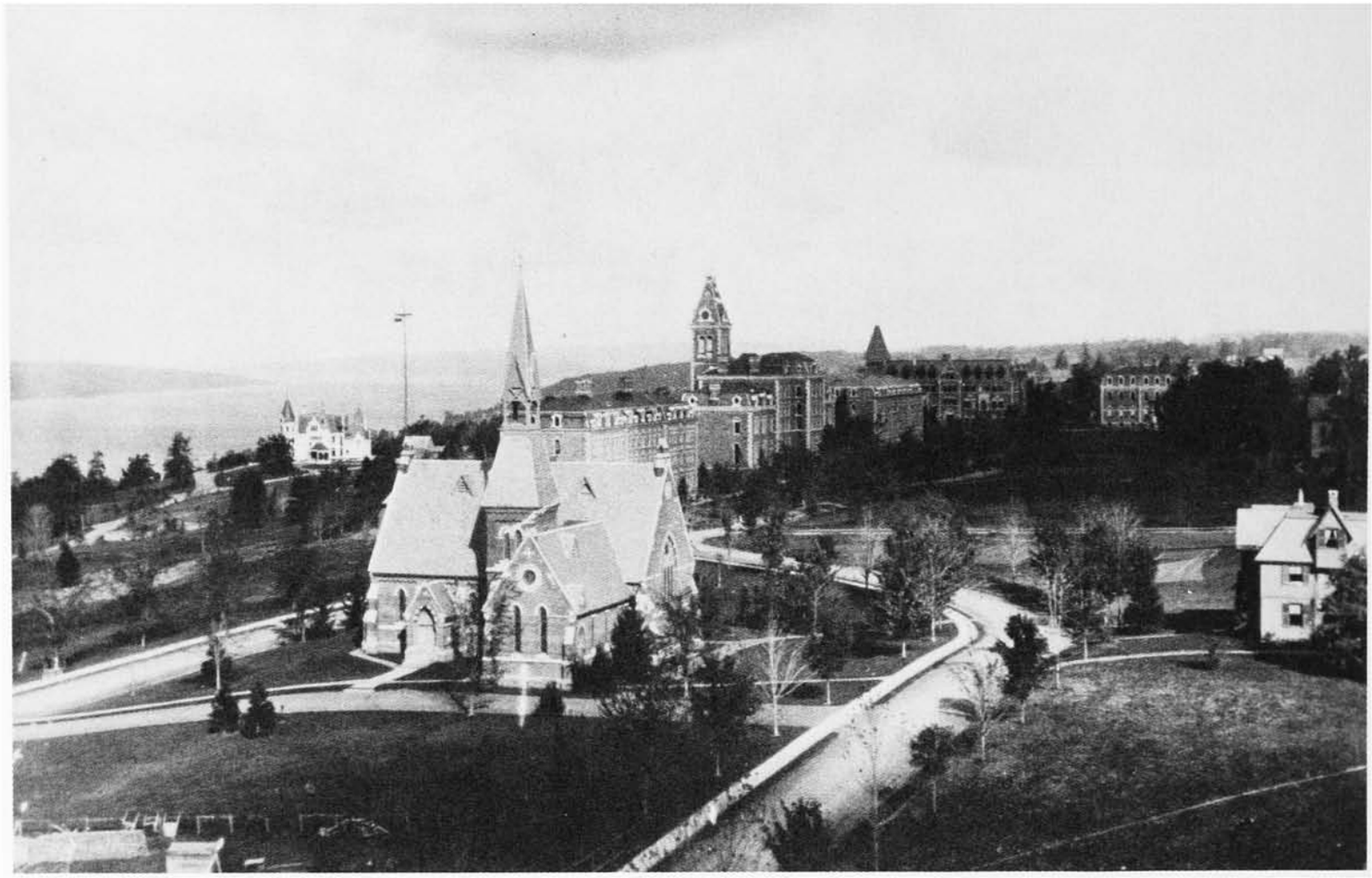


77. Early campus view showing Sage Chapel, the Stone Row, Franklin, Sibley, and the Reverend Charles Babcock's house to the right. At the far left is the McGraw-Fiske mansion.

works) was built in 1880 on thirty acres of land along the south edge of the Fall Creek Gorge.

Campus and Collegetown in 1889

An Ithaca city map dating from 1889 gives us some idea of the campus and Collegetown neighborhoods at that time. On the campus were two fraternity houses, nineteen university buildings (including the dairy house and barn), and twenty-four cottages and private homes, where faculty and students lived, of course.

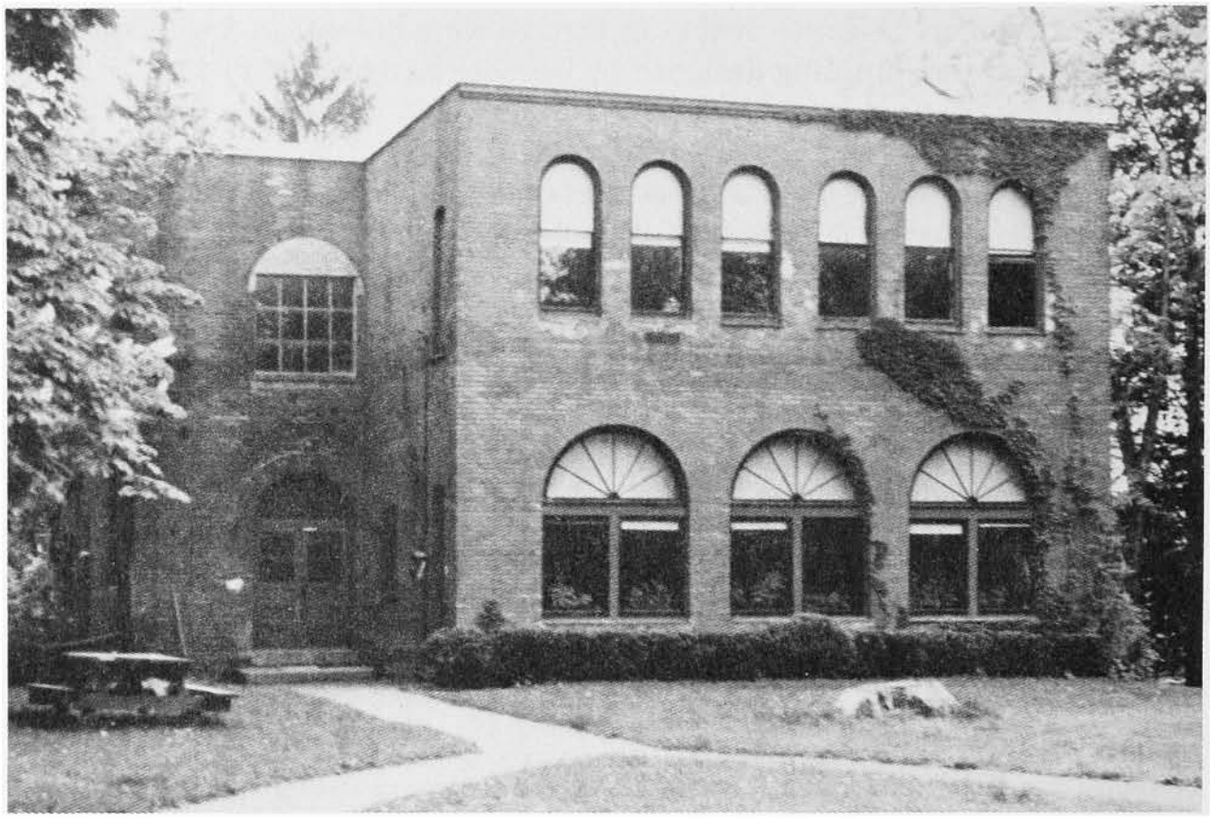
By 1889 almost all the men students were lodged in rooming houses on the hill and down in the newly incorporated city of Ithaca. A few roomed in the faculty cottages. Several makeshift shacks probably stood on the campus, put up by students who could not afford other lodging. One eminent Cornell graduate, David Starr Jordan '72, had lived in such a dwelling, with President White's permission. (Jordan went on to become the first president of Stanford University.)

The few women students of the university were housed in Sage College, a beautiful Victorian building designed by Babcock and opened in 1875. It had a large dining hall, used by both the men and women students, and an elegant Victorian parlor, complete with substantial furniture and potted plants, the setting for Friday night dances. Anna Botsford Comstock, who lived there in the fall of 1875, called it "a beautiful home."[7] It became so successful that in 1876 the university had to construct a large addition to provide housing for fifty more women.

On the far northwest corner of the campus stood the palatial McGraw-Fiske mansion, for a time the object of bitter legal battles between the university and Willard Fiske and eventually (1896) purchased by Chi Psi fraternity. To the south, where Gannett Clinic stands today, were three cottages, one of which was owned by T. F. (Teefy) Crane, an Ithaca lawyer by trade who was pressed into service as librarian and German professor. He liked his new occupation so well he stayed on at the university, switched chairs with the professor of Romance languages, and ended up teaching French, Spanish, and Italian thereafter; he went on to became the first dean of the Arts College. Other faculty members on the campus were the Reverend Babcock (as well as being a professor and architect, he was ordained and conducted Episcopal services at Sage Chapel); James Law (the Scottish horse doctor who was the first professor of veterinary medicine); philosophy professor and future president Jacob Schurman; Liberty Hyde Bailey, one of Cornell's most renowned professors; mathematics professor Lucien Wait; President Adams; and former president Andrew Dickson White.

The university already had Sage Chapel, dedicated in 1875, for religious services. Barnes Hall was built in 1887 with funds raised by students and faculty for a Christian Association building; it contained a student lounge, a reading room in the west wing, and a theater which was then, as now, a favorite place for special lectures, small-scale dramatic presentations, and recitals. On the site of Uris Library (which, together with its tower to house Jennie McGraw's bells, was not completed until 1891) stood a weather signal. Generally, the East Hill campus was open and had very few trees, except for a heavy pine woods north of Cascadilla Gorge. And farther down on the hill was Ezra Cornell's villa, finally completed in 1875 and occupied by his widow, Mary Ann, and daughter Mary Emily. The house stayed in the family until 1911, when it was sold to Delta Phi fraternity.

Across the wooden bridge that linked campus and village was a growing community. A second wooden bridge crossed Willow Pond, often referred to as the Reservoir. Along the gorge and millrace to the east was a lovely path, enjoyed by local people over the years. In his memoir of childhood days in Ithaca, the Reverend S. J. Parker recalled that in 1829 he had walked along the "raceway that is now a pleasant path up to the 'Eddy Stone Dam.'"[8] Nearby was a lot on the corner of Oak Avenue and Summit Street, owned by Lucien A. Wait, Cornell professor of mathematics, waiting for the two buildings of the Cascadilla School to go up the next year (1890). The school had been founded in 1870 by Professor Wait, to prepare students for entrance into the university.



78. The brick classroom building called Wait Hall at the Cascadilla School, designed by William Henry Miller and built in 1890.

It moved several times—headquarters for a while were at Cascadilla Hall—and assumed several forms: a four-year high school accepting boarding students, then a day preparatory school. It ceased operations for a while. In 1946 the brick building at Oak Avenue and Summit Street was bought by Maxwell Kendall, who started up the school again. Accredited by SUNY and the Board of Regents, it now offers programs for its fifty-some regular students, half of whom are boarders, and gives public high school students of the area the opportunity to take courses—some accelerated—in preparation for college.

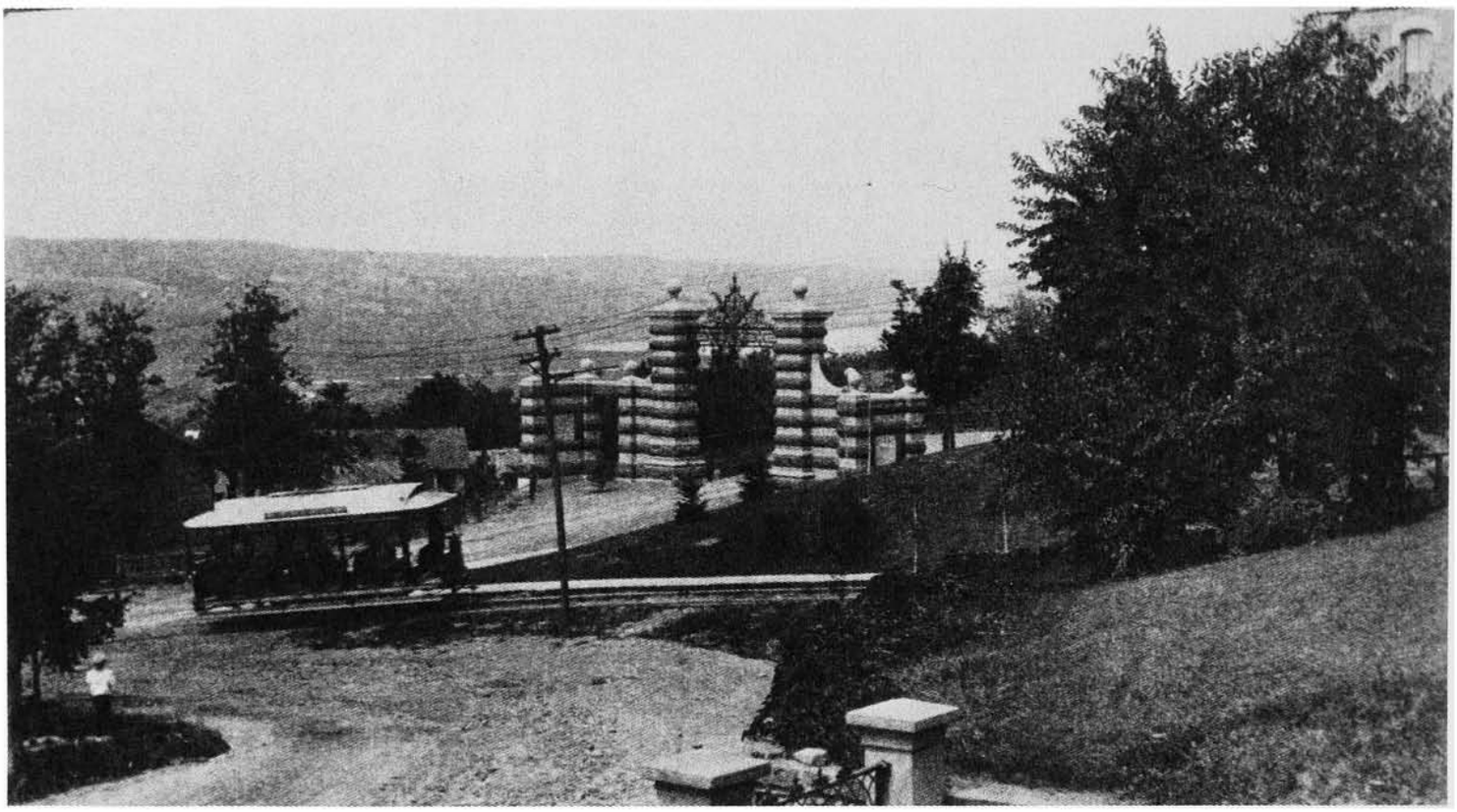
To the west of the wooden bridge were Cascadilla and its neighboring mansion, called Corson Place by its owner, Hiram Corson. In the area bounded by Eddy Street to the west, the gorge to the north, Hazen Street (Linden Avenue today) to the east, and State Street to the south were fifty-nine residences, including two fraternity houses (one on Eddy and one on Huestis Street). Huestis Street, which in 1909 was given the name of College Avenue, was named for Lorenzo Scott Huestis (sometimes spelled Heustis), a gardener and farmer who had a large house and piece of land opposite present-day Catherine Street. The Cook family owned a wide tract between Eddy and Huestis streets and used part of their property for several large greenhouses (Cook was listed in the city directory as florist and speculator). Ezra Cornell's son Franklin owned the entire area between Eddy, State, Blair, and Catherine streets (this last named for one of the Cook daughters), and his daughter Mary Emily held two pieces at the top of Eddy Street. Music dealer James T. Newman owned three houses at the top of Huestis Street, the most northern of which (No. 411) was

79. Catherine Street about 1900, showing the last of the Cook family's greenhouses. Photograph courtesy of Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cornell University Libraries.

rented to Beta Theta Pi fraternity and was home to as many as seventeen of the society's members. It also served as a house for Kappa Sigma until it became a general boardinghouse. Farther south down the street, at the present-day No. 140, was a Snaith house (John Snaith, an architect and builder who held the main contract for Sage Chapel, owned several buildings on the street), a substantial brick residence that survived a serious fire and, after many changes and significant remodeling, stands today—refurbished in late-nineteenth-century style and completely renovated—as a bed and breakfast establishment called the Peregrine House. The present-day Orchard Place was designated only as Proposed Street and was sketched as a through street on the 1889 map. Hazen Street already had several large houses where boarders lived.

Changes in the 1890s

The 1890s brought important changes to both the university and Collegetown communities. Among those that most affected daily life were improvements in transportation. During Cornell's early years, many students lived



80. The Eddy Gate and the trolley coming around the curve on its way to the campus. Cascadilla Hall is in the right corner.

down the hill in the village and reached the campus on foot via the Bone-Yard Cut (by crossing Cascadilla Creek at the bottom and climbing up along the north side of the gorge and through the village cemetery). By 1876 a horse-drawn omnibus that left from the Clinton House six times a day came up the hill to Cascadilla. The trip took half an hour. In 1893 the Ithaca Street Railway ran a single track up East Hill, and the first trolley car made the climb on January 28, 1893. The trolley rail entered the campus over a bridge, built the same year. Then a spur was added, bringing public transportation to the center of the campus. Not only did the trolley service make it easier for students living downtown to get to the university, it opened the way for greater development of the community at the southern end of the campus.

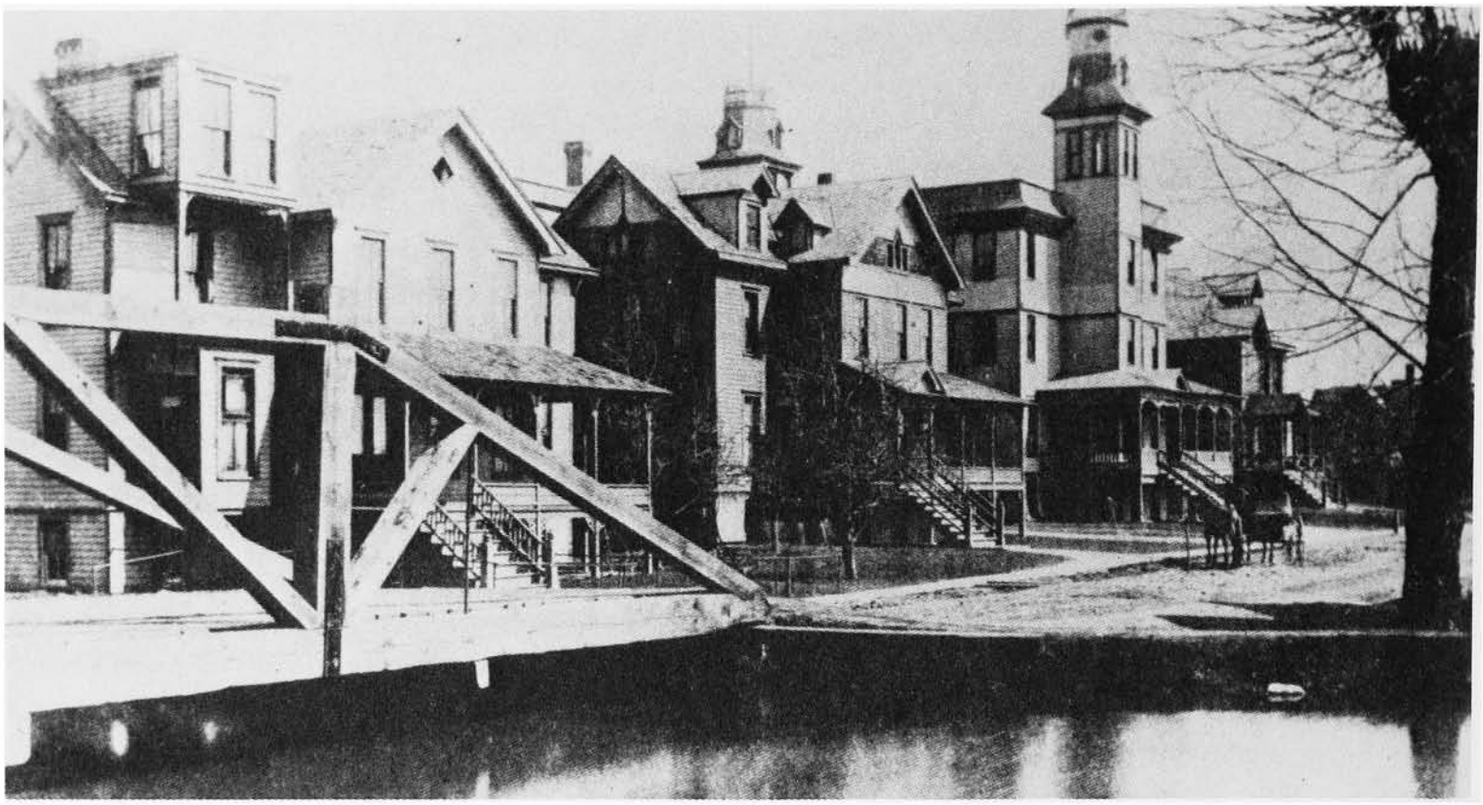
In May 1895 the *Ithaca Journal* reported that university and local authorities had reached an agreement to fill up Willow Pond and to extend Huestis Street and Oak Avenue: "Residents of that vicinity are in high glee over the happy occurence [*sic*]." (The dam was allowed to silt over, and the area today is the site of the university's tennis courts.) In 1896 a beautiful stone arch was constructed at this entrance to the campus, a gift of benefactor William Henry Sage. Around the same time, the university built a hydraulic laboratory at the site of Triphammer Falls and constructed a new dam above the water fall, replacing the old one constructed in the late 1830s by the young Ezra Cornell. The original dam had created Beebe Lake, a place of recreation for students and townspeople alike for many years.

81. Skating on Beebe Lake.

The year 1896 also marked the construction of a Collegetown landmark, the picturesque and impractical entrance gate at the top of Eddy Street. The gift of Andrew Dickson White, Eddy Gate is located directly below White's old rooms in Cascadilla Hall. Designed by William Henry Miller and constructed of alternating layers of sandstone and limestone, the gate was immediately dubbed "Andy White's layer cake." Today, the gate is closed to traffic.

Thus, before the turn of the century, Collegetown had developed into a bustling community. Just across the bridge small businesses sprang up to serve the student population: barbershops, food markets, restaurants, bookstores, pharmacies, a saddler and harness shop, and shoemakers, to name a few. The Student Agencies (complete with a horsedrawn laundry wagon) was located for a while at 405 Eddy Street; their advertising motto was "We treat your linen white." A truly perennial institution, this organization provided work for poor students and its profits helped them to meet their educational costs; it achieved its greatest success dealing with piles of laundry.

In the 1890s homeowners of the area were providing housing for many Cornell students, as they have continued to do through the years. By this time Huestis Street was already lined with large houses, designed to accommodate students. On the east side of the street between the pond and Dryden Road were four frame houses, with tall basements for student lodgings and long flights of steps up to the main entrance. Builders favored large houses, com-



82. The east side of Huestis Street (College Avenue) between Willow Pond and Dryden Road. On the right, the Brunswick, at No. 407, was built in 1887 by James Newman and featured three full stories and a full basement, not to mention a tower.

plete with towers, which not only provided many student rooms but presented a grandiose appearance. By the early twentieth century these four houses alone accommodated almost sixty student roomers, plus proprietors, janitors, cooks, and servants. Boarding rates were relatively inexpensive, and waiters in white jackets served the meals. More often than not the boardinghouses were run by women. For example, Mrs. Martha Warren, a widow, lodged five students at what is now 217 Linden Avenue. Her daughter Mary owned the enormous, five-story Grand View House at 209 College Avenue. Mary fed close to one hundred students three times a day and in addition kept the upper rooms for boarders. Her house was remodeled into ten apartments with steam heat in 1915; today it still has student accommodations.

Fires on the Hill

Because rooms on the campus had kerosene lamps and lacked running water, fire was always a serious concern. Many of the large wooden structures in Collegetown, filled with student and faculty roomers on every floor, also presented enormous fire hazards. Fires on East Hill were rampant, and most of them caused serious damage because the only fire-fighting apparatus available was located downtown and took twenty or thirty minutes to get up the hill.

Also, until the end of the century, there was only one hydrant, located on Cascadilla Place.

After its incorporation, the city of Ithaca—along with the university—began to play a greater role in regulating safety and sanitary conditions up on the hill. Requirements concerning fire escapes and provisions for adequate water supply were established by the turn of the century. In 1895 a firehouse for Company No. 9 was built on Dryden Road, on the location of the present bank building parking lot. Its name was Neriton Fire Company No. 9, and five alarm boxes were installed on East Hill.

Despite these measures fires continued to claim buildings on the hill. In January 1899 Kappa Alpha fraternity house burned to the ground, and a year later Delta Chi, at 315 Huestis Street, met the same fate. The city acquired that property in 1905 and built a brick structure to house additional fire apparatus on the hill; this was the well-known "Nines" station. In December 1906 the magnificent McGraw-Fiske mansion, which by that time belonged to Chi Psi fraternity, was also totally destroyed by fire. And in 1907 a disastrous fire—the most serious since the downtown conflagration of 1871—consumed most of the western side of Eddy Street, between Buffalo and Williams streets. The block, developed by the McAllister family, consisted of two buildings with shops on the ground floor and flats above. Luckily there were no deaths among the residents—the owners and their families, two Cornell faculty members, one doctor—but they lost a total of eight pianos! Also destroyed were the John A. Chacona Candy Company store, the Student Laundry Agency, a meat market, a men's clothing store, a grocery store, a shoe repair shop, and the Cascadilla Pharmacy, the first drugstore on the hill. The total damage was estimated at $100,000.

Even before these disasters, developers were taking steps to meet the need for safer, more fireproof dwellings, not to mention more rooms for students. In 1903 Charles L. Sheldon '90 constructed a private men's dormitory, located on the site of the twice-burned East Hill House. The brick building, known as Sheldon Court, was advertised as fireproof and boasted modern lavoratory facilities and tennis courts. Sheldon Court housed 135 students in single rooms and suites. It also contained the original Triangle Book Store, one of Collegetown's enduring businesses, a doctor's office, and a restaurant known as Mother's Kitchen.

The old wooden rooming houses on College Avenue were also replaced by a more solid structure of concrete. Designed by local architect John Wilgus, the Chacona Block at 411–413–415 College Avenue was put up in 1911–12. It featured stores on the ground floor and second- and third-story flats—units with bedroom, bath, and kitchen all on one floor.

Collegetown in the Twentieth Century

In the first half of the twentieth century Collegetown did not change a great deal. The area nearest the campus provided shops and services for the students.

83. World War I parade on Eddy Street. The picture shows several area businesses, including the Cascadilla Pharmacy, rebuilt after the fire of 1907.

All the way up the hill to the No. 9 Fire Station on College Avenue were private houses; toward the campus there were many large and small rooming houses, with apartments rented by students and lower-level faculty. College Avenue was still a narrow street, lined with large shade trees; it did not take on a different appearance until after World War II, when it was widened and most of the trees were removed.

The Collegetown population by and large was working class. Many of the area's residents were immigrants who had established successful businesses there; others were faculty families. As in the 1890s, some wives and widows continued to take in boarders to make ends meet. The diversity of the neighborhood can be suggested by a list of some Collegetown residents during the twenties and thirties: an insurance man, who rented rooms above his office, the Cornell athletic doctor, the city's postmaster, a pharmacist who worked in the drugstore, a tutor, a tailor, grocery store help, restaurant managers.

The area nearest the campus, with its various shops and services for students, remained the neighborhood's commercial center. At the top of College Avenue was Pop's Place, run by Constantine Manos from 1926 to 1939, and then by a succession of owners until it closed in 1977. At first advertised in the city directory as a confectioner's and ice cream store, it expanded to a restau-

rant sometime in the fifties. Its mosaic tile floor can still be seen (in present-day Oliver's). Area residents remember the restaurant's violin-playing machine, which later ended up in the parish hall of the Oak Avenue Lutheran Church next door. The Petrillose family ran various businesses, including a laundry and a barbershop, and that renowned establishment, Johnny's Big Red Grill, in business from 1919 until it closed in 1981. On the west side of College Avenue was Gillette's Cafeteria ("Everyone ate at Gillette's") and Sheldon Court. The building had been inherited by Sheldon's son and daughter. The latter, taking the name of Dove Peace, became a follower of the charismatic black religious leader Father Divine, and when she died, her half interest in the building passed to the religious group. In 1948 Evan J. Morris, the owner of the Triangle Book Store, purchased Sheldon Court from the Angels of Father Divine and in 1955 sold the building to Cornell University. Another story was added in 1981 and the building was renovated at that time. Today it is a college dormitory with shops on the ground floor.

For many years, Collegetown had various grocery stores—the Larkin brothers' store and the Market Basket are fondly remembered—and, later on, an A & P and Egan's IGA. Fletcher's Dry Cleaning establishment was located for years on Dryden Road. On College Avenue were a beauty shop, a candy store, and the perennial Student Agencies (still in operation and specializing these days in summer storage services and small refrigerators for student rooms). A post office was down on Eddy Street.

On the present-day "bank corner" was the Hill Drug Store; some Ithacans still dream of the peanut butter sundaes to be had at its soda fountain. It opened in 1903 as the Merrill Company and was located at 320 Huestis Street until 1909, when it moved to 328 College Avenue and became the Hill Drug Store. For years it was managed by two men who had started out as clerks and pharmacists. When the store burned in 1959, the owners relocated at 408 College Avenue; a new store opened in 1976 at 309 College Avenue.

Another Collegetown institution, the Fontanas, opened their first shoemaking shop in 1907 at 316 College Avenue. It was operated by Cesare Fontana, just over from Italy. In 1923 his son, Alfred, came over and started an independent store at 405 Eddy Street; the father and son, who lived under the same roof and shared expenses, could not see eye to eye about the business. Alfred's son, Caesar, came into the store on Eddy Street in 1953, and his son, Steve, took it over in 1981. Today the Fontana store sells new shoes and still manages a booming shoe repair business.

The Triangle Book Store, one of Collegetown's most enduring commercial enterprises, remained in its original location in Sheldon Court even after the university purchased the building. In 1965 Robert Johnson, who had bought the business from Evan J. Morris in 1956 and also ran the store, moved it to its present location at 403 College Avenue, site of the former Egan's IGA grocery. He sold it in 1986 to the Nebraska Book Company.

The Turk Brothers, David and Seymour, opened a shop in 1953 on College Avenue across from the present Triangle Book Store. Their first enterprise was a very successful laundry, but in the late sixties, with, as one brother said,

the "change in fashion, no haircuts, no dressing up," they went into selling used clothes and army surplus. In the early 1970s they changed their merchandise to Cornell clothing, T-shirts and sweatshirts (currently popular as items to swap and send to friends), with some sporting goods and sneakers. The Turk Brothers moved to their new location at 328 College Avenue in 1980.

Another integral part of the neighborhood through the years has been the Lutheran Church on Oak Avenue. The church first organized in 1913, holding the first Lutheran service in Ithaca, and indeed the first in the county, for over one hundred years. The initial group, mainly students and a few faculty and townspeople, was associated with the university Christian Association and held campus services in Barnes Hall. When the Reverend William M. Horn was called to lead the church in 1918, the Lutherans rented the former residence of Hiram Corson, at 118 Dryden Road, and called it the manse. The pastor and his family lived in the northern half, the chapel was set up in the southern half. Besides offering two Sunday services, the manse was open every day until 10 P.M. and had a reading room, plus a pool and billiard room. In 1923 ground was broken for the new church on Oak Avenue, which was dedicated in June 1925. For several years Reverend Horn and a few church members operated a radio station, WLCI. When Mr. Horn died in 1932, all the stores in Collegetown closed for the funeral service. The parsonage was remodeled to make three rental apartments as well as a home for the pastor, and in the late 1950s it was converted into a parish house. The church joined Cornell United Religious Work in 1955 and has supported a part-time Protestant chaplain at Ithaca College. And over the years the basement of the parish house has been the setting for many lively discussions in a coffeehouse called The Unmuzzled Ox.

The Collegetown neighborhood also includes the Presbyterian Mission Apartment complex on Catherine Street, built in 1952 to provide housing for missionaries who have come for study at Cornell or Ithaca College or for special service before returning to the field. Open to all missionaries, agricultural specialists, and food and community development leaders, the apartments offer reasonably low rents, generally for one year, and are managed by volunteer leaders from the First Presbyterian Church in Ithaca.

The University in the Twentieth Century

Unlike Collegetown, the campus community has grown and changed significantly since the turn of the century. In 1914 the university finally moved to provide housing for many students; the dormitory complex down the hill from the quadrangle and across West Avenue was completed in 1916. The residence halls, known as Baker Dorms, were constructed in an English Gothic style and originally provided rooms for men students only. Today, however, they are home to both male and female students, particularly incoming freshmen. The Memorial dorms were added to the complex later and dedicated in 1931.

Scattered over the university area are the many fraternity houses that accommodate chapter members. Several of these elegant houses date from the nineteenth century and were designed by William Henry Miller. The frater-

nities have played a prominent role throughout the university's history, a role that has not always fostered a favorable reputation. They have hosted many drunken parties, played evil and dangerous pranks, and encouraged discrimination against fellow students, both men and women. Efforts have been made to curb their influence, for many critics felt that students in fraternities devoted far too much time to fraternity activities. During their heyday in the 1950s, the fraternities boasted over sixty active houses at Cornell. As of 1988, the number has dropped to forty-seven. Today there are sixteen active sorority houses that provide a living center for women students. Present-day fraternities are all involved in community work and service—canvasing for the United Way appeal, collecting donations for heart and cancer crusades, sponsoring fund-raising campaigns. Every year Phi Kappa Psi sponsors a race through Collegetown and the campus called the Phi Psi 500.

The student body, which numbered 2,000 in 1898, had grown to 5,015 by 1912. This increase necessitated more buildings and produced more changes: Rockefeller Hall was built in 1906, taking the place of several faculty cottages. The first building of the Agriculture College went up in 1906, followed by others. In 1911 a cafeteria was opened in the Home Economics building, giving students a chance for a good meal and a social center. Bailey Hall, a concert hall that also serves as an auditorium for large lectures, was built in 1913. Funds left by Willard Straight '01 (a dominant campus personality in his time and a distinguished diplomat and public figure) financed the student union building, which was erected and dedicated in 1925. Its terrace provided a mess hall for Army troops during World War II, and to this day its theater offers plays for university and neighboring audiences. In 1945 Cornell acquired a badly needed administration building, Day Hall, which took with it Professor Babcock's house, the first house built on the campus. The construction of the Statler in 1950 required the demolition of four more houses. The last house erected on the campus, the James Law house built in 1873, north of the President's House, was first moved in 1905, but in 1962 it too was torn down.

Thus the campus community lost its residences one by one. Forest Park was sold to Cornell University in 1929 and became a "residential facility" for the graduating class in architecture. It was torn down to make way for the Delta Tau Delta chapter house in the early 1960s. Only Ezra Cornell's villa and the Andrew Dickson White House remain. The former, known as Llenroc, is now the Delta Phi fraternity house. The latter, after serving as the home for Cornell presidents, became the university art museum in the 1960s. When the Herbert F. Johnson Museum was built in the early 1970s, the Andrew Dickson White House underwent extensive renovations and became the home of Cornell's Society for the Humanities.

University and Collegetown Ties

Over the years, the Collegetown neighborhood as well as Ithaca at large has benefited from the presence of Cornell in many ways—practical, educational, recreational, and cultural. Thanks to physics professor William A. Anthony,

who strung a telegraph wire from the campus down to the foot of College Avenue in 1877, Ithaca was one of the first places in the entire country to have telephone service. And because Anthony and his colleague George S. Moler built an electric dynamo, the campus had arc lights as early as 1875; they could be seen from West Hill. In the 1880s the weather station on the site of Uris Library guided sailors on Cayuga Lake. The home economics courses conducted by Martha Van Rensselaer in the early 1900s provided training in home management for many an Ithaca housewife. And following the great flood of July 1935 the Drill Hall provided a refuge for seven hundred evacuees for four nights.

The campus has long been the scene for celebrations, starting with the first Founder's Day party (Ezra Cornell's birthday) in January 1869. While a blizzard raged outside, the halls, stairs, and corridors of Cascadilla Hall were jammed with university members and townspeople. All Ithacans had been invited, and apparently most of them came for a big Thanksgiving-style dinner and dancing. In 1875 when the Cornell crew won in the intercollegiate races at Saratoga, an Arch of Victory, with the enormous words, GOOD BOYS, was put up just across the Cascadilla Gorge from the campus, welcoming home the victorious rowers. A huge student parade up Eddy Street sent the crew off to Henley in 1895. Spring Day parades were part of the campus scene from the early days up until World War I. Parades through Collegetown continued over the years, as late as the 1960s, complete with bands and fraternity floats.

Cornell's recreational, educational, and cultural contributions to the city have been various and numerous: the campus bells, whose daily chiming can be heard downtown as well as in Collegetown; the grassy areas up on the hill; the flower gardens on Tower Road and the herb and rose gardens at the Plantations; Statler Hall, with its facilities for lodging and its auditorium for concerts, stage shows, and movies; the Bailey Hall concerts; the university classes and public lectures; the farm days, and, more recently, such events as the Veterinary School open house and the Plantations "Fall-In"; the skating, in the early days at Beebe Lake, later at Lynah Rink; the many sporting events.

For children growing up in Collegetown in particular during the 1920s through the 1940s, the proximity of Cornell offered special recreational advantages: picnics up on the campus; swimming, toboggan slides, and skating on Beebe Lake. Public transportation signaled good skating conditions with a red ball (anyone carrying skates got to ride for half price).

The ties between Cornell and Collegetown are also attested to in literary outpourings—scenes described by such writers as Thomas Pynchon, E. B. White (called Andy, as was any student who came bearing the first president's name), Alison Lurie, and especially the late Richard Fariña, whose novel *Been Down So Long It Looks Like Up to Me* vividly describes student life in the 1960s. Peter Yarrow '59 sang at Johnny's Big Red Bar and Grill before he went on to fame as part of the trio Peter, Paul and Mary.

But the closeness of campus and Collegetown has created problems too. Pranks, drunken misbehavior, drug dealing and drug abuse, and recklessness on the part of boisterous young people have frequently angered local residents.

And many feel today that unwelcome changes in the neighborhood are caused by the university and its students. As early as May 1911 the university enacted its first speed law, 10 miles per hour on the campus, and in June 1916 the trustees' report stated that they would have to take up the "matter of providing on the campus parking facilities for autos." As the number of students, the number of cars, and the number of students who own cars have increased over the years, the problems of parking and of crowding have become especially acute in the Collegetown area. Merchants and residents alike have appealed for more spaces and stricter regulations. Now, in the 1980s, the new parking garage on Dryden Road (inaugurated by long-time parking advocate Robert Johnson of the Triangle Book Store) and probable regulation of residential parking offer at least a partial alleviation of that problem.

Conclusion

Collegetown has taken on a new look in the 1980s. Despite confusion, delays, and considerable disruption, the streets are being improved, the Cascadilla dorms and Sheldon Court have been renovated by the university, and the new parking garage and apartment complex have been completed. After the student unrest in the late 1960s, when events on the Cornell campus shook not only the university's neighbors but the entire world; after riots in Collegetown when a permit for a block party was turned down; after scenes of spaced-out drug users, the 1980s have brought a cleaner, brighter aspect to the area. The main streets now display new store fronts, brick-trimmed sidewalks, park benches, both new and old businesses concerned with maintaining an attractive appearance. The Collegetown Neighborhood Council, established to bring a political organization to the area, has put out a "Good Neighbor Handbook" that gives a short history of the area and provides newcomers with important information about landlord/tenant relations, parking regulations, fire safety, and crime prevention. And in observance of the Ithaca centennial year, the council has sponsored cleanup days to aid in beautification of the neighborhood. In the spirit of friendship and local pride, local residents, both permanent and transient, are being urged to help work toward a better neighborhood. Collegetown now anticipates the refurbishing of the Eddy Gate, the repaving of Eddy Street and the addition of brick trim, and continued commercial revitalization. And what could be more exciting than the new university building, rising on the boundary of the campus and Collegetown, just to the east of Cornell's first home, Cascadilla Hall. The Center for the Performing Arts will open in Ithaca's centennial year, offering a new resource for all Ithacans and a beautiful tribute to the shared history of the university and Collegetown neighborhoods.

10 Cornell Heights

Carol U. Sisler

In 1899 Franklin Cornell, Ezra's son, observed, "The land across the gorge is the grandest and best in this country for residences. It is an ideal place." And, he predicted, "Some time the campus people will burst across the gorge in a stream and make those lands the choicest in Ithaca."[1] He was right. The campus people did burst across the gorge. Developed privately by Edward G. Wyckoff, the property across Fall Creek Gorge north of Cornell University was annexed by the city in May 1903. Cornell Heights became Ithaca's first suburb.

Although Wyckoff envisioned a quiet, residential area for professors and businessmen, less than seven years after the first houses were completed one of them had been given to an agricultural fraternity, and within eleven years, Cornell University's first large dormitory, Prudence Risley Hall, was constructed.

Edward G. Wyckoff was the son of William O. Wyckoff, a court stenographer who in 1877 became enamored of a new invention—the typewriter. Born in Lansing in 1835, William O. Wyckoff worked in Ithaca for the distinguished jurist Judge Douglass Boardman. He recorded court testimony in shorthand that his secretary, Mary A. Adsitt, transcribed in longhand. He purchased three typewriters from E. Remington Sons and Company of Ilion, New York. When his secretary became proficient with the machine, she was viewed as a modern wonder. She eventually opened the Phonographic Institute at 149 East State Street, Ithaca, where she taught others to type.

Joining with Clarence W. Seamans and Henry H. Benedict of Ilion, Wyckoff purchased the rights to the typewriter from Remington, opened an office in New York City, and marketed not only an improved typewriter but also office supplies and furniture. As more women learned to type at the Phonographic Institutes, which opened throughout the United States, being a typist in an office became a respectable female occupation. Wyckoff became a wealthy man. Among his projects was the construction of a sixty-four-room, $100,000 summer house on Carleton Island in the Thousand Islands. The house was only recently completed when he died of heart failure in July 1895.

His fortune was inherited by his sons Edward, then 28, and Clarence, 19. They had been born and had lived in Ithaca until the family moved to New York City. Edward attended Cornell University, but when he married Edith

84. Fall Creek Gorge and the bridge at Stewart Avenue, showing the old power plant of the Ithaca Street Railway Company, ca. 1900. Photograph courtesy of Department of Manuscripts and University Archives, Cornell University Libraries.

Clymer in 1888, he left his studies to become the agent for his father's company in Syracuse. Clarence graduated from Cornell in 1898.

As wealthy young men they contributed financially to Admiral Robert Peary's efforts to conquer the North Pole. Edward went to the 1896 Henley Regatta in England, fished for muskellunge in the St. Lawrence, and cruised on his seventy-six-foot steam yacht, the *Ezra Cornell*. He raised and exhibited hybrid chickens.

Cornell Heights

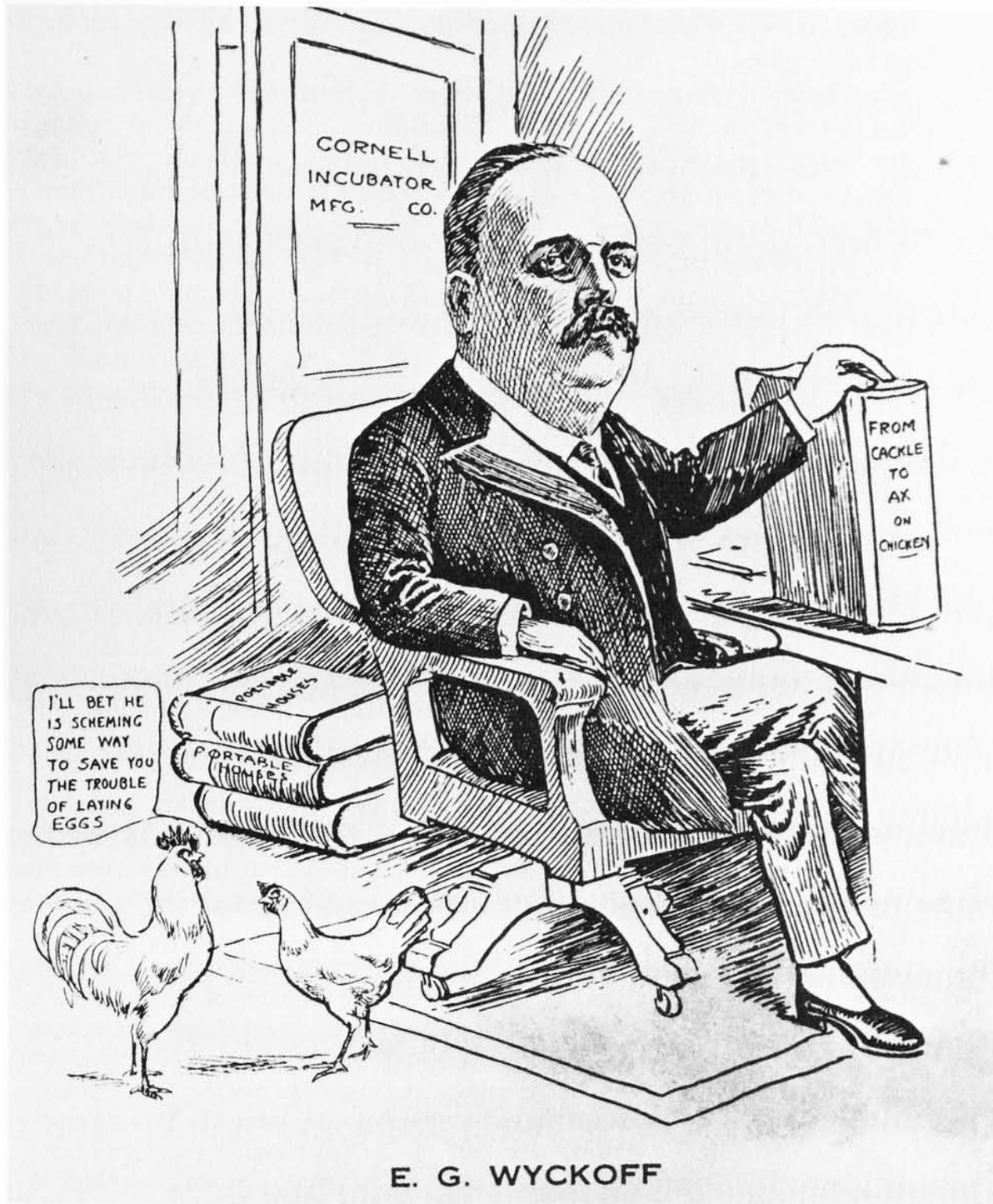
In 1897 Edward decided to develop the land across the gorge, undeterred by the realization that he had to erect two bridges across the gorge and purchase a controlling interest in the Ithaca Street Railway Company. The land he bought from Franklin Cornell and Herman Bergholtz, electrical engineer for the trolley company, was farmland, essentially cleared of trees and shrubs—a surprising fact given the verdant leafy cover one sees in the Heights today. Wyckoff engaged William Webster, a landscape architect from Rochester, to plan the streets and select the trees to border them. Departing from the grid system of

85. The Eddy Street trolley rounds The Knoll, ca. 1920. Photograph by Seth Sheldon.

downtown Ithaca, Webster followed the contours of the land with curving dirt roads. Some were named for Cornell professors: Robert H. Thurston, director of Sibley College of Engineering; Lucien A. Wait, professor of mathematics; Isaac P. Roberts, director of the College of Agriculture. Triphammer Road was named for the power-operated hammer that worked in a mill constructed many years ago underneath the bridge site. And, of course, a street was named for Wyckoff.

The Groton Bridge and Manufacturing Company began to build the Triphammer (or Thurston Avenue) Bridge on July 15, 1897. Costing $10,000, it was made wide enough to accommodate the streetcar tracks, carriages, and a sidewalk. It was finished in January 1898. Stewart Avenue (or lower Fall Creek) Bridge was opened the following year. Now the trolley loop was completed: up State Street to Eddy Street, then through the Cornell campus, across Triphammer Bridge down Thurston Avenue, around The Knoll, to the Stewart Avenue Bridge, rejoining State Street via Stewart Avenue. The trolley ran both ways on the circuitous, hour-and-a-half ride, which became one of the chief attractions for visitors to the city as well as a frequent pleasure for its residents.

In December 1897 Wyckoff offered to sell the Cornell Heights land and the almost completed Triphammer Bridge to Cornell University. Why? Was he concerned about his cash outflow? In a decision he considered shortsighted,



86. Edward G. Wyckoff in an *Ithaca Journal* caricature, ca. 1910.

the university refused the offer because it had "no present need now for more land."[2] Having just endured the financial strain of becoming established, the university was in no position to make a major expenditure.

The Edward G. Wyckoffs had engaged William Henry Miller to design an impressive Colonial Revival residence situated on the highest point of land in the Heights at the intersection of Highland and Thurston avenues. It was the centerpiece of a large estate that included a gatehouse, greenhouses by Lord

and Burnham of New York City, an immense barn built by Driscoll Brothers, and chicken houses.

As work progressed on the Wyckoffs' house, the surrounding area became a beehive of activity. In July 1899 the *Ithaca Journal* reported that Foreman McCarthy was grading the streets and Foreman Hassett was laying ties for the trolley line. More than 150 workmen were involved in construction. Contractor Wanzer had finished a house for Professor John L. Stone. Contractor Bogart had nearly completed two handsome cottages on Wait Avenue which were built on speculation by the Wyckoffs. Driscoll Brothers were building houses for H. C. Howe and C. William Wurster. Contractor Larkin was building a house for Professor E. B. Tichenor. Many teams were hauling lumber and building materials to the site. Thirteen buildings were finished by the holidays.

On June 16, 1900, Edith Wyckoff invited friends to view her completed house. The *Journal* reported,

> Mrs. E. G. Wyckoff gave a large reception on Thursday afternoon at her beautiful new residence on Cornell Heights. In the large entrance hall Mrs. Wyckoff, assisted by Miss Bowen, and Mrs. Ezra Cornell II, received the many guests who thronged the house and wide piazzas admiring both interior and exterior views. The rooms were enhanced by the lovely June flowers which stood in every available spot. The dining room paneled with dark mahogany was lighted by electric light bulbs concealed in half open flowers.

Meanwhile, the Common Council had begun to view the residential development with acquisitive eyes. The potentially taxable property was enticing. In 1901 Wyckoff spurned an offer of annexation, but in 1903 he was amenable. At its April 15, 1903, meeting Common Council passed the following resolution:

> That the proposition of Edward G. Wyckoff for the transfer of the streets on Cornell Heights to the City of Ithaca and the connection of said Heights by streets so as to make the same taxable for municipal purposes be accepted . . . [that] the Mayor be authorized and directed to execute an agreement to pay the said Wyckoff the equivalent of the taxes assessed for municipal purposes upon the private property owned and retained by him on that part of Cornell Heights exempted from taxation for municipal purposes for the period of 15 years. The said Wyckoff to relinquish all claim to compensation for the erection of the bridge near Beebe Lake and the use of the same as a public street.

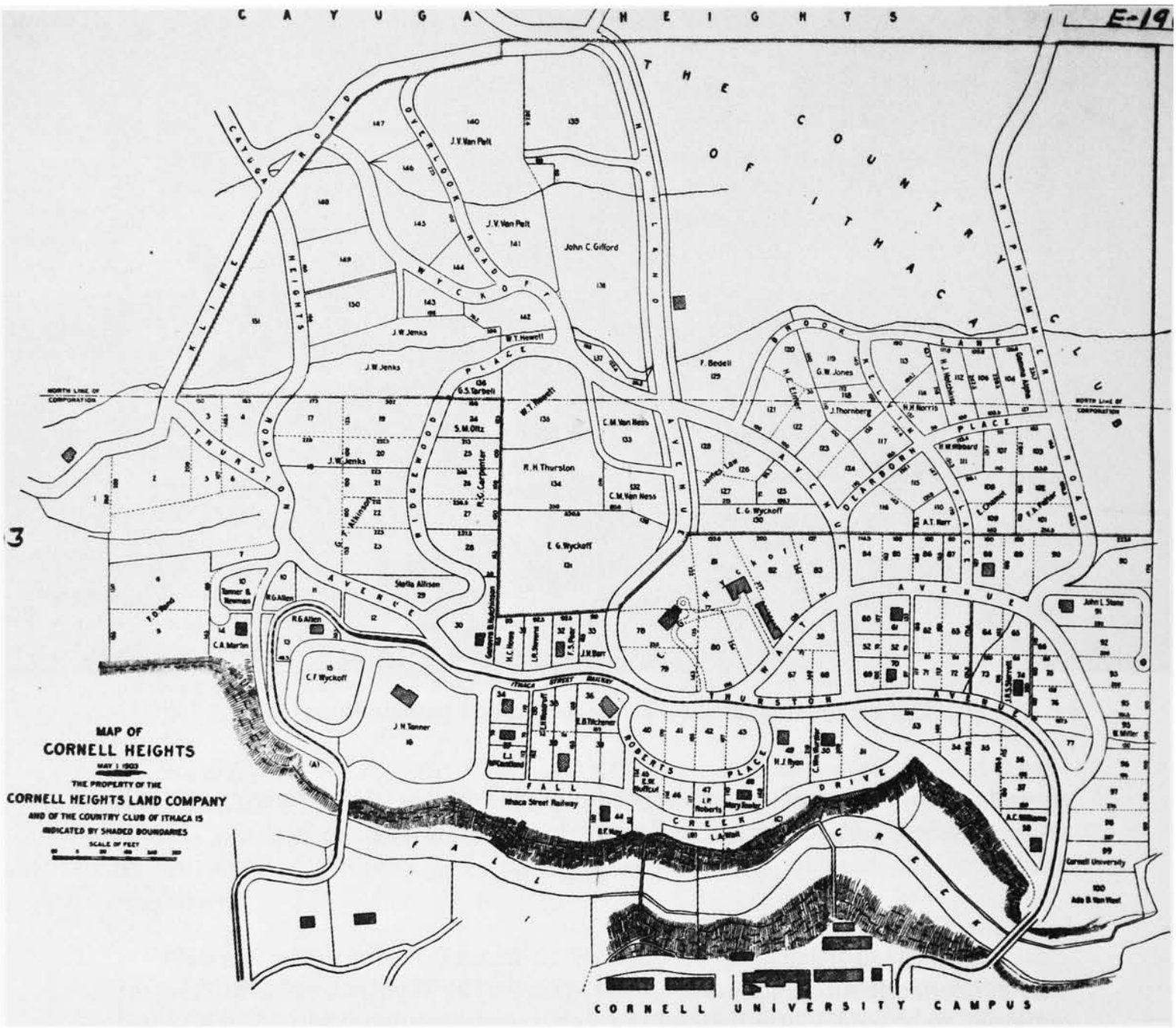
In November 1901, eighty-six more acres of land north of the original Wyckoff purchase were bought from Franklin Cornell. The buyer was the Cornell Heights Land Company, whose directors were Wyckoff, president; Professor John Tanner, vice-president (he signed the deeds for the company); Professor Charles H. Hull, secretary; Charles Blood; and Jared T. Newman. The company gave forty-four acres to the Ithaca Country Club, which had been formed in June 1900. The club's one hundred members were delighted because the

87. The Wyckoff estate around 1905. In the foreground is Wait Avenue.

ground was uneven and thus presented many obstacles to be overcome, which they considered an advantage in "scientific" golf playing.

Living in Cornell Heights

By 1908, of one hundred lots originally planned by Wyckoff, only thirty-eight remained to be sold. Cornell Heights was becoming a neighborhood. Who lived there? The Wyckoffs had two sons, William Ozmun, born in 1892 and Edward G., Jr., born in 1898. David F. Hoy, registrar of the university, who is remembered each time "Give My Regards to Davy" is sung, selected a choice lot alongside the gorge at the north end of the suspension bridge. The house was designed by Clarence A. Martin, a faculty member in the School of Architecture. Hoy's only child was a red-haired boy named Fletcher. Mary F. Fowler, a librarian at Cornell, built a house on Roberts Place also designed by Martin. On The Knoll (at 106) was the residence of Clara and John Tanner, designed by William Henry Miller; and R. G. Allen, director of the U.S. Weather Station, engaged Martin to design a house for him at the very edge of The Knoll. Allen enjoyed a splendid view of the lake and hills and heard the rattle of the trolley as it rounded the corner on the way to Stewart Avenue. W. H. Austen, an assistant librarian at Cornell, built the Swiss chalet at the corner of Stewart



88. Land development map of Cornell Heights dated May 1, 1903.

and Thurston avenues. F. S. Peer constructed a gambrel-roof house at 214 Thurston. Professor John Stone chose a site on Wait Avenue (312), as did Professor and Mrs. Rice, who with their six children occupied the residence (308) in January 1906.

Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Wyckoff and their four daughters lived at 216 Fall Creek Drive. Around the corner at 109 Barton Place were Colonel and Mrs. Frank Barton and their four daughters. The Louis Agassiz Fuertes family lived in a double house at the corner of Wyckoff and Thurston avenues, built in 1904. Their children were Sumner, born in 1905, and Mary, born in 1908. The Olaf Brauner family, with seven children, lived on Dearborn Place.

What was life like for these families in Cornell Heights early in the century?

Betty Wyckoff Balderston, Clarence's daughter, Jim Rice, the late Mary Fuertes Boynton, and the late Harriet Barton O'Leary remembered. First, their schooling. Some of the children whose mothers were concerned about the long walk to the East Hill School attended the private Campus School operated by Miss Martha Hitchcock. In 1916 Miss Hitchcock moved the school from the Cornell campus to a house at 319 Wait Avenue (now a vacant lot). She closed that school in 1921 to become the principal of Cayuga Heights School, a position she held until she retired in 1948 at the age of seventy-five. Other children, including the six Rices, hiked across the campus to the East Hill School. Children below fourth grade often rode the trolley. Those who were old enough for high school had to walk downtown to school, back home for lunch, down again, and back in the afternoon. With only an hour and a half, they had to walk very fast to avoid being late. Some recalled with anger familiar drivers who would not give them a lift when they were dashing up or down University Avenue.

Some of these girls who became students at Cornell identified several of the dignified professorial residents of the Heights as "The Pawnee Chiefs" because they would pat female students on the knee during office conferences. When a student complained to the dean of women about this familiarity, she was told to see a chief only in the company of other students.

Many of the Cornell Heights boys joined football and baseball teams, often playing the Fall Creekers, known as "those Goose Pasture people." They faced unfamiliar social structures when they went downtown to high school. As professors' children they felt they were better than some of the downtown people. Some of the families, fearing evil influences on their children, enrolled them in private schools outside Ithaca.

After school, Beebe Lake, the Fall Creek Gorge, and the many construction sites were playgrounds for the Heights children. When the Risley dormitory was under construction in 1911, the children climbed over and through the mountains of construction material. They ice-skated and tobogganed on Beebe Lake, which could be scary. Mrs. Boynton recalled that the cinders from the power plant settled on the ice and snow. If a person slid off a toboggan and skidded across the ice, cinders could become deeply embedded in the skin, often scarring the face. The children were cautioned about playing in the gorge, and only the older children were allowed to explore or swim there.

The trolley provided lots of fun. When the short connection was completed to Cayuga Circle (the Upland, Highland, Hanshaw Road intersection), the children hitched a ride back and forth. They could sense when a trolley was approaching by the amount of vibration in the rails. They recalled the conductors as friendly and good-natured.

In 1913 two important events occurred in the lives of the Heights children. Louis Agassiz Fuertes built his studio, and the silent film industry came to Cornell Heights. The famous painter of birds and animals Fuertes decided to build a separate studio behind his house because his painting materials had caused two fires. A friendly, affable man, he welcomed children into the studio to study his specimens while he painted in the north light. He took them for

nature walks and encouraged the boys to join the Boy Scouts, which he served as assistant troop leader.

Because he was the only man in the neighborhood working at home, Fuertes was often asked to be an extra when the Essanay Film Company was in production. The firm had rented 411 Thurston Avenue (now Alpha Phi sorority) for the actor Francis X. Bushman and his family. Although the neighbors initially welcomed the film company and the resulting excitement, as more actors occupied the house, they began to wonder what was going on inside. The Bushmans' two-year-old son fell out of a second-story window but, happily, recovered from his injuries. Sumner Fuertes earned a role in *Little Ned.* He had to dash across the bridge to save his film parents while holding up his pants. For this he earned eight dollars, with which he purchased a bass drum.

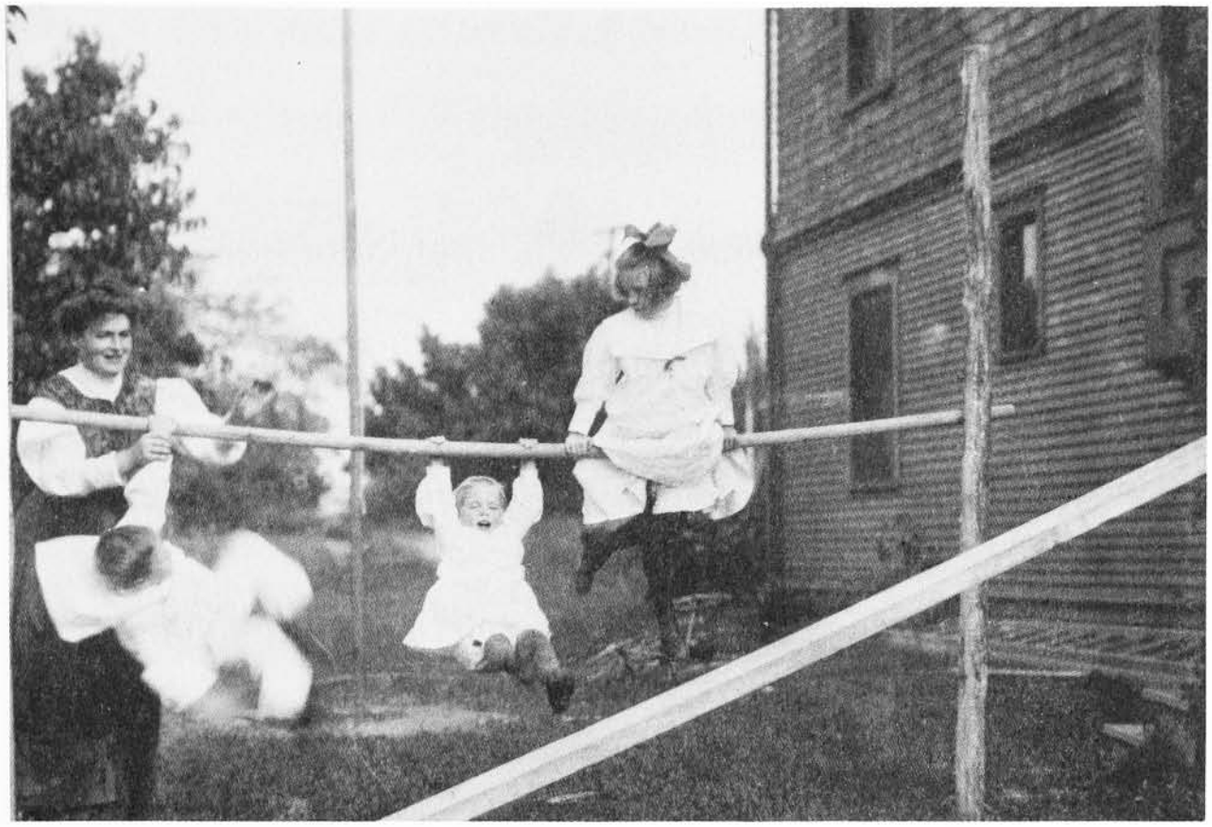
The children were entranced with the actress Irene Castle, who had rented the Brauner house. She walked about the neighborhood in riding breeches with a monkey on her shoulder or rode in a horse-drawn sleigh smothered in a white fur rug. She spoke in a hoarse gravelly voice and was nice to the girls but mean to the boys.

What was life like for adults in the Heights before the First World War? There was, of course, work: most of the men were on the faculty at Cornell, to which they walked or rode every day. At the same time, husbands and wives alike were occupied with the basic household concerns—water, heat, food. Each house had two water systems, one for drinking water, which came from the spring-filled water tower, and the other for washing water, which was pumped up from Fall Creek by the power plant for the Ithaca Street Railway Company. When the plant burned in 1906, residents pleaded with the city to provide water; they even threatened to secede. City water was finally provided in 1908. Each house had a septic tank for sewage. Furnaces consumed tons of coal. As the coal was fed into the metal chute, it made such a horrible noise tumbling into the bin that the Fuertes' parrot, Bombay, would scream in fright.

Each house had electricity and one or two telephone lines, provided by either the local company or the Bell system. Each morning most of the wives would phone Atwaters grocery, located on East State Street, with a list of the supplies they needed. Later in the day, the orders would be delivered. A familiar call for the children was "Here comes Atwaters!" or "There goes Atwaters!" The ice man came three times a week. A triangular sign in the window indicated whether he should stop. The mailman made daily rounds in his horse-drawn wagon or sleigh. A heavy weight loosely attached to the horse prevented him from running away while the driver delivered the mail.

Many families were concerned about good health and slept on sleeping porches because they thought fresh air was good for them. During the winter the Rices bundled into capes, like Red Riding Hoods, and snuggled close to their "pigs"—clay hot water bottles.

The neighborhood families met socially at Sunday afternoon teas, especially at the Fuertes house or at Forest Park, the estate of Franklin Cornell, Jr., or at the Cornell president's house, occupied at this time by Livingston and Daisy



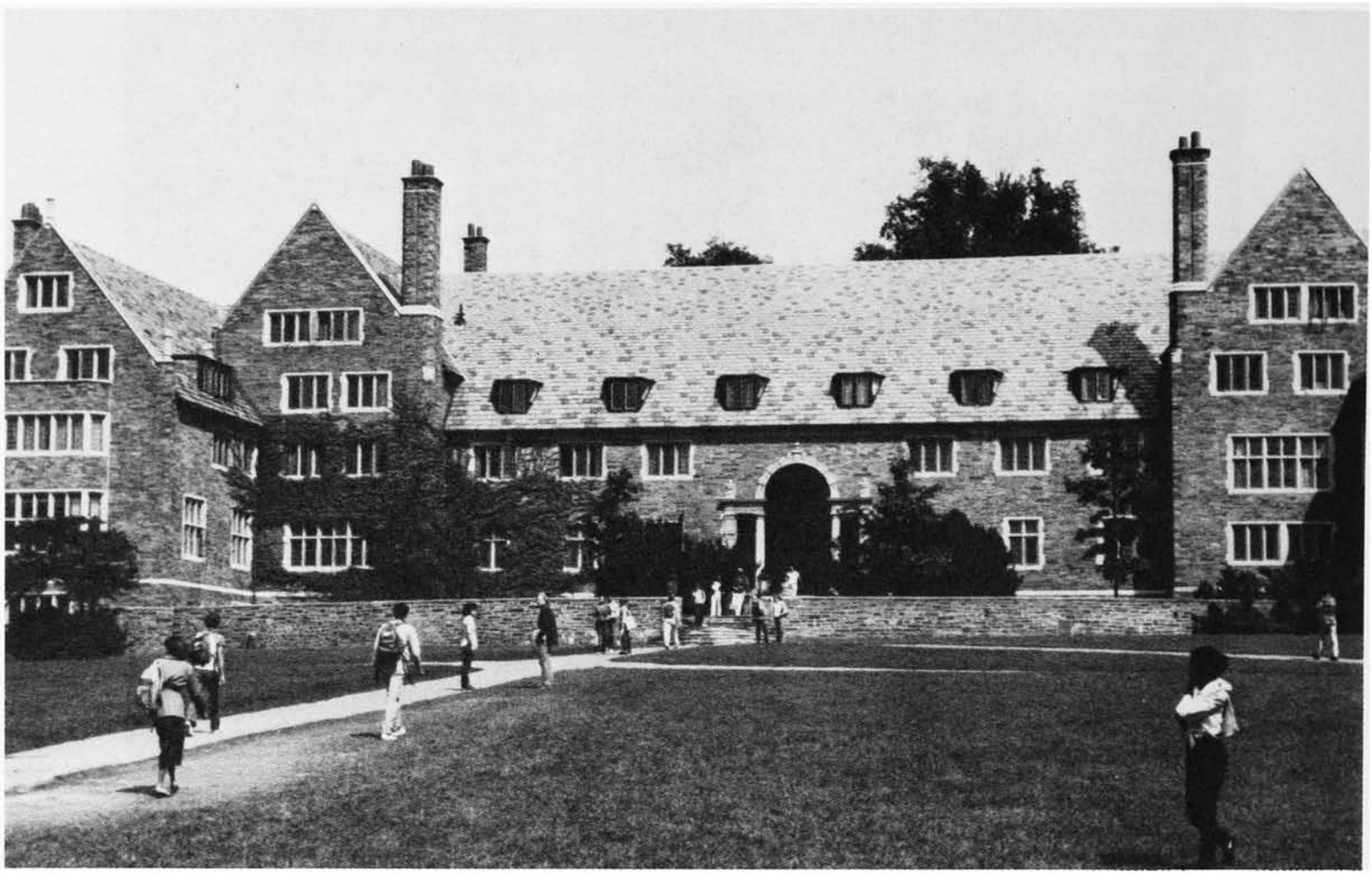
89. The family of Professor James E. Rice, Sr. at 308 Wait Avenue, ca. 1910. Photograph courtesy of James E. Rice, Jr., the child in the center.

Farrand. The family Christmas party was held at the Alpha Delta Phi fraternity house, near Stewart Avenue. Though the country club was nearby, none of the families within this group was a member.

The Rices were close friends of John and Anna Botsford Comstock, he the eminent entomologist and she the naturalist, both prolific writers. In 1910 the Comstocks moved from the Cornell campus to the Heights, buying Mary Fowler's house on Roberts Place for $10,000. What appealed to John Comstock was its light and dry, spacious basement, which would provide ample room for the Comstock Publishing Company, a growing enterprise. Mrs. Comstock ordered furniture for the house from Grand Rapids, Michigan. The Comstocks named it "The Ledge" because it sat on a ledge of rock. They slept on the porch even when the temperature was sixteen degrees. Professor Comstock would awake with frost on his moustache, and he would descend to the basement to stoke the coal furnace. He would never let anyone else deal with the furnace because he firmly believed that only he knew how to keep the house warm and the fuel bills down.

In February 1915 the Comstock Publishing Company was moved across the street into a Swiss chalet the Comstocks contracted to have built of concrete and steel. When the Comstocks died in 1930 and 1931, the building and the publishing company were left to the university and provided the foundation of the Cornell University Press.

Following the opening of the Risley dormitory for women in 1913, male



90. Balch Hall of Cornell University. Students and dormitories have been part of Cornell Heights since the 1910s. Photograph by Russ Hamilton, courtesy of Cornell University Publications Photography.

students increasingly crossed the gorge to live in fraternity houses. Back in 1906, F. S. Peer had given his house to Alpha Zeta, the honorary agricultural fraternity. Wyckoff, enraged, had written to his lawyer, Jared T. Newman:

> You are aware as to the efforts we have always made to the end of keeping fraternities from occupying houses on Cornell Heights. Mr. Peer, as I understand, recently deeded his Cornell Heights residence to a fraternity, which is now occupying the premises. These young men are causing considerable annoyance to the neighborhood by using adjacent property not their own as a playground, baseball field etc. . . . I would be very much gratified if we could work together in the protection of our property to the extent that these parties would understand that their presence was not desired there, and in the meantime I will employ such legal means as are within my power to relieve me from the injustice of Mr. Peer's failure to comply with the terms of the deed under which the property was conveyed.

Peer subsequently built a large residence in Newman's development, Cayuga Heights, which was farther removed from the campus than Cornell Heights. The Tanners, Newman's sister and brother-in-law, sold their house to a local fraternity in 1910. They too built a new residence in Cayuga Heights.

During the summer of 1915, however, Wyckoff learned that Phi Kappa Psi

fraternity was in the market for a larger house. He moved quickly to interest the fraternity in his large residence and succeeded in selling it on August 31. Whereas in 1906 Wyckoff had been furious when Peer had given his house to a fraternity, nine years later he acquiesced happily to student housing in his cherished Cornell Heights.

In July 1963, Phi Kappa Psi sold the house to Cornell Residence, Inc., which sold it to Highland Holding Company the following January. This company demolished the building and erected the present apartment complex, Highland House, for about $140,000. But all the other buildings of the grand Wyckoff estate except the greenhouses remain. The large barn was moved northward and converted to several apartments (110 Heights Court). The gatehouse lodge is now a private residence (1 Lodge Way).

After 1915 Cornell Heights developed into the mixed residential neighborhood that it is today. Dormitory architecture dominates the intersection of Thurston and Wait avenues. Balch Hall, beautifully sited and designed by Frederick L. Ackerman, architect, was donated to Cornell University by Allen C. Balch '89 and Mrs. Balch. The four connecting units were dedicated in September 1929. Clara Dickson Hall, built in 1949, was named by the board of trustees for the mother of Andrew Dickson White. Both dormitories were built to house young women. Many young men also lived in the Heights, in the fraternity houses scattered throughout the area. Some of these houses had been converted from large private residences; others had been specifically designed for the fraternities. Delta Chi (102 The Knoll) dominates the skyline above the Stewart Avenue Bridge. A handsome Tudor-style structure, it was designed by the Ithaca firm of Gibb and Waltz in 1915. Across Thurston Avenue on a matching pinnacle, Phi Delta Theta (2 Ridgewood Road) was built in 1920. In 1913 Frank Morse, president of the Morse Chain Company, developed his large estate, Greentrees (5 Ridgewood Road), across the street. Upon his death in 1935, it was sold to a local fraternity and is now Phi Kappa Sigma. Tau Kappa Epsilon (105 Westbourne Lane) occupies the house originally built for the fraternity Scorpion in 1927.

Cornell Heights is a patchwork quilt of zoning designations. On the zoning map, the predominant design is open circles on a light background, representing R-U, the category allowing for single dwellings, multiple dwellings, fraternity and sorority houses, townhouses, dormitories. The next most frequent pattern is dark circles on a light background representing R3a, an area of single and multiple dwellings, no dormitories. Minute dots around Kelvin Place, Dearborn Place, Kline Road, and Wyckoff Road signify R2a, an area restricted to one- and two-family dwellings.

As the original developer of Cornell Heights, Wyckoff determined the type of residential neighborhood it would be by the amount he charged for the lots and the architectural restrictions he placed on the deeds. Even when Cornell University became the predominant landowner, building dormitories and buying private houses, the neighborhood remained residential.

In 1978 the university proposed to adapt a six-bedroom house at 316 Fall Creek Drive into working space for the Office of University Publications. But

when it applied to the city board of zoning appeals for a permit, the application was denied. This denial was the result of a vociferous community protest. Historically, churches and educational institutions have been exempt from local zoning laws, but the permanent residents of Cornell Heights had had enough of territorial pressure from the university and rejected the proposed change from house to office building.

Uniting to revive the Cornell Heights Civic Association, in 1982 they again protested a university plan, this time to place the Modern Indonesia project, with a full-time staff of fifteen, in the house. When the board of zoning appeals again refused a permit for office use, the university sued the city, claiming that as an educational institution it was exempt from zoning regulations. In October 1981, State Supreme Court Judge Frederick Bryant ruled in favor of the university. The city appealed Bryant's decision to the appellate division of the New York State Supreme Court. The appeal failed, but the appellate court ruled that Cornell nevertheless must have a special-use permit from the board of zoning appeals. In 1985 the city carried the suit to the Court of Appeals, seeking to overturn the protected status given to schools and colleges throughout the state. Again the court upheld the Bryant decision, with some modifications. The university is still required to apply to the board of zoning appeals for a special permit.

As a result of this case, university administrators seem to have become more aware that residents want a family neighborhood. Cornell has begun to sell houses on land contract, an arrangement whereby families pay land rent to the university but own the house. Within Cornell Heights those properties farthest from the university are privately owned. On Kelvin Place, for instance, only one property is owned on land contract. However, closer to the campus, on Fall Creek Drive, six properties are owned by land contract and four are privately owned.

No longer a family neighborhood in the old sense, Cornell Heights is today several communities. Students, who are of course transient residents, join fraternities, sororities, cooperatives, language houses, and dorms for the performing arts. To those within their immediate communities, they provide friendly support, but to others, they are strangers. The permanent residents may know their next-door neighborhors, but their friends live in other sections of the city. Although Cornell Heights is no longer the purely residential area it once was, its present composition (which is likely to remain as is) has its own advantages, for the yearly influx of students ensures the youthfulness of this neighborhood.

11 Belle Sherman

Margaret Hobbie

When Ithaca became a city in 1888 its eastern boundary was Eddy Street. The upper reaches of East Hill consisted of farms, creeks, woods, greenhouses, quarries, dotted here and there with homes. Two highways diverged at the western edge of the hill and led out of Ithaca to the east and southeast. These routes were the road to Varna and the ancient Catskill Turnpike (Route 79).

Early in the twentieth century upper East Hill began to change. Decade by decade, homes were built, sidewalks and sewers were laid, and neighborhoods took shape. The area became what it is today, a popular residential area, primarily for faculty, staff, and students of Cornell University.

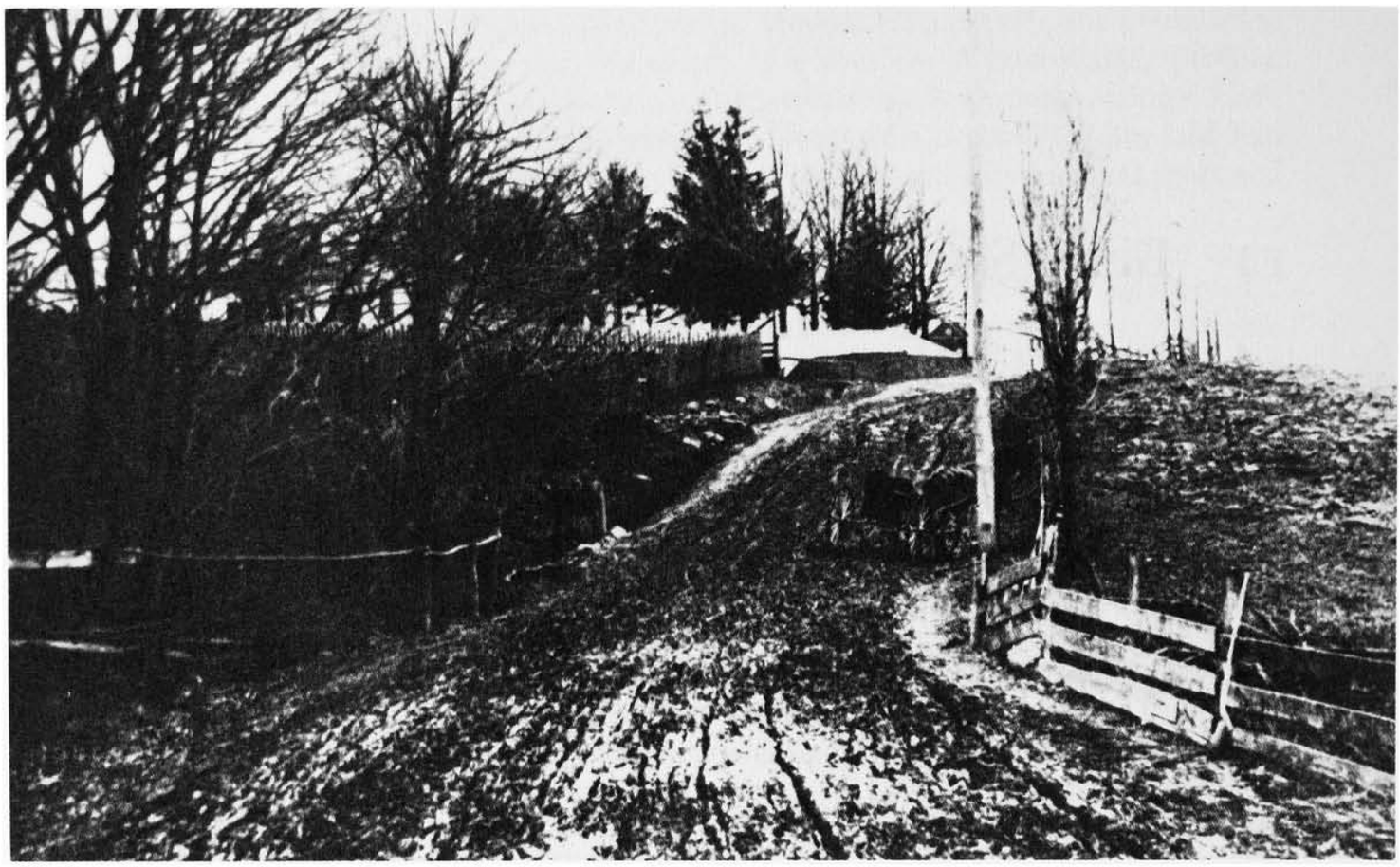
The Beginnings

The Pew Family

The area now known as East Ithaca or East Lawn was once called "Pewtown," in honor of one of East Hill's first families. William and Hannah Pew left their home in northern New Jersey with their children and grandchildren in 1800, planning to visit relatives in Upper Canada and perhaps move there. On their way they stopped at a tavern on Ellis Hollow Road, the owner of which attempted to sell them his property, between Cascadilla Creek and the Catskill Turnpike. The Pews refused and moved on, only to be held up in Ludlowville by the arrival of a grandchild. The East Hill tavern keeper caught up with them and begged them to reconsider his offer, and William Pew indeed bought the entire property for his children. Descendants of this pioneer family are still living in Ithaca.

The Mitchell Family

James Mitchell was the first member of his family to visit what is now Ithaca. He stopped here on his way from his birthplace, Mansfield, New Jersey, to family property near New Market, Upper Canada, in 1802. He was so favorably impressed with the area at the head of Cayuga Lake that, after disposing of his Canadian property, he returned and bought a farm from the Pews. Early



91. The Catskill Turnpike (East State Street) near the present city line, ca. 1900. The Catskill Turnpike (Route 79 today) connected the Hudson Valley to the New York interior and was the route taken by many of Ithaca's first settlers. Before that it was an Indian trail.

accounts state that he built a log cabin on the north side of present-day Mitchell Street near Cornell Street and returned New Jersey to fetch his family.

In October 1802 he returned to his new home with his parents, John and Hannah English; his wife, Lyna Clabine; and four of their five children (one child had died on the journey). Also traveling with the party were James's brother, George, his wife, Betsey Ramsey, and their eight children.

Mitchell family tradition includes many stories of the hardships of pioneer life. Lyna once attacked and killed a bear with a pitchfork when she discovered it eating her piglets. Daily life included encounters with rattlesnakes, wolves, and Indians.

The Mitchells and their descendants farmed on East Hill for most of the nineteenth century. Many family letters have survived and make up part of the Barnes-Mitchell Collection of Cornell University's Regional History Collection. A letter from Amelia Mitchell (daughter of James's son John) to her sister Hattie describes the life of a prosperous farm family in November 1846:

> Mother will finish her weaving about the middle of this week and then we are going to spend the rest of the week cleaning house so that it will be in order when

you and Hannah comes; and also when Job comes but when is he coming? . . . Pa sold our 4 firkins of butter to Culver for a shilling per pound, and we have got another over half full for winter. I have done nearly all of the cooking since you left. I have done all the cleaning and all of the work with Lottie's help. What spare time we get besides doing the house work we have to twist stocking yarn so you see we do not get much time to sew or knit. I get very tired day after day but shall get rested again and it is not much matter if I do not. If you will send me a paper and let me know how and when you are coming I will make some first rate bread and pies and have them ready for you when you get here. I believe I can go a head of you in making apple or pumpkin pies, bread, and molasses cake. I improve very fast I assure you. But they will not give me time to fill my pillow case with stockings so you see I am not ready to get MARRIED yet. Your plants look very well indeed and are doing well; but it is an AWFUL task to take care of them. Geo. C. Hall left some cake and his card for Jno Mitchell and family. The cake was done up in a white paper and pined [*sic*] with a very small pin and a narrow white ribband [*sic*] tied around it and the cards (one with Geo C Hall and the other with Mrs Geo C Hall on it) sliped [*sic*] under the ribband. There was but one kind and that was fruit cake. They were married early in the morning and left for the City. I have not seen either of them since their return. Phebe A. Hazen is married to a Mr Logan from the east I believe. William Sprigg is also married; and I expect the next thing we hear will be that you are married as we have already heard from different ones that you were going to be.[1]

In addition to the log cabin mentioned in early accounts, the Mitchells built a home at what is now 609 Mitchell Street and a brick house at 1006 Ellis Hollow Road, which was razed in 1979. In 1871 John Mitchell sold a half acre of his land to the Ithaca and Cortland Railroad, and in the 1870s and 1880s he sold several lots "for burial purposes only" in the Pewtown graveyard, later East Lawn Cemetery. After their father's death in 1886, Hattie and Charlotte Mitchell ran the farm themselves, raising cows, chickens, pigs, and wheat.

By the time the 1853 county map was published, other families—among them the Hazens, Benhams, Motts, and Hixsons—had joined the Mitchells and Pews. Deacon Dickson C. Hazen was a prosperous South Hill sheep farmer who transferred his operation to East Hill around 1845. Linden Street was called Hazen Street for many years. About 1862 his farm was purchased by Solomon and Abigail Bryant. By 1866 much of the land on East State Street from Mitchell Street east was owned by the Driscoll family (see Chapter 3).

The opening of Cornell University in 1868 had an immediate and profound effect on the area now known as Collegetown, but it was several years before the growing university affected development farther up the hill. The Elmira, Cortland and Northern Railroad was cut through the area in 1871, and its station building, commonly known as the East Hill depot, was built in 1876. East Lawn Cemetery had been in use for many years and a cemetery association had been formed in 1878. Mount Olivet Cemetery had been laid out in a long, thin wedge off East State Street on sharply sloping land sold to the bishop of Buffalo by William Driscoll in 1865. One of the Driscolls' quarries was located off Mitchell Street on what is now Brandon Place. Patrick and William Driscoll lived nearby at 914 East State Street and at the corner of State and