eds, and transcribed speeches as well. The Strike Daily was well circulated

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26 Ibid.
and allowed UNH students to communicate and spread information quickly and efficiently. This publication demonstrates how dedicated and engaged the students of the University of New Hampshire were to these causes.

One of the earliest issues of the *Strike Daily* details the precise reasons UNH students were striking. The headline on the page reads: “THIS IS A CALL FOR YOU TO JOIN THIS STRIKE AND GET UNH MOVING” (Figure 5). The first reason it lists for the students striking was students seeking control over their own lives on campus. They felt that certain power groups, most notably the University Trustees, controlled the university. Instead, students wanted their peers, the faculty, the administration, and other university employees to be the ones making the decisions that affected them. Some went even further by demanding that students should handle all of the affairs relating directly to them singlehandedly. The comprehensive list of reasons read, “Students and only students should decide matters that affect them alone. This means control over dormitory and dining hall policies, use of student fees, visitation hours, speaking programs, etc.”

Secondly, students sought control of their lives outside of the university, with specific reference to the Vietnam War. The pamphlet says, “We are getting sent to fight an unending war in Indochina. We have no say in policies which determine whether we live or die.” Young people at the time did not even have the right to vote, as the voting age was not lowered to the age of the eighteen until 1971. To address this issue, students felt the best course of action would be to withdraw all American troops immediately and to reconsider the function of the ROTC program on campus. They determined that the ROTC program was providing the military with the leaders necessary to continue the war. The final and most

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28 Ibid.
immediate reason UNH students were demanding a strike was to properly mourn the recent killings of four students at Kent State. The Strike Daily called the event “the murders of four…brothers and sisters.” These motivations align directly with the demands being made across other college campuses and demonstrate how students at the University of New Hampshire were just as aroused and agitated as others. These guiding principles allowed students to rally among each other and decide their course of action moving forward.

In addition to the students at the University of New Hampshire some faculty also took to protesting during this time. One of the most outspoken academic departments on campus was the department of Philosophy. In one of the earliest editions of the Strike Daily, the department made a statement to show their support for students. It read,

The students and faculty of the department of Philosophy have met together in the absence of their chairman and in mourning for the hundreds of thousands of Asians and Americans who have died in the war in Indochina and in mourning for those students who died at Kent State University in Ohio, and in opposition to the continuance of that war. We do resolve that:

1. We are on strike for the rest of the semester; classes and examinations are suspended.
2. The department will design and engage in appropriate activities in this period of mourning.

Following this statement, many departments across the university began reevaluating the future of the spring semester. It was becoming increasingly certain that the students were beginning to shift their full attention to starting a movement. Faculty meetings were called to try and plan a course of action. The first meeting was held on Wednesday May 6th, just two days after the Kent State University shootings; it began at 9:00am but concluded with no resolutions.

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29 Ibid.
After other failed attempts for faculty to decide upon a position, students created a proposal that was to be sent to the faculty outlining their requests. Some of these proposals included:

1. We move that the UNH Faculty declare itself to be in support of an immediate and total withdrawal of U.S forces from Indochina.
2. We move to suspend regularly scheduled activities at the University in view of the national concern over the war in Indo-China and as an act of sympathy for the slain Kent State students. At the same time, we move that the University facilities be kept open and operating in order to devote our time and energy to confronting the national, state, and local issues.
3. We move that the combined faculties of UNH declare Friday, May 8 as a day of mourning for the seven slain Kent State students and that a group of people be charged with planning activities for that day.
4. We resolve that the University community stand together in opposing any attempt to interfere with the rights of free expression and free assembly. In particular, we oppose any and all punitive actions directed against those involved in organizing the appearance of the “Chicago 3” defendants.  

With the deaths of the Kent State students and their plans for the coming weeks at the forefront of their minds, it was important that UNH students received the necessary support from the faculty who were willing to support the movement during this time. Many of the faculty at this time removed their voice from the conversation by refusing to comment or vote on any proposed resolutions. However, there was a small portion of the faculty that advocated for the student movement. The Strike Daily reported that at one of these faculty meetings, “Several faculty members took to the floor to lobby their position that the University cease its normal operations and concentrate on developing provisional programs to better facilitate the goals of the striking students.”  

While these voices did not incite any permanent motion to be passed by the faculty, these professors did not let their voices be silenced when “approximately 50 of the 300 faculty members present walked out in protest.”  

Those faculty publicly in support of students stated it was due to “the atmosphere of intimidation posed by the presence of the

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32 Strike Daily, 5/7/1970
33 Ibid.
striking students.”

Students were frustrated with the lack of support from the majority of the faculty at the university and reluctant to understand their hesitation to support the strike. However, they continued on with the help of a select few faculty.

It was not until May 8th that a resolution was passed by the UNH faculty. The student newspaper at UNH, *The New Hampshire*, detailed this important meeting where an agreement was made by the majority of the faculty. Professor of economics Sam Rosen urged the faculty to “express their sentiments to the students” when he said “show them that we (the faculty) are not light years behind them.”

The resolution that was ultimately passed after several rounds of amending, read as follows,

> The American invasion of Cambodia and the renewed bombing of North Viet Nam have brought severe tensions to this campus, destruction to many others and death to at least one. These circumstances raise an incalculable danger of unprecedented alienation of many of our students and faculty, and the ability of the University to survive in any recognizable sense. Therefore, we support the immediate and total withdrawal of all U.S. forces in Indo-China.

This resolution passed with a final vote of 283 in favor and 123 opposed.

The faculty reaching a final resolution that aligned with the proposals of the students was a crucial step in fostering a movement that would create positive outcomes. With a handful of educated supervisors, the student movement at UNH was able to communicate effectively with officials and avoid disorder. The expertise of the faculty allowed for greater student advocacy in the battles against university administration. The students drove the movement, and those faculty who supported it aided in directing it. At many other institutions across the country, faculty and administration were stridently against any form of protest on college campuses. This conflict

34 Ibid.
35 Lou Ureneck, “UNH faculty approves two major resolution in closed session,” *New Hampshire* (Durham, NH), May 8th, 1970.
36 Ibid.
often made students seek alternative methods of protest and left each side with no effective form of communication. Students at the University of New Hampshire were able to successfully avoid those conflicts and create a movement that garnered the support of some authoritative figures on campus.

During this time, the students took full advantage of the available resources of the university. The Memorial Union Building (MUB) was designated as a “Strike Center”. It was open twenty-four hours a day and housed many of the workshops organized by the students. It also operated as housing for students who wished to be at the center of the movement at all times. A Strike Information hotline was created where students could call and receive the latest updates and have questions about strike related activities answered. Run by volunteers, this hotline was a lifeline and alternate effective form of student communication in addition to the Strike Daily. The university radio station, WUNH, was used to send out important bulletins as well. The students often fell short in funding for their activities and causes. Throughout the strike, funds were limited but necessary for transportation, advertising and other general supplies needed to continue operations. The publication of the Strike Daily alone cost one hundred dollars per issue.\(^{37}\) Outside of UNH, students were seeking funds for matters that would advance their causes. The May 7\(^{th}\) edition of the Strike Daily details a call put out to students to help in fundraising for a council that was purchasing airtime on national television for South Dakota Senator George McGovern. McGovern was outspoken in his opposition to the growing United States involvement in the Vietnam War. The student movement saw him as a strong ally in Congress at the time. His appearance on television would cost $12,000. This plea to students read, “Contributions are desperately needed. Donations can be sent directly to the Council or

brought into the Strike Daily office. This is a golden opportunity for our views to be aired across the nation. Let’s not lose this chance!"\textsuperscript{38} This among other various cries for fundraising were published throughout the run of the \textit{Strike Daily}.

Many of the university’s annual spring activities had to be modified during this time. This included Parents’ Day, a day where parents would typically come to campus to enjoy springtime in Durham prior to students taking final exams and returning home. However, in 1970, students altered this event to accommodate the strike and its missions. The \textit{Strike Daily} published an open letter to parents just days before the scheduled festivities. It read,

Parents’ Day has traditionally been a time for parents and their sons and daughters to get together and share some of the more redeeming aspects of university life. This year, Parents’ Day will be different. For the first time, students, instead of administrators will decide what they want to share with their parents. The University will reflect the real spirit and feelings of its students instead of the traditions that you, as parents, may well recall.\textsuperscript{39}

The student strike impacted all aspects of life at the university. Students reached beyond the university community for support and were sure to not allow for business to continue as usual.

The most definitive effort made by UNH students to bring meaningful protest to campus was the undertaking of bringing some of the notorious Chicago Seven to campus. Activists Jerry Rubin, Abbie Hoffman and David Dellinger were asked to speak to students about free speech and other countercultural ideals. Previously, these men had been three of the seven charged by the federal government with conspiracy and inciting to riot following protests outside of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago. Although after lengthy trials all charges were

\textsuperscript{38} \textit{Strike Daily}, 5/7/1970.  
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Strike Daily}, 5/7/1970.
dropped, these men continued to be controversial figureheads of the anti-war movement. Their presence on the University of New Hampshire campus was unsettling for those already worried about the smaller demonstrations on campus including the university board of trustees and state officials. New Hampshire State Legislator Wilfred Boisvert says that he was “disturbed” by the “publicity being given to these people.” Deeming the Chicago Three convicts, he went on to say that “every time they appeared at some of those schools riots would happen…destruction.” The governor of New Hampshire Walter Peterson even weighed in by warning students saying, “We will deal most severely with anyone who attempts to harm life or property.” The legislature across the state of New Hampshire was concerned with the possibility of these men coming and speaking on what was considered state property. New Hampshire Republican councilors Joseph Acorace of Manchester and Bernard Streeter of Nashua issued a statement voicing their concerns. Printed in the May 3rd edition of the Boston Globe, this statement read, “The Chicago Seven are entitled to think what they may, but they do not have the right to publicly spread their anti-American philosophy from state owned buildings or grounds. In our opinion, the best place for the Chicago Seven to expend their beliefs is a well-used pasture, many miles from New Hampshire.” All of these competing attitudes would complicate the decisions being made on the UNH campus. The board of trustees would go on to deny the students’ request to allow these men to speak on campus and prohibit the Chicago Three from speaking at UNH or any of its facilities. The students refused to abide by this notice and continued to make the plans anyways. Student body president Mark Wefers continuously reiterated to the media and university officials that the appearance of the Chicago Three on the UNH campus was not any attempt to incite

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40 Mayflowers, directed by Gary Anderson (2010; New Hampshire: nhmovies.com). DVD. Time: 7:40
42 Alex Ghiselin, “Students say UNH bars talks by 3 of Chicago 7.” Boston Globe (Boston, MA), May 3rd, 1970; ProQuest Historical Newspaper: The Boston Globe pg. 96A.
violence or acts of lawlessness. Rather, he said, “This is an issue of freedom of speech. It’s not anarchy, it’s not communism, it’s not money. It’s one of your basic constitutional guaranteed rights.” While students had been making plans to prepare for this campus visit for over two weeks, this event became even more significant after the Kent State shootings.

The students’ continued plans led the university board of trustees to acquire a court issued injunction that stated that the Chicago Three could only speak between the hours of 3:30pm and 6:30pm on May 5th. University President John McConnell announced and explained the trustees decisions at a convocation held on Saturday May 2nd that was attended by over two hundred students and faculty. This stipulation made it impossible for the Chicago Three to make it to campus as the trio would not have been able to leave the state of New York by plane prior to 5:30pm due to court commitments. The students and activists decided that this time restriction was in itself a violation of their right to free speech. Mark Wefers “maintained the trustees knew of the three men’s previous commitments and interpreted the decision as a violation of the open campus, free speech policy of the University.” In retaliation, the Chicago Three penned a note for Wefers to read to the crowd that would gather on the afternoon of May 5th. It read:

The conspiracy has come to New Hampshire. We will speak tonight at 7:30 at the Strike Rally. We refuse to be duped by the trustees of the University into compromising the plans made by the strike organizers. There is no such thing as half of free speech. See you tonite.

-Abbie Jerry Dave

Despite the restrictions imposed by the trustees the students continued to bring meaningful protest to their campus. The University Faculty Senate sided with the students on this

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44 Ron Winslow, “ ‘Chicago 3’ are speaking tonight despite Trustees 2-5 p.m. time ruling,” *New Hampshire* (Durham, NH), May 5th, 1970.
issue under the presumption that if university administration did not make facilities available, there would be trouble. The May 5th edition of *The New Hampshire* details the administration’s last effort to reach a solution in an article titled, “University Senate approves motion to make facilities available for ‘Chicago 3’”. In it, Faculty Senator Louis Hudon, Chairman of the French Department, is quoted saying, “It is my opinion, that the subject has been exhausted. The University has no choice but to make arrangements. These three speakers will be here, and if we don’t make any arrangements ourselves, the state police certainly will.”*46* Although rather reluctantly, the faculty agreed to the conditions presented by the students to have the Chicago 3 appear on campus.

The University took measures to ensure the safety of everyone who would be attending this rally, as the campus wellbeing was the top priority. It was important that the students did not feel the event was being unfairly policed or targeted in any way. As a result, it was determined that only campus and town of Durham police officers would be in the vicinity of the Field House during the duration of the event. Dean of student affairs Richard Stevens explained that there would be “six campus policemen and two fire marshals in Lundholm Gymnasium and the lobby, and the Durham police will be used for directing traffic to the event. All policemen will be in “standard” uniform (no sticks will be carried).”*47* This arrangement allowed for the event to be properly monitored without students feeling concerned or intimidated. Also, a group of fifty student marshals were assigned to the responsibilities of maintaining fire aisles, escorting press to a designated area of seating and providing students with paper and pencils to ask questions to

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*46* Dave Whall, “University Senate approves motion to make facilities available for ‘Chicago 3,’” *New Hampshire* (Durham, NH), May 5th, 1970.

the speakers as no floor mics were being supplied. The decision to call in state police was to be made by President McConnell, if necessary. Unlike Kent State University, the New Hampshire National Guard had not been called to the UNH campus and at the time of preparing for this event, a spokesperson for the Adjunct General’s office is quoted as saying that he was “not aware of any plans to deploy them.” With plans set in motion and the arrival of the Chicago 3 quickly approaching, all parties, including the state attorney general were hoping for “a peaceful day in Durham.” Having recently witnessed the dangers and consequences of students and university administration being unable to make concessions that resulted in the violence and student deaths at Kent State, it was understood by both UNH students and administration that coming to an agreement that kept the community safe was imperative. This cooperation among university administration, law enforcement and students to create a safe environment for protest was unique.

On the afternoon of May 5th, 4,000 people gathered at the Field House around 3:30pm waiting for the Chicago 3 to speak (Figure 6). The activists arrived later that evening to speak to students. David Dellinger was the first of the activists to speak (Figure 7). He first apologized to the crowd of students saying, “Sorry we were late, but we were stopped by the police for what just happened to be a routine check up, and ten other cars just happened to go by without being stopped.” He went on to tell the students of the charges brought against him and the other defendants in the Chicago 7 trials. He said the group went to Chicago two years earlier looking to express their right to free speech during the national convention of the Democratic Party. Because the government did not want visible protests, the activists were met with police action.

48 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
Dellinger asserted that the group was convicted of inciting a police riot, but in reality the Nixon administration was right then “carrying on an international riot all over the world.” While condemning the actions of law enforcement and the University Board of Trustees, David Dellinger declared that the goal at this time was “not dissent. Not protest and then going back to life as usual. The goal must be to paralyze the war machine of this country!” He talked of the destruction the United States military forces were causing in Vietnam. Along with many other anti-war activists, Dellinger advocated for a withdrawal of all American troops from the region. He felt that there would be no victory in Indochina and a revolution in the United States was necessary. He stated this revolution would not be accomplished through violence, but rather, by force. It was not the duty of American citizens to blindly adhere to the government’s wishes but instead use their power as free people to reject government policies. It was critical that young people in particular commit to the antiwar effort and refuse serving in the armed forces under the regulations of the draft. Together, all Americans must demand the government recognize the citizens do not support the military conflict in Vietnam. Dellinger touches on the hypocrisy that existed in American culture at the time. In the most impactful portion of his speech he says: “How can you love God whom you have not seen when you do not love your brother whom you have seen? Despite all our indignation to stop the war, we also have to ask ourselves a similar question. How can we love the North Vietnamese whom we have not seen when we do not love the blacks and Panthers whom we have seen?” He concludes his speech saying Americans of different views and lifestyles must come together at this time to prompt any sort of relevant

51 News Staff, “‘Chicago 3’ pack Field House for speech asking students to liberate the University”, New Hampshire (Durham, NH), May 8th, 1970.
53 News Staff, “‘Chicago 3’ pack Field House for speech asking students to liberate the University”, New Hampshire (Durham, NH), May 8th, 1970.
change. Dellinger passed the mic to Jerry Rubin and was met with applause and cheering from the crowd before he sat down.

Jerry Rubin, the second activist to speak, was a leader of the Yippie Party, a radical political group (Figure 8). His messaging to UNH students had a stronger message rooted in his animosity for American economic systems. He also more harshly attacked universities across the country. He compared schooling to toilet training the younger generations to inherit a capitalist society saying, “these places (universities) are like factories and we’re all treated like sh*t. We all know that school is nothing but advanced toilet training. School is to make us little capitalists, consumers, and bureaucrats. They want us to work for grades which, like money, ain’t worth nothin.”^54 His commentary on universities garnered great support from the crowd.

Abbie Hoffman was the last of the activists to speak (Figure 9). Also a leader of the Yippie party, Hoffman’s commentary focused primarily on the injustices occurring in the state of New Hampshire and the unjust court systems in the United States. He declared, “There are not courts left for us except the streets. The courts are here to protect only the people in power.”^55 Hoffman ended his speech with talk of planned protests in Washington scheduled for later that summer.

The men made firm comments about the political climate and those running the government. Throughout the night, students responded positively with hollers and yells of encouragement. They praised the speakers comments about free speech and the war while

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^54 News Staff, "'Chicago 3' pack Field House for speech asking students to liberate the University." New Hampshire (Durham, NH), May 8th, 1970.

^55 Ibid.
standing and clapping. *The New Hampshire* describes how the event came to end. The article titled “‘Chicago 3’ pack Field House for speech asking students to liberate the University” reads,

> The mass of people stood, clapped, gestured for power, shouted and chanted in a tense frenzy. The “Chicago 3” shook hands with people from the audience. Then they left through the back door to address 3000 people who waited outside to see them. Then it was over. Some of the apprehension, tension, and excitement of the evening disappeared. One by one, in pairs, in groups, the people filed out quietly.  

> The men were able to leave the campus without incident and left UNH students even more riled up than before.

While the majority of the UNH campus returned their attention to planning more events and workshops on campus, student body president Mark Wefers was faced with a more pressing issue. While the Chicago 3’s visit to campus was successful and resulted in no violent or serious incidents, it was still a violation of the court issued injunction set forth by the University Board of Trustees. As a result, United States Attorney David A Brock filed for an application to press Wefers with criminal contempt charges at the clerk of the Federal District Court in Concord, New Hampshire on May 6\(^\text{th}\), 1970. This application stated that Wefers “willfully violated the court’s order by permitting then otherwise encouraging Dellinger, Rubin and Hoffman to speak after the 6:30pm time limit without obtaining permission from the Trustees.”  

A subpoena was then issued for Wefers to appear in court (Figure 10). While this motion outlines true statements, student leaders at this time were operating under the discretion of the University Faculty Senate who had passed a motion granting approval for the Chicago 3’s appearance on campus. Despite this, university and state officials were quick to condemn student leaders after the event. After allowing the speakers to appear on campus University President McConnell stated that he

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56 News Staff, “‘Chicago 3’ pack Field House for speech asking students to liberate the University.” *New Hampshire* (Durham, NH), May 8\(^\text{th}\), 1970.

believed that “student leaders violated the court order and should be answerable to the court and the University for this action.”\textsuperscript{58} It was confusing and discouraging for students to receive two starkly different messages from university administration surrounding an event that students deemed necessary and ultimately was a success. State officials including Governor Peterson issued similar statements. Although Peterson “praised the responsibility and common sense of the students” during the visit, he said that in the case that student leaders violated a court order, he “would hope that appropriate actions would be taken at the District Court.”\textsuperscript{59} Wefers believed he had the grounds to prove his innocence and began to assemble a strategy for when he would appear in court. With these condemnations coming down quickly and harshly on Wefers, the university community began to rally around him. A petition began circulating around campus. Over one thousand students signed this petition which read:

Mark Wefers, president of the student body, is being cited for criminal contempt of court regarding the appearance of the “Chicago 3” on the evening of May 5.

First, in accordance with our representative body, University Senate, which passed a number of resolutions supporting: (a) free speech with no time limits; and (b) University facilities to be made available on the evening of May 5; and

Second, the overt action by three fourths of the 4,000 students who left the Fieldhouse on the afternoon of May 5 in response to the “Chicago 3’s” preference to speak in the evening;

We, the undersigned, consider ourselves to be equally responsible and legally accountable for the action which Mark Wefers alone has been accused.\textsuperscript{60}

The university community understood that Wefers was not solely responsible for the appearance of the Chicago 3 and they felt that they should share in the guilt as a result of those actions. A Political Action Committee was created to help organize and fund efforts to support

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{59} Ed Brodeur, "Contempt charge filed against Wefers," \textit{New Hampshire} (Durham, NH), May 8\textsuperscript{th}, 1970.
\textsuperscript{60} News Staff, "Students admit equal legal responsibility with Wefers", \textit{New Hampshire} (Durham, NH), May 8\textsuperscript{th}, 1970.
Mark Wefers’ case. With a court date quickly approaching, the students were prepared to show their support both verbally and physically. A call was put out in the *Strike Daily* a week before Wefers’ scheduled court appearance for students to travel to the district court in Concord to show their support. The memo read, “On Friday May 15th, an assembly will be held in Concord concerning the Mark Wefers trial. All students interested should meet at Snively Arena parking area at 7:30 A.M. Position papers, maps, and further information will be supplied there.” Along with the support of the student community, Wefers also found support in the Faculty Senate. Faculty members believed that Wefers and other student leaders acted in earnest under their directions. The heavily amended resolution that was passed at the end of the Faculty Senate’s meeting on Tuesday May 12th was a show of support for Wefers and explained that the Faculty Senate believed that Wefers should not be singled out and be the only party held responsible for the appearance of the Chicago 3 on campus. The motion acknowledges that student leaders were making decisions that were consistent with the Faculty Senate’s previous motions in support of the right of free speech. The May 15th, 1970 edition of *The New Hampshire* reports that: “In final form the resolution stated that the University gave its support to Mark Wefers in his attempts to carry out previous Senate resolutions concerning the “Chicago 3”. It also urged the University community to give support “as directed by conscience.” President McConnell abstained from voting on this resolution for what he deemed “legal reasons”.

Mark Wefers appeared at the Federal District Court in Concord, New Hampshire on May 15th, 1970. Prepared with the help of his lawyer, William P. Shea of Dover, New Hampshire, and the support of both the Faculty Senate and the UNH student body, Wefers felt confident in his

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ability to prove his innocence in court. United States District Attorney General David A. Brock, who had filed the application to charge Wefers, prosecuted the case. When the hearing began at about 10am, Brock outlined the states approach that would “prove a certain course of conduct, an attitude taken by Wefers and his state of mind” which would demonstrate that he was in contempt of court. Shea immediately moved to have the case dismissed arguing that “The order to ‘show cause’ is too vague and cannot be defended against.” This motion was denied. After ten hours of debating, discussing evidence and calling witnesses, at 7:40pm that evening Judge Bownes dismissed the courtroom. At that time, no decision had been made. Each side was ordered submit written statements of their cases to the court by May 25th.

It was not until almost a month after his first appearance in court that Mark Wefers would receive the decision regarding the charges brought against him. On June 9th, 1970, Wefers was found in contempt by Judge Hugh Bownes. The sentencing included Wefers being issued a fine of $500 or twenty days in jail. Wefers was very surprised by this decision. In a New York Times article published on June 14th, 1970 titled, “A Contempt Order Fought by Student In New Hampshire”, Wefers is quoted saying, “We were naïve enough to actually believe that the university lawyers might try to throw out the case. We just couldn’t understand that anybody might have the audacity to decide when people may speak on a university campus or any other place.” Although it was a disheartening setback for the university community, Wefers and his legal team planned to appeal the decision. After several rounds of appeals and court hearings, over seven months after the Chicago 3 had visited the UNH campus, in December of 1970.

65 Ibid.
Wefers succeeded in having his conviction vacated in the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. While Wefers case was primarily a battle fought in a court thirty five miles from the UNH campus, the support displayed by the faculty and students demonstrated the community values and efforts that drove the antiwar movement on campus to be successful in creating positive change.

The spring semester of 1970 was unlike any the University of New Hampshire had ever seen. Classes and final examinations had been cancelled. Classrooms across campus were instead being used for workshops. Titles included “Restructuring the University,” “The War in Indochina” and “Women and the Strike” and all allowed students to gather and continue planning. With the end of the semester nearing, students began organizing summer initiatives including a “summer work in.”

The summer of 1970 saw a hoard of students who stayed on campus continuing antiwar movement efforts. After much of the commotion had passed the students that remained on campus turned their focus to more local campus issues. This included matters such as the role of the ROTC program on campus, visiting hours in the dormitories, and students involvement in local political campaigns. No large demonstrations took place after May of 1970 and soon the campus returned to its rather mellow demeanor.

Conclusion

It was not long after the spring term that the University of New Hampshire campus returned to an equilibrium that left few traces of the protests. After a summer break that allowed students to leave behind the angst and tension of the previous year, the fall semester began just as

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it had for decades prior. However, the students who returned to campus were transformed. They were empowered with a new sense of responsibility to challenge authority and exert their influence on university operations. They had mastered the tools necessary to organize. Students continued to work to be well informed citizens who used their resources to promote just causes. They understood the meaning of community and the power they inherently held as the generation who would soon be inheriting the world. The anti-war demonstrations launched UNH into the conversation surrounding young people and their reactions to the Vietnam War, foreign policy, constitutional rights, and many other topics. These events altered how students interacted with university administration and the channels through which they could communicate. This movement protected UNH’s long celebrated tradition of promoting free speech and encouraged both the Faculty Senate and the University Board of Trustees to be more in tune to the needs of students. The student action and political polarization on the University of New Hampshire campus was a reflection of what was seen across the United States at the time. Although demonstrations on UNH’s campus may not have garnered crowds in the tens of thousands or made national headlines, they still brought together a significant population ready and willing to have their voices be heard.

The conflict in Vietnam did not end until 1975. By then, nationwide student demonstrations had dwindled. However, the actions of young people did not quickly fade from memory. The student movement left long-lasting impacts on American culture, media, and education. The year 1970 in particular proved to be a year of students leaning on the status quo and working towards a future with greater representation, equality, and opportunities for all people. The movement was widespread, even reaching the corners of rural New Hampshire. Regardless of size, location or notability, college campuses across the United States erupted. It is
evident that the divide among students and people in New Hampshire was just as prevalent as it was anywhere else in the United States. The greater narrative of the student protest era may not highlight the events on the UNH campus but for those students whose college careers were shaped by the spring semester of 1970 and the subsequent students who have called UNH home, these events play a crucial role in understanding the University today. New Hampshire Seacoast cinematographer Gary Anderson describes it best when he says that revisiting this era and studying the events that occurred on the University of New Hampshire campus reminds us of just “how much ordinary people, in ordinary places like this, are capable of.”

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Figures

Figures 1-4

*Strike Daily* publication cover pages distributed on UNH campus in May 1970. *UNH Special Collections and Archives.*
Figure 5

*Strike Daily May 6th, 1970 edition. UNH Special Collections and Archives*

[Image of text]

Figure 6

UNH students gathered at the Field House on May 5th, 1970 to see the ‘Chicago 3’ speak.

*Nicholas Wallner ‘71* [http://unhmagazine.unh.edu/sp10/riot_act.html]
Figures 7-9

Activist David Dellinger, Jerry Rubin and Abbie Hoffman (pictured below in that order) speaking to UNH students on May 5th, 1970.

Nicholas Wallner ’71 http://unhmagazine.unh.edu/sp10/riot_act.html

Figure 10

Student Body President Mark Wefers ’73, seated in the center, is issued a subpoena to appear in court regarding charges related to the appearance of the ‘Chicago 3’ on the UNH campus by U.S. Marshall Victor Cardosi. Wefers hands him a petition signed by more than 2,000 students who asked to be named co-defendants. Students standing in the rear include Dana Gordon ’72, second from left. Richard Lewis ’70 is seated at right. Student with sunglasses on his head is Pete Riviere ’71, then editor of The New Hampshire.

Nicholas Wallner ’71 http://unhmagazine.unh.edu/sp10/riot_act.html
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