

The Rathskeller: The History of a Student Favorite

by Heather Manley/Associate News Editor

In the fall of 1948, the Board of Trustees of Union College granted authority to the Student Council to operate a snack bar facility in the basement of Stoller Hall, home of the Geology department. Thus began the forty-six year history of the Rathskeller.

Originally called the "Dutchmen's Rathskeller," it opened because students had no place to gather informally to eat or enjoy a beer. From the time the doors opened for business on December 2, 1949, until 1961, the Rathskeller was entirely student operated, under the official management of the Union College Student Council, Inc., the predecessor to the Student Forum. Students controlled the hiring, managing, buying and bookkeeping.

During its planning stages, some members of the college community protested the sale of beer to students. They, as well as some Schenectady residents feared it would be detrimental to student morals, while others argued it would be a good place for gathering and entertaining guests.

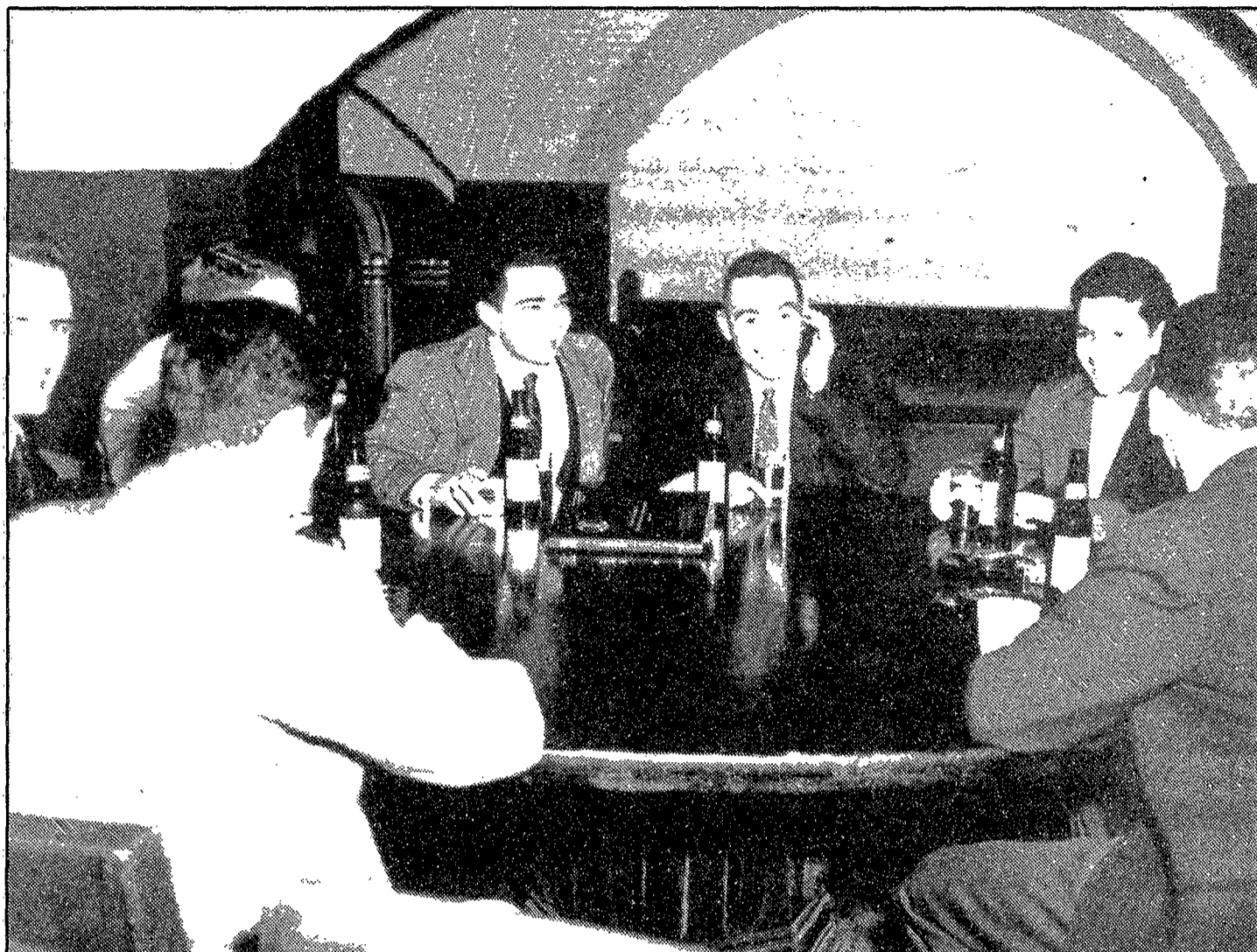
The Student Council could not financially support the start-up costs of the "Dutchmen's Rathskeller." Instead, students volunteered to both donate and raise funds and amassed over \$3,000. Many ex-GI's on campus helped in the construction with carpentry and wiring skills learned while in the service.

Calvin Schmidt, class of 1952, was a founding student member and important influence in the history of the Rathskeller. He was

the general manager during his senior year. He later became the Union College Registrar and faculty advisor to the Rathskeller. After Schmidt retired in 1985, the Student Forum gave the school \$65,000, the equivalent to the accumulated net revenue that the Rathskeller generated during thirty-six years. Part of this sum was designated for endowing the Calvin Schmidt Prize, which is given to an outstanding junior each year on Prize Day.

In the spring of 1969, the student officers and college administration decided not to open if professional management could not be employed to replace the recent poor management and service. It remained closed that fall, but reopened in January of 1962 under the direction of Saga Food Service. The college's Board of Directors maintained a year to year contract with Saga until September of 1978, when Union College Food Service assumed management. The last management change occurred in 1994, when the college privatized dining services under the direction of the Marriott Corporation.

The original "Dutchmen's Rathskeller" was decorated with travel posters along the walls, leatherette upholstered chairs and



Students enjoy beer in the Rathskeller (1955) Alcohol is no longer served at this location.

indirect lighting designed by students. An average of three hundred people per day came to the Rathskeller. At this time, a student worker could not earn more than thirteen dollars a week. At today's wages, that is roughly the equivalent pay of working three hours a week before taxes. Today, students work anywhere from four to ten hours a week.

On January 7, 1962, the jukebox was installed. The records were a mixture of artists, but none were rock n' roll. No music was allowed during evening hours.

On January 10 of that year, however, the Board of Directors of the

Student Council, Inc. discussed posting a "No Dancing" sign in the Rathskeller because singing and dancing was not permissible without collecting taxes for goods sold when these activities are in progress.

In 1976, a pitcher of Genesee beer cost \$1.50, a bottle of Heineken cost \$1.00, a ten ounce soda cost twenty cents, a BLT cost eighty cents and a cheeseburger cost seventy cents.

In 1985, the Rathskeller stopped serving alcohol due to the change in the legal drinking age from eighteen to twenty-one, making most of the students underage.

In 1987, the Rathskeller served breakfast from 7:30 to 10:45 a.m. Patrons could buy two eggs with toast for ninety cents, french toast for \$1.05 and coffee for thirty-five cents.

Today, the cheeseburgers cost a little more, rock n' roll is found on the jukebox, students sing and occasionally dance, and beer is no longer served. The carvings that are added daily to the table tops tell their own history. Yet, forty-six years later, the Rathskeller is still the place where students can go to gather informally to eat, study or relax.

The Way We Were, Starring Redford & Streisand, Filmed at Historic Union

by Jody Mousseau
Concordiensis Staff

In the fall of 1972, Union College took its claim to fame and found its place on the silver screen. Certain scenes of *The Way We Were* were shot on the Union campus. Robert Redford and Barbara Streisand, stars of the movie, brought a relatively different spirit to the campus for a short time.

The Cornell University campus acted as the setting for the story in Arthur Laurent's book, however, when it came time to choose the setting for the nostalgic col-

lege scenes, it was decided that the Cornell University campus was a much too modern setting. In searching for an alternate location to film the scenes, Williams College in Williamstown, MA was chosen. However, due to a provision in the contract which forced the camera crew off campus before the beginning of the fall semester, the directors again sought for a college campus on which to film portions of the movie. The Union College campus became the location for the filming of the collegiate scenes after the directors visited and were astonished by the beauty of the setting.

The Way We Were, produced by Sydney Pollack and Ray Stark, is the story of Katie Morosky, played by Barbara Streisand and Hubbell Gardiner, played by Robert Redford. Morosky, the head of the Young Communists League on campus, is the star of many touching scenes, including a speech made about the Spanish civil war. The scene captured the beauty of the campus, and was located on Library Field with the Nott Memorial in the background. Robert Redford portrays an aspiring

writer. The 1930's setting depicts their nostalgic story.

The movie crew began arriving

left a certain character, which had not existed before. Those who were given a chance to take part in the scenes would always have special memories of Union. Altogether, the portion of *The Way We Were* composed of scenes filmed on the Union campus lasts about twenty minutes.

The world premiere screening of *The Way We Were* was shown in New York City on October 16, 1973. The commercial debut took place on November 1, 1973. However, the Union College community received special treatment in their viewing of the movie. Homecoming weekend, which normally consists of numerous special events and the home football game, was made extraordinary. On October 12, 1973 at 9 PM, the Union College community was invited to become the first of the public to witness the product of what had been filmed on campus only a year earlier. Cinema 7 hosted the filming, and many members of the Union community were invited to experience the finished product.

HOMECOMING
UNION COLLEGE PREVIEW

"THE WAY WE WERE"

Friday, October 12, 1973 — 9:00 P. M.
CINEMA 7, Latham, N. Y.

No. 0024

in mid-August. Extras were needed for over 1000 small parts, including a football rally and a prom scene. For many residents and students, this was a once in a lifetime opportunity. The extras were forced to comply with the plans of the producers, many having to cut their hair very short to depict the 1930's era. For the college students of the early 1970's, only a place on the silver screen would have convinced them to do this.

Many scenes became longer than originally intended due to the producer's wishes to utilize the beauty of the campus. A scene was produced specifically to use Jackson's Gardens. Many adjustments were made to perfectly depict the story. One minute in the movie required a complete "makeover" of Library Plaza to add a more antiquated, nostalgic look to the setting. The beautiful month of September allowed for filming to go smoothly. The short period of filming on the campus

Alumni and past and present members of the Union community can be proud of the portion of *The Way We Were* which glorifies the beauty of the Union Campus for the rest of the public to witness. It will forever be known as one of the monumental events in Union's history.

