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# Plattsburgh for Peace: Student Protest at SUNY Plattsburgh from 1965-1970

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When Thomas Moran arrived at SUNY Plattsburgh, a small state school in northern New York, in the fall of 1965 as a freshman student, it was evident that the campus was “beginning to bubble with anti-war sentiment”.<sup>1</sup> As a student, Moran’s opposition to the Vietnam War began in high school, well before many students were really aware of America’s purpose in Southeast Asia. As the war escalated and stirred civil unrest among college campuses throughout America, students like Moran became involved and demanded that their voices and opinions be heard. From teach-ins, to protest marches, and demonstrations, SUNY Plattsburgh was no exception to the exploding antiwar sentiment that overcame America during the tumultuous years of the Vietnam War.

Schools like Berkeley, Columbia University, the University of Michigan, and Kent State stand out to us as hotbeds for student activism during the Vietnam War. At many universities where protest occurred, peaceful demonstrations often turned violent as university administrations and local communities sought to suppress anti-war sentiment among the student populations.<sup>2</sup> However, as opposition to the war developed at SUNY Plattsburgh, the protest movement remained peaceful throughout the duration of the war. Why did the student protest at SUNY Plattsburgh remain peaceful while many

universities, including some within the SUNY system, experienced violent protest? After researching the student protest at Plattsburgh, one common theme appeared that differentiated the student protest movement at Plattsburgh from other universities. I will argue that the antiwar protest remained non-violent at SUNY Plattsburgh due to the support and leadership offered to student's protesting the war by the university administration.

To help support my thesis, I will use evidence from numerous sources including newspaper articles, recordings, speeches, letters, and personal accounts to show administrative support for the protest movement at Plattsburgh. First, I will discuss the historiography and what historians have said regarding the Vietnam student protest movement as a whole in the years following the conflict. Then I will show the developments of the anti-war movement at Plattsburgh from the years 1965 to 1970. Through analyzing important events such as the 1965 Vietnam "teach-in", and President George W. Angell's 1967 speech "Protest is not Enough", and the campus' reaction to the Kent State shootings, I will show the progression of the student protest at SUNY Plattsburgh as well as the role the administration and faculty played.

Since the conclusion of the Vietnam War, scholarship on the anti-war protest remained relatively quiet until the 1980's. As the anti-war movement gained academic popularity, numerous debates and conversations began to emerge. Over the years, one of the major arguments surrounding the anti-war protest was whether it was successful or not at bringing the Vietnam War to a close. Most historians have argued and labeled the movement a success, while some, but very few, have argued that it was ultimately a failure and didn't help hasten the end of the war.<sup>3</sup> Historians have also argued over the

role class played in the internal dynamics of the movement. Earlier historians argued the movement was dominated by the elite or was really only present at elite universities and support of the war largely came from the working class.<sup>4</sup> However, this argument has changed over the years as more recent works have concluded that the working class played a large role in the anti-war movement and less prestigious universities was active with student protest.<sup>5</sup>

While analyzing the protest movement of the Vietnam era, a few scholarly analyses stand out and will act as a backbone to understanding the developments of the student protest across American universities. The book *An American Ordeal* by Charles DeBenedetti in 1990 is one of the first sources to document the Vietnam protest movement in its entirety, and is a major contribution to antiwar scholarship. DeBenedetti argues that while the movement was successful in bringing the war to an end, the movement was plagued with divisions, weaknesses, and negative public images contributing to the rise and fall of the movement.<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Heineman, a history professor at Angelo State University, in 1993 argued in *Campus Wars* that while "elite" universities are seen as the major actors in the student anti-war protest, state universities and their student bodies played a large role in creating campus protest during the Vietnam War.<sup>7</sup> This source is very important to my research because *Campus Wars* offers us insight into the student protest at smaller state universities, which has been largely ignored by historians in past years.

Adam Garkinkel's *Telltale Hearts* from 1995 offers new insight to the protest as he disagrees with past historians and argues that the anti-war movement of the 1960's was not only ineffective at ending the war, but in fact prolonged it.<sup>8</sup> While his argument and

supporting evidence is interesting and will be useful to my research, it has been largely criticized since its publication. Recently, historian Penny Lewis denounced the myth that the protest movement was class divided and dominated by “elites” in *Hardhats, Hawks, and Hippies*. Lewis argues that working-class opposition to the war was in fact widespread throughout the duration of the war. Since the Vietnam War’s end, pre-existing stereotypes towards the protest movement and its followers have skewed our views of it in the years since and left us with a “distorted image” of the movement as a whole.<sup>9</sup> Published in 2013, the book is one of the most recent sources available on the Vietnam protest movement.

My argument fits into the historical conversation regarding the presence of the student protest at smaller, non-"elite" universities. Besides Heineman, few scholars have offered insight into the student protest at smaller universities. My research offers to make a contribution to this hole in scholarship. Also, Kenneth Heineman argued that the student protest at state universities turned radical and violent in response to the violent opposition they were met with by the administrations and local communities. Therefore, my argument that the student protest at SUNY Plattsburgh remained non-violent due to administrative support fits well into the conversation by agreeing with past historians, especially Heineman, while offering a look into the developments of the student protest at a smaller state school.

Newspaper articles, recordings, letters, and interviews from 1965 to 1970 support my argument that administrative support for student protest at Plattsburgh allowed the antiwar movement to remain peaceful at the university. Recordings and articles that document President George Angell (1954-1974) speaking in favor of student activism or

supporting a student protest is strong evidence to support my thesis. The role of the local Plattsburgh community is also evident in many newspaper articles as well as eyewitness accounts that will help to further understand antiwar sentiment at SUNY Plattsburgh during the 1960's.

Student protest began to emerge at a select few “elite” universities around the country as early as 1965 following the beginning of US bombings of North Vietnam. Following the Second World War, enrollment at universities skyrocketed and many universities were transforming into intellectual institutions. Also, universities essentially became a part of the American war machine as many developed ties with the Department of Defense and received funds to conduct military research. This development along with a growing number of an educated, upper class, liberal student populations laid the foundation for early protests. Students at prestigious, liberal universities including Berkeley, Columbia, Harvard, and the University of Michigan became involved in student activism.<sup>10</sup> However, as 1965 lead to an escalation of the war and the implementation of the draft, student disdain for the war rapidly spread to universities across the country.

Prior to the teach-in of November 1965, student protest at SUNY Plattsburgh was relatively quiet. One of the first signs of student activism on the Plattsburgh campus occurred when a forum was held on March 14, 1965.<sup>11</sup> While little evidence is given about the details of the relatively small forum, it represented early signs of student interest in the Vietnam conflict at Plattsburgh. Another development prior to the teach-in was when thirteen students traveled to Washington to take place in an anti-war rally on April 17, 1965.<sup>12</sup> The rally was the first major antiwar rally during the Vietnam conflict,

occurring a month after the first marines were deployed in South Vietnam, even though military advisors had been present in Vietnam since the late 1950's. 16,000 people picketed the White House and Capitol Hill and although the rally was small in comparison to later protests in Washington, it wasn't long before this anti-war sentiment reached college campuses and, of course, SUNY Plattsburgh.<sup>13</sup>

By the fall of 1965, the Vietnam War and the issues surrounding it started to become a pressing issue on Plattsburgh's campus. Students were eager to become educated about the war and sought a better understanding of the related issues. One group that was adamant about bringing the issue to Plattsburgh was the campus' Students for a Democratic Society, or known as SDS. The influential national leftist organization spearheaded the student protest movement of the late 1960's, brought social issues to light and openly attacked America's involvement in Indochina.<sup>14</sup> As the organization grew, local chapters were established at universities across the country, one being at Plattsburgh. The nationwide organization came about in the early 1960's in response to the emergence of Civil Rights and other social issues and would later grow into a powerful, yet divisive, organization. As Vietnam became a pressing issue in American society, the SDS would be a play a major role in the movement as they arranged demonstrations, protests, and antiwar propaganda throughout the war.

However, as the Vietnam War escalated in 1965, the SDS's base grew tremendously and local chapters were developed at less prestigious schools. Although the organization maintained a multi-issue platform concerning many social issues, the Vietnam War became the driving force behind the organization's massive expansion. In fact, as historian Penny Lewis argues, it was the war in Indochina that brought the SDS

and the student movement to “lower ranked” and “working class campuses”.<sup>15</sup> SDS leaders saw the war as essentially a magnet for student activism. By spring of 1965, the SDS had 124 chapters nationwide, including one at SUNY Plattsburgh, and became a driving force behind mobilizing student opposition to the war.<sup>16</sup>

The Plattsburgh SDS chapter was the major proponent of student activism on the campus during the war. A former Plattsburgh student and member of the campus’ SDS described his experience within the campus organization:

We were the first group to come to the campus and start an SDS chapter, smoke pot, grow our hair long, and generally arouse a ruckus. It was us who provided the movement leadership during those years, created Big Stink (our underground newspaper), held influence on the concert booking committee, took over the radio station, called the campus STRIKES, took over the Administrative Building, marched on the Federal Building and the Air Base, broke down the dress codes and rules in the dorms and cafeteria, and were, generally speaking, the major proponents of peace, love, sex, drugs, and rock and roll. In those days the scholarly life was somehow secondary to the pressing issues at hand: like war and Civil Rights...We were known as the Space Cowboys.<sup>17</sup>

For the “Space Cowboys” and SDS members across the country, their non-conformist mentality and dedication to social issues attracted students to the New Left and the Vietnam protest movement.



One strategy utilized to bring the protest movement to the Plattsburgh campus was through a “teach-in”, an open forum where information is presented, conflicting issues are debated, and opinions are presented from multiple perspectives. Throughout 1965, teach-ins were conducted on college campuses throughout the country as a form of non-violent protest. It was viewed as a way to educate students on the Vietnam issue and allow them to develop their own opinions regarding the war. The first teach-in on a college campus occurred at the University of Michigan in March of 1965 and was attended by over 2,000 students.<sup>18</sup> Soon enough, teach-ins had become a way to bring the war to an open debate among students and became a common event among college campuses. On November 12, 1965, Plattsburgh conducted its own teach-in that drew hundreds and helped bring forth the controversial war to the attention of the student body.<sup>19</sup> The teach-in, which was available to me through a digital recording, lasted just over four hours as guest speakers, administrators, faculty members, and even students, shared their personal opinions and engaged in a debate in an open forum.

The local SDS chapter, with the help of campus organizations including the International Relations Club and SEANYNS, arranged the teach-in and invited a number of guests to voice their opinions. For the SDS, the teach-in would be a major stepping-stone for the student protest movement as local SDS President Gene McMechen said: “We are organizing this discussion because we feel that Vietnam is an extremely important issue and all its implications must be discussed before and by the people.”<sup>20</sup> The speakers were broken up into two panels; one representing the left and one representing the right. The left’s panel included guest speaker Chris Koch and SUNY Plattsburgh professors Dr. Shah, Dr. Papadopoulos, Dr. Newgarden, and student Pat Newman. For the right, their

panel consisted of guest speaker Dr. Gerald Steibel along with Plattsburgh professors Dr. Bernstein, Dr. Bjork, Dr. Kelly, and student Ira Riddle.<sup>21</sup> The teach-in was given the title “The Vietnam Question” and had an impact upon the student body, especially since President Angell was there to show his support and leadership for the event.

Plattsburgh’s President George W. Angell gave the opening remarks to the teach-in as he addressed the event as “a milestone on higher education at Plattsburgh State University.”<sup>22</sup> To President Angell, teach-ins were crucial to addressing issues, especially the Vietnam War because he argued: “Student protest has arisen from a suppression, or lack of sufficiently answered questions.”<sup>23</sup> Therefore, a debate about the Vietnam conflict in an open forum creates self-education for students through its ability to “illuminate issues, identify alternative solutions, and stimulate reflection and thoughtful reaction.”<sup>24</sup> Even though President Angell felt it was necessary to not announce his own personal opinion on the war, Angell’s perspective on the conflict was clearly evident as he addressed that it was the “moral duty” of the American government to bring the war in Vietnam to an end through negotiations.<sup>25</sup> For Plattsburgh students, Angell’s participations and positive remarks towards the teach-in was an indication of his support towards student activism at Plattsburgh.

The first guest speaker was Chris Koch, a program director of WBALFM radio station, journalist, photographer, and Columbia lecturer who recently returned from North Vietnam.<sup>26</sup> Koch discussed his visit to North Vietnam and emphasized the damage being caused by bombing raids on villages, roads, factories, and other infrastructures. Bombing raids, Koch explains, were essentially causing the Vietnamese people to rally behind their government and resist foreign attackers as he says, “when faced with

national security, they put aside their differences with their government.”<sup>27</sup> Koch argued that American troop presence and bombing missions indirectly created Vietnamese nationalism that would not easily be quelled.

The second guest speaker representing the right was Dr. Gerald Steibel, a director of Foreign Affairs for the Research Institute of America. Steibel too was an outspoken opponent of the war in Vietnam. For Steibel, America was involved in two wars, “the war in Indochina, and the war that is going on amongst ourselves, and I am a veteran of the second one.”<sup>28</sup> This clearly represented the growing polarization among Americans that not only students felt, but older Americans sensed as well. Following Steibel’s opinion on the war in Vietnam, Plattsburgh professors were then given the chance to give their perspectives as each professor was allotted five minutes. The first professor to speak was Dr. Newgarden, a philosophy professor, whose fast speaking, awkward, monotone voice received a few giggles that could easily be heard within the recording. Nevertheless, Newgarden also expressed opposition to the war. Following him was Dr. Bjork, a liberal arts professor, who condemned America’s presence in Vietnam as the “arrogance of democratic value”.<sup>29</sup> This “arrogance”, as Newgarden asserted, was a result of American attempts to implement democratic values throughout the world. However for Newgarden, it created a dangerous situation in Vietnam that would backfire at the United States.

Next to speak at the teach-in were professors Dr. Shah, an economics professor, who also expressed his negative opinions towards the war. His argument included how the Vietnamese peasantry was fighting for land inequality that had been created as a result of western intrusion into the region. Following Dr. Shah was Dr. Papadopoulos

and Dr. Kelly who both spoke of bombing raids, communism, escalations with the Soviet Union, and the politics behind it.<sup>30</sup> The one professor to openly support the war during the teach-in was Dr. Bernstein who believed that America had a “moral justification” to have troops in Vietnam. For Dr. Bernstein, America has the rightful duty to “promote world order” and that “non-action in the face of aggression is immoral.”<sup>31</sup>

The next two speakers were members of the student body. The first, named Ira Riddle, was an adamant supporter of the war in Vietnam. While his voice expressed a sense of anger, he compared the actions of North Vietnam to that of Japan and the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, the next student speaker, the only woman speaker of the teach-in was, from a personal perspective, the most passionate speaker to express their opposition to the war. Based on the recording, Newman received the largest applause out of the panel as it indicated that a majority of the people present not only approved her message, but also opposed the war.

After every speaker completed their personal statements regarding the conflict in Vietnam, a “Questions and Answer” segment followed, lasting for a remainder of the teach-in. Members of the audience asked questions, and a panel member was given three minutes to respond to the question. During this segment, one audience member stood out from the rest. Ranting in a loud and angry voice, a member of the audience openly expressed that he “opposed the teach-in movement” on the basis that, “they were not taking the story to the American people; they were taking it to the college students and this I feel is a great danger.”<sup>33</sup> Although the rest of the audience made side comments and remarks, the student continued to criticize the forum by arguing that there were “better means of reaching the American public” and one method was to “inform the

American tax payer, not the students.”<sup>34</sup> Although there was no clear question asked by the frustrated student, Dr. Shah responded by replying that the teach-in movement was a means of “establishing dialogue on campus, and a way of getting information to the American public.”<sup>35</sup> For SUNY Plattsburgh, the teach-in was one of the initial stages of student activism on campus as it essentially brought the issue to light among the student body and represented the support of the faculty and administration for student involvement in social issues.

As 1965 came to a close, the pressing issue of the Vietnam War had made its way to Plattsburgh’s campus. However, 1966 was a relatively quiet year for student protest at Plattsburgh. On a nationwide scale, 1966 still marked the early stages of the protest movement. With much of the Plattsburgh student body quiet about the issue through 1966, the student press still addressed the issue in the campus newspaper, the *Northern Light*. As the war escalated, more and more faculty began expressing their views on the Vietnam conflict to the student body, both inside and outside of classes. As a result, students began making “ridiculous and sometimes cruel accusations” regarding campus faculty.<sup>36</sup> In a *Northern Light* article from February 1966, a student journalist addressed this issue by saying: “too many “students” have been guilty of attaching “communist tags” and others to professors whose economic, political, and social philosophies do not coincide with their own.”<sup>37</sup> With a student body that was relatively quiet about issues like the Vietnam War, it is interesting that many would openly attack the political views of faculty members. This made President Angell’s leadership all the more crucial to maintaining stability and peaceful relations between students, faculty, and administrators on campus.

A month later, the Plattsburgh's College Chorale traveled to Montreal to give a performance at McGill University. When the bus reached Montreal, they were met by a group of demonstrators protesting the Vietnam War. The bus was forced to a stop for about 20 minutes as the protesters chanted "Go Home Yankees!"<sup>38</sup> The demonstrators went on to create commotion as the demonstrators broke a window on the bus and "threw pamphlets on the bus, and some of them tried to get into the bus."<sup>39</sup> One student present at the scene said, "There were well over 500 protesters. Many of them were students from McGill."<sup>40</sup> Although the incident took place off of the Plattsburgh campus, it certainly opened the eyes of the students involved to the growing antiwar sentiment among other college students.

As 1967 came around, antiwar sentiment was very much present, but public demonstrations remained few. By March of 1967, word had reached the American public about the CIA's connection to the National Student Association. Although the connection was largely monetary, the news created a scandal as many were outraged that the world's largest spy organization was working with America's student leaders.<sup>41</sup> One person to openly criticize this was Plattsburgh President George Angell in an interview with the *Northern Light*. From Angell's perspective, the CIA-NSA connection wasn't "very acceptable to many educators"<sup>42</sup>.

Angell continued to defend academic freedom by saying, "I think the educators are more interested in our intellectual safety and it seems to me that what we're after is freedom of speech and freedom of knowledge and free use thereof and anything that the CIA or anything else does to use educational organizations for military purposes is wrong."<sup>43</sup> The CIA was using this connection to gain access into student activities and

also to provide a cover for secret operations, as was the case at Michigan State University.<sup>44</sup> Angell's comments regarding the CIA-NSA connection certainly expresses his belief in academic freedom for students and educators without the interference of military organizations. At many colleges, this military-university relationship was met with opposition and often resulted in violence. As a result, Angell opposed the CIA-NSA connection for it posed as a possible threat to campus order.

By this time, protest on Plattsburgh's campus was still less apparent than at other universities of the time. Many people, especially writers from the campus newspapers, were wondering if Plattsburgh's isolated location "influenced a lack of militancy" among the student body or Plattsburgh's students were just simply apathetic.<sup>45</sup> One person to openly comment on this was economics professor and advisor to the campus' SDS chapter, Dr. Shah. The economics professor was one of the faculty's most outspoken critics of the war in Vietnam and although he felt anti-war sentiment at the university was very much alive, factors like the school's educational background, isolated location, and fear among the student body hindered a sense of militancy among the students. However, according to Dr. Shah, protest at Plattsburgh was likely to come as he said, "I don't think it's possible for really any school to remain apart from this widespread phenomena."<sup>46</sup> As the war in Vietnam escalated, Professor Shah's statement would prove to be correct, although in a rather non-violent manner.

Around a month later in May of 1967, Dr. Shah's teaching contract was terminated based on a yearly evaluation given by the economics department. The system uses a procedure that allows the coordinator of the department to report his evaluation of professors to the administration. Once viewed by the administration and the Vice

President, they decide whether their contract receives termination or renewal.<sup>47</sup> Known for being an outspoken critic of the war in Vietnam and other social issues, many people around campus, including the faculty, couldn't help but feel that Dr. Shah was released for political purposes. In fact, based on the evaluation, one of the reasons for his dismissal was for his "use of his classes for political purposes."<sup>48</sup>

The professor's release created uproar on the campus as 1,047 students signed a petition for a reevaluation of Dr. Shah. Also, 25 students marched outside of Hawkins Hall for multiple days straight with signs demanding answers from the administration.<sup>49</sup> Many of the students who petitioned for Dr. Shah's reevaluation called for a meeting with the administration, but the administration stood by their decision to terminate his contract. In an interview with the local community paper, the *Press-Republican*, Dr. Shah felt that his "political involvement and socialistic leanings were a definite factor involved in his termination of contract."<sup>50</sup> President Angell was left in a tight spot. If he intervened on the issue, President Angell would have met opposition from either students or faculty, regardless of his decision. Therefore, Angell may have felt it was necessary to allow the process to be carried out in an effort to maintain good relations with both the faculty and students. Nevertheless, the issue created one of the first instances of public student protest on the campus.

That same month, the *Northern Light* conducted an interview with Joseph Mosier, the editor of the local community paper, the *Press-Republican*. Mosier was a staunch supporter of the war in Vietnam and openly criticized those who protested the conflict. Mosier felt that "the country should be behind the President in this war that is going on in Vietnam."<sup>51</sup> Mosier was also confident in the reports made by General Westmoreland,



the top commander of the forces in Vietnam, as his “assessment and evaluation of the situation there...answered many questions that people had been asking and wondering about.”<sup>52</sup> Besides openly supporting President Johnson and the war in Vietnam, Joseph Mosier and the *Press-Republican* lashed out against protestors of the war. These dissenters are what Mosier referred to as “the beatniks, Hanoiniks, and know-nothings who oppose the war.”<sup>53</sup> To Mosier, these dissenters represented “a very irresponsible and intolerant attitude about a discussion of the issues of the Vietnam War” and posed as a problem to the American people.<sup>54</sup>

In the summer of 1967, President Angell attended a leadership conference where he gave a speech regarding antiwar action. Although it is not known where he spoke, the speech from August 7 titled, “Protest is Not Enough”, addressed the growing presence of protestors both on and off campuses and the role administrators played. Angell started off the speech by addressing the question “what is leadership?”<sup>55</sup> For Angell, leadership required many qualities:

The quality of leadership is directly related to one’s ability first to envision the problems of the immediate future...secondly to make others aware of these problems...thirdly to plan counter measures if necessary and to plan those cooperatively with those affected...fourth to prevent the disruption of daily operations while you’re doing the first three...and fifth to help channel all those released energies into constructive, long range work.<sup>56</sup>

Angell felt leadership was essential to university administrators as college campuses were becoming “surrounded by the forces of long range responsibilities: mass protest.”<sup>57</sup> As a result, he felt it was absolutely crucial to plan for the future in the case of campus protest.

President Angell continued his speech expressing dissatisfaction towards many of the protestors across the nation. Angell didn't attack all dissenters or expressions of activism, but rather disagreed with the certain methods and actions of protestors who believed militancy was the answer to spark social change. However, Angell was aware of the impact activism can produce as he says, “let's not underestimate the value of protest” as protest can “bring our attention to a problem.”<sup>58</sup> “No protest in itself...can build a nation,” Angell argued, but “protestors need to elect an official because it is a political problem, which is not easy to do.”<sup>59</sup>

For the American people, Angell asserted, “we are in this confused state, and that is why we are in Vietnam...we don't know.”<sup>60</sup> As result of the looming threat of campus protests, Angell felt that “administrators are in the spotlight” to lead their campuses and guide their students towards peaceful and non-violent protests.<sup>61</sup> To Angell, the answer lied in the preservation of values as he asked administrators at the conference “what values are you going to teach?”<sup>62</sup> Angell closed his speech by asserting that: “A liberal education will build a national attitude of open-mindedness rather than a close-mindedness feeling of superiority...about our American politics.”<sup>63</sup> These leadership qualities that President Angell spoke of would be essential to addressing student protest on Plattsburgh's campus in later years.

As 1968 came, the issue of the draft loomed over the heads of many male students at SUNY Plattsburgh. Although 1968 was tumultuous year, no student newspapers were available from that year. As a result, the local newspaper was my main source for campus activity during 1968. The war in Vietnam had reached a climax in 1968 as US troop presence numbered around 550,000 American men, and the draft called more and more men into service.<sup>64</sup> Although millions were eligible for military service, certain deferments, including a college education and graduate school, excused many from joining the military. However, in 1968, the Johnson administration passed a legislation that refused draft deferments to graduate students in fields other than medicine and the ministry.<sup>65</sup> As a result, a large portion of undergraduate students would now be eligible for the draft.

President Angell criticized the Johnson administration for this decision in an interview with the *Press-Republican*. For Angell, limiting draft deferments to only graduate students in fields of medicine and the ministry was “shortsighted” and “a form of national suicide.”<sup>66</sup> Angell believed this would create a future problem as he says, “The armed forces cannot function unless supported at home by a sound economy, a strong government, and by an extensive program of research and training in every essential field of endeavor.”<sup>67</sup> The Plattsburgh President continued to express his disapproval by stating, “To force excellent mathematicians, as an example, to become perhaps mediocre soldiers is obviously a form of national suicide.”<sup>68</sup>

The *Press-Republican* also interviewed a number of male Plattsburgh students to learn their perspectives on the issue. Asked about the changes in draft deferments, one student replied, “The deferment system will hamper the graduate schools. In 10 to 15

years the intellectual community will be depleted...I can't see taking the educational elite to fight a ground war in Asia."<sup>69</sup> Another student added that "I think they've got enough for the service without graduate students. There are more important fields than just medicine and the ministry. The choice should be well-rounded and not just from a specific group."<sup>70</sup> The draft created a sense of anxiety among young males at the time and played a large role in the growth of campus activism across the country.

While public demonstrations and protest were still a rare occurrence on Plattsburgh's campus, the issue of the Vietnam War was certainly being discussed. On March 16, 1968, former South Vietnamese ambassador to the United States, Dr. Tran Van Chuong, addressed students, faculty members, and town residents about the issues surrounding the Vietnam War and the future of the conflict. The meeting was arranged by the International Relations Club and was held at the Educational Research and Demonstration Center on Rugar Street.<sup>71</sup> Chuong argued that the continuation of the war was due to the fact that the United States had simply "underestimated the enemy." America's underestimation of their enemy in Vietnam was, according to Chuong, why "only one nation can defeat the United States- the United States itself."<sup>72</sup>

As the draft affected many students directly and became more of a pressing issue, some felt compelled to express their opposition to it. From the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> of April, 1968, students at Plattsburgh took part in an anti-Vietnam war "vigil" outside of Hawkins Hall. Both students and faculty participated in the vigil and many faculty members even took a considerable effort in arranging the demonstration. One faculty member who helped lead the vigil was theater professor and member of the Faculty Committee Against the War, a newly formed faculty group on campus, E. T. Guidotti.<sup>73</sup>

For Guidotti, the vigil was to be a peaceful demonstration as he states, “The vigil...will involve no illegal activity” and if not performed within the law, he would take ‘no part in it.’<sup>74</sup> President Angell held a similar view, as saying, “As long as it stays within the realm of the law, people should express themselves.”<sup>75</sup> Participation in the vigil was relatively small as only a few dozen students and faculty members showed up.<sup>76</sup> The vigil not only expressed faculty and administrative support for student activism, but also showed their commitment to maintaining peaceful and non-violent order among the students at Plattsburgh.

Later in April, a poll was performed on Plattsburgh’s campus, along with 1,500 other colleges, that asked students what their thoughts were on the Vietnam War, the pending election of 1968, and America’s urban problems. The poll received a large turnout on the campus as about 2,000 students took part by casting ballots at Hawkins Hall. The first question focused on the level of military activity that the US government should pursue in Vietnam. The second question addressed the issue of bombing campaigns in North Vietnam and whether they should be intensified or not. The final question asked voters what they thought was a priority when dealing with the many urban problems of the time. Students were also asked to circle one of the twelve candidates running for President.<sup>77</sup> Although the results of the poll were not available, the ballot was a method to get students personally involved in political and social issues of the day, especially the Vietnam War.

As campuses around the country were exploding with anti-war sentiment and violent protest, many were wondering why Plattsburgh wasn’t affected by this sense of activism. An article in the *Press-Republican* addressed this lack of militancy among the

Plattsburgh students. Diana Hood, associate dean of students and in charge of student housing and activities, commented on this by saying, “The one major reason is that other means of communication haven’t been closed to students here. There are ways to talk over the possibility of change.”<sup>78</sup> For Diana Hood, open communication for students allowed for a peaceful campus atmosphere as she states, “Here at PSUC, we can still talk. We’re here together- faculty and students- and can work on problems together.”<sup>79</sup> Although Hood may have been correct about why Plattsburgh’s student remained relatively peaceful, 1969 would turn out to be the year that protest would finally come to Plattsburgh’s campus.

By the fall of 1969, student activism at SUNY Plattsburgh began to explode. By 1969, college campuses and American society in general had become polarized by the conflict in Vietnam.<sup>80</sup> At this point, more and more students across the nation had become involved in violent demonstrations. Draft resistance had increased, police clashes with students had intensified, and ROTC buildings had become “focal points of protest.”<sup>81</sup> For SUNY Plattsburgh, the Homecoming Parade of 1969 would become an essential development to the growing antiwar activism among Plattsburgh’s students. The parade also threatened campus order and relations with the local community as both the town and student body would become polarized on the issue.

The Homecoming Parade of October 1969 received a great deal of attention from the students and community as the *Cardinal Points* and *Plattsburgh Alumnus* covered the events. A few weeks prior to the Homecoming Parade, the Student Homecoming Committee invited the US Marine Corps Force Troops Atlantic Drum and Bugle Corps and the Marine Corps Color Guard to perform in the parade. A few days later, rumors

about the invitation reached the student body. Students reacted in a variety of ways as some expressed “delight and amazement” while others reacted with “alarm and indignation.”<sup>82</sup> As the issue created a debate among the campus, a group of students met with Don Grant, the assistant to President Angell for College Relations, to discuss and solve the issue of the Marine Band.

The students addressing Don Grant about the issue were split on what course of action to take. Those in favor of an invitation for the Marine band felt the invitation should stand, as it would be a good contribution to the parade. The group of students in opposition to the presence of the Marine band argued that, “they heard rumblings that undergraduate dissidents were proposing counter measures that in one way or another could result in confrontation or violence.”<sup>83</sup> As the meeting concluded, Grant decided to let the Student Senate decide the outcome of the issue.

On Wednesday October 8, 1969, the issue was to be debated and decided by the Student Senate. Earlier that day, a petition circulated on Plattsburgh’s campus that called for student support of the Marine band’s invitation. The petition was able to gather the signatures of 800 students and was to be submitted to the Student Senate for consideration during their debate later that day. However, the petition would turn out to be ineffective. After a rigorous debate, the Student Senate turned down the Marine Band’s invitation in a landslide 7-1 vote. For the Student Senate, the fear and “the possibility of physical confrontation on campus” was enough to bar the Marine band from performing in the parade.<sup>84</sup>

The small minority of students who sought to protest the Marine band's presence were part of a campus student group known as PICPIV, or the Plattsburgh Independent Committee for Peace in Vietnam. The campus group was planning to create an anti-war parade float along with a "funeral cortege" that would follow the float along its route.<sup>85</sup> The parade float was to depict a long-nosed Pinocchio character with a banner stating, "The Troops Will Be Home By Christmas."<sup>86</sup> Rumors of the float spread around campus and initially deterred the Student Senate from allowing the Marine band to perform. However, as the decision to ban the Marine band reached Plattsburgh students and local residents, many spoke out against the vote of the Student Senate.

Slowly but surely, plans for a successful Homecoming parade had "come apart at the seams."<sup>87</sup> Resident and students began demanding that the student government and campus administration rescind the permit for the parade. Following the public outcry, the administration and student government did all they could to salvage the Homecoming festivities. In order to do this, many felt it was crucial that the Student Senate reverse their previous decision to ban the Marines. On Thursday, October 9, an emergency Student Senate meeting was called for on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor of the Kehoe administrative building. Prior to the meeting, Sergeant White of the Marine Corps band was asked if they would still accept the invitation if the decision is reversed. Sergeant White replied that they would perform as long as no floats were present that are derogatory to the Marines or President Nixon.<sup>88</sup>

Following the emergency Student Senate meeting, the group issued a press release statement that said, "The Homecoming parade will go on as scheduled with the Marine band participating and PICPIV being allowed to participate in the parade if they comply



with the desires of the Homecoming chairmen.”<sup>89</sup> That same day, students and citizens packed into the Common Council chamber in the Plattsburgh City Hall. The issue had become a divisive factor in Plattsburgh and it was evident at the City Hall as one person described the atmosphere as “electric.”<sup>90</sup> About 300 students were present along with a number of alumni and community residents as a select few were chosen to speak in front of the audience at the City Hall. Many Plattsburgh residents were skeptical of student dissidents as one speaker stated, “If we cancel the parade, the radicals will have one.”<sup>91</sup> Each person gave their perspective on the parade, and by the end of the meeting, a large majority supported the continuation of the Homecoming festivities.

As the issue of the Homecoming parade unfolded, President Angell was off campus on college business, but was constantly informed of its developments. From the beginning of the issues, President Angell said that the “solution to the issue was the responsibility of the students involved” and was confident that “they would select the right path in the end.”<sup>92</sup> This expression of confidence in the ability of students to resolve issues not only helps to explain Angell’s leadership qualities, but also shows why the student body respected him and his commitment to campus order. For SUNY Plattsburgh, the issue of the Homecoming parade of 1969 threatened campus stability and relations with the local community. For a change, Plattsburgh was subject to the exploding tensions that the Vietnam War was creating within college communities. The Homecoming Parade went on as planned with no signs of confrontation from the PICPIV or other Plattsburgh students.<sup>93</sup> As clearly expressed through the developments of the ordeal, the Homecoming parade dilemma showed the ability of Plattsburgh students and local residents in resolving issues and avoiding violent confrontations.

Around the same time, Plattsburgh students were planning a moratorium to protest the Vietnam War and honor those who died in the conflict. The moratorium was to coincide with a nation wide antiwar moratorium on October 15, 1969. News of the moratorium was originally spread through an ad in the *New York Times* that called for students across the country to openly protest the war. Pamphlets and buttons that stated, “WORK FOR PEACE, OCTOBER 15” were distributed to 2,300 universities around the country in an effort to create the largest coordinated anti-war demonstration since the 1968 primaries.<sup>94</sup> For students across the nation, the moratorium posed as a “way that people can give a second judgment on the war in Vietnam to those who hold political power.”<sup>95</sup> The event was labeled “Vietnam Moratorium Day” as “rallies, silent vigils, faculty-student forums, candlelight processions, and marches” were to occur at over 50 upstate New York schools alone.<sup>96</sup>

Planning for the moratorium was conducted by the campus anti-war organization, the PICPIV. A week prior to the moratorium, the PICPIV held a meeting on the night of October 7 to discuss what action Plattsburgh’s students would take for the event.<sup>97</sup> The group scheduled a silent vigil at the pond outside of Hawkins Hall from 12:50 to 1:15. During the vigil, black armbands and antiwar literature were dispersed to participants by the PICPIV. Although classes were to be held as scheduled, President Angell left the decision up to the students regarding scheduling and attending the moratorium.<sup>98</sup>

The moratorium turned out to be one of the largest displays of nationwide protest in American history, with an estimated 3 million people taking part in some form of activism against the war in Vietnam.<sup>99</sup> At Plattsburgh, 500 gathered around the pond outside of Hawkins Hall in silence donning black armbands. During the short period of

silence, a wreath was placed in the midst of the crowd that read, “In memory of the 40,000 unjustified human sacrifices taken in the Vietnam conflict.”<sup>100</sup> Following the silent vigil, many students dispersed to go to classes while some stayed behind. Shortly after, two students picked up guitars and began singing the classic anti-war song “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” while the remaining students sang along.<sup>101</sup>

During the moratorium at Plattsburgh, a few students, whose names were not given, were asked to give their opinion on what they hoped to accomplish with the moratorium. One student commented on the event by saying, “We want people to see this is what we want- peace, not violence.”<sup>102</sup> Another student gave positive feedback on the Moratorium by commenting; “I think this was a chance for those of us who are against the war to re-affirm our feelings.”<sup>103</sup> Present at the Moratorium was President Angell who participated to express his support for the peaceful anti-war demonstration. When asked about the Moratorium and the participation of Plattsburgh’s students, President Angell replied, “My only disappointment is that there weren’t three of four thousand people here - people from the community as well as the college.”<sup>104</sup> President Angell’s presence at the Moratorium gave the students at Plattsburgh a sense of administrative support for their anti-war demonstrations and helped allow the event to remain peaceful. The Moratorium would represent one of the largest anti-war demonstrations at Plattsburgh during the Vietnam era.

Following the Moratorium, President Angell attended a conference of the United States Northeast Regional Council of Academic Affairs Administrators. As a speaker at the conference, President Angell urged academic administrators facing the threat of student protest to consider “new strategies of policy enforcement” as a means to “ward

off moral disunity and the unfettered use of political power on the nation's campuses."<sup>105</sup> For Angell, the values that every academic administrator must possess include, "moral commitment; integrity; participation in the decision-making process; accountability; efficiency; communication; viability; and humaneness."<sup>106</sup> As he did in the summer of 1967, President Angell was able to express the qualities necessary for an administrator in dealing with student activism and protest and would use these qualities to address disturbances at Plattsburgh and ensure campus stability.

A month later, another nationwide moratorium was planned for November 15, 1969 and it would become the largest single demonstration in American history. The Moratorium attracted nearly 500,000 people to march on Washington D.C. and demand an immediate end to the war in Vietnam.<sup>107</sup> At Plattsburgh, some students were interested in taking part in the massive demonstration. The decision to fund the trip to Washington D.C. created a large debate with the Student Senate. Although the Student Senate originally agreed to subsidize the trip to Washington D.C., the proposal was voted down by the senate who argued that the trip would bring forth legal issues involving subsidies for student activities.<sup>108</sup>

Despite the decision not to subsidize the trip to Washington, the PICPIV continued to plan for a moratorium of its own at Plattsburgh. In an attempt to get students to participate in the demonstration, the PICPIV set up a table in Hawkins Hall on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of November to promote the event and encourage student participation. The PICPIV handed out anti-war literature, buttons, posters, black armbands, and information regarding the event. On both November 14 and 15, films on Vietnam were shown by the PICPIV along with various speakers who voiced their opposition to the

Vietnam conflict. Following the films and discussion forums on Saturday evening, November 15, participating students and residents met in front of Hawkins Hall and began a march to the MacDonough Monument on campus. Upon reaching the campus monument, the participants engaged in a fifteen-minute silent vigil mourning the fallen soldiers in Vietnam. During that allotted time, numerous churches throughout the Plattsburgh area rang bells in mourning.<sup>109</sup> Although it is not known how many people participated in the event, it showed how antiwar protest at SUNY Plattsburgh was becoming more and more visible.

But the tensions on SUNY Plattsburgh's campus appeared to ease. In the final month of 1969, a former US Senator, Wayne Morse, spoke in front of a crowd of students and faculty members on December 11 at Hawkins Hall auditorium. In his address, Morse attacked American policy in Southeast Asia by stating, "We are the foremost world-wide violator of international law."<sup>110</sup> Morse emphasized that America's actions in Vietnam were illegal because of our defense of the South Vietnamese government, which we established, and our lack of a declaration of war in Vietnam. When one person asked what his opinions were regarding student protest, he replied, "Use all the legal avenues. Write to Senators, Representatives, and the President."<sup>111</sup> Morse, like many others, knew how important it was that students use peaceful means of protest since violent protest were not only ineffective, but were polarizing many universities and communities in America.

By 1970, the issue of the Vietnam War continued to create unrest among students throughout the nation. For SUNY Plattsburgh, 1969 brought forth some noticeable signs of student protest against the war and this sense of activism would carry over into 1970.

In April of 1970, another anti-Vietnam moratorium was scheduled to take place on Plattsburgh's campus. The moratorium was a four-day event that lasted from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup>. On the first day, students, faculty members, and town resident were addressed a reading of the fallen American soldiers in Vietnam.<sup>112</sup>

On the second night, a listing of the US deaths in Vietnam continued followed by a speaker who addressed a crowd in Hawkins Hall. On April 14, the reading of the war dead was continued until finished and was followed by a speech given by an unknown speaker at the Kehoe Administrative Building parking lot. For the rest of the night, participants listened to folk singers, discussions, and open forums about the conflict in Vietnam. On the final day of the four-day Moratorium, participants gathered at Hawkins Hall pond to listen to speakers, discussions, and folksingers before a silent vigil was performed at noon.<sup>113</sup> Activities such as vigils and discussions allowed students to express their opposition, but in a way that would be non-violent. Although few details are available about the Moratorium, the four-day event presented the increasing activism among Plattsburgh's students.

Tensions on American campuses erupted when 4 students were shot and killed at a protest demonstration at Kent State University on Monday, May 4, 1970. As news of the shooting at Kent State and the invasion of Cambodia reached the American public, massive waves of protest emerged on universities across the country. At 1,350 universities, 4,350,000 students participated in some form of protest in response to the shootings and invasion. In some instances, campuses became scenes of violence as students and local police clashed. At SUNY-Buffalo, for example, a few students

firebombed the campus' ROTC offices while police responded by "laying siege" to the campus and using tear gas on the students.<sup>114</sup>

When news of Kent State reached Plattsburgh's campus, students were quick to act out and protest. Just hours after the shootings, on Monday, May 4, members of the student government and student body began to rally outside of MacDonough Hall and later moved onto Broad Street where they stood and blocked off traffic in protest. The crowd then walked down Broad Street towards downtown Plattsburgh to the Courthouse where various people gave speeches. By the time the crowd reached the Courthouse, nearly 1,200 people joined in on the march. The crowd of protestors then marched to the Federal Building on Brinkerhoff Street where "they remained for several hours peacefully standing and sitting."<sup>115</sup>

John Myers, a former Plattsburgh professor and Chairman of the Faculty Senate present at the time, vividly depicted the events in the day following the tragedy in a letter to his parents:

About 11 in the morning (of Tuesday), President Angell called me. Some kids were occupying his office, demanding an end to classes...The Student Senate sent me a resolution "strongly requesting that the faculty conduct a fair strike to be held May 5 and 6 to express their disgust and horror by the recent killings at Kent State University." When I reached the Tower (Kehoe Administrative Building), I could barely get in...Then we joined the President's Administrative Conference in meeting. He decided to leave the holding of classes to each individual instructor.<sup>116</sup>

In a more recent interview with Professor Myers, he stated that, “a few conservative professors refused to dismiss class, but in one case I remember, the students simply removed the chairs.”<sup>117</sup>

One student commented on the actions of student protestors by saying, “that she was outraged at students who banged on dorm-room doors as early as 6 a.m. urging others to take place in marches or skip class.”<sup>118</sup> After listening to student grievances, President Angell allowed the Student Strike Committee to use the Kehoe Administrative Building and “allowed students to use his office as headquarters for the strike.”<sup>119</sup> Even as students occupied his office, Angell knew it was crucial to assume leadership and cooperate with the students through the ordeal. As a result, Angell prevented any immediate confrontations from erupting on campus. By Tuesday night, tensions calmed as both students and townspeople gathered in Memorial Hall after another all night vigil as various groups and individuals expressed their opinions and methods of protest for the following days.

By Wednesday, May 6, protest continued as Professor Myers wrote, “The kids downtown tried to close down the federal building but got ousted by a federal marshal. They then picketed the building.”<sup>120</sup> That same day, students, faculty members, and town residents engaged in a candlelight march led by Plattsburgh’s Mayor Francis Steltzer and President Angell. The march began at MacDonough Hall and made its way to the United States Air Force Base not too far from the campus. More than 2,000 people participated in the March as some sang anti-war songs like “Give Peace a Chance” and “Where Have All the Young Men Gone?” Marchers also received peace “V’s” from bystanders along the way.<sup>121</sup> Professor John Myers, who participated in the march as he commented, “I



went along in great part to help prevent trouble, but there certainly was never a more disciplined group.”<sup>122</sup> With President Angell leading the march, it is clear why Plattsburgh’s students remained a so disciplined.

Following the march on the Plattsburgh Air Base, students poured into the main auditorium to participate in the faculty meeting. There, students proposed that two days of special meetings be held and threatened to not go to classes unless their demands were met. The administration agreed and both seminars were open to students and faculty and as each featured a panel of speakers that addressed issues such as the war in Vietnam and protest. As open forums were held, groups also organized protest tactics including an anti-draft action where a male student would “lose one’s card into a girl’s hand, creating so much paperwork it would disrupt the system.”<sup>123</sup>

As Friday came around, peaceful marches and demonstrations continued on Plattsburgh’s campus. A “Peace Parade Concert” was held that day where musicians like Herbie Mann and Judy Collins were among the several acts to perform for Plattsburgh students, faculty, and residents. The concert turned out to be a major success as one student commented, “What a damn good show it was.”<sup>124</sup> Later that evening, two buses with about a 100 Plattsburgh students departed for a massive anti-war rally in Washington D.C. Over 100,000 people gathered for the rally in Washington and Plattsburgh’s students were eager to express their discontent over the events of May, 1970, in any way possible.<sup>125</sup>

For many, the week-long protest erased all notions of an “apathetic” student body on Plattsburgh’s campus. One student commented on this surge of student activism as he

wrote to the student newspaper saying, “The Plattsburgh audience has come alive. The cast of Peace Parade really dug it here. The Plattsburgh audience no longer shits. I stand corrected and my faith in mankind has grown ever more strong.”<sup>126</sup> In the time following the protests at Plattsburgh, many students, faculty members, and town residents openly praised the peaceful demonstrations by students and the leadership on the part of the faculty and administration.

Writers from both the *Cardinal Points* and the local *Press-Republican* credited President Angell and the Plattsburgh administration for maintaining peace and non-violence during the week-long demonstrations. One article from the *Cardinal Points* commented that due to a “sympathetic administration”, Plattsburgh’s students “remained a group of Peaceful Peace enthusiasts.”<sup>127</sup> One local resident wrote to the editor of the *Press-Republican* that Angell’s “ability to understand and work with young people” helped him promote peace throughout the week.<sup>128</sup> John Myers also noted the leadership of President Angell as he wrote, “He certainly came out well in the days of the strike: no burned buildings, the college not closed down. I think he demonstrated great political ability. With other administrators ordered to stay off campus, only he and the faculty were seen.”<sup>129</sup>

As the turbulent events of the spring of 1970 came to an end, many Plattsburgh alumni wrote letters to President Angell applauding his efforts and leadership during the demonstrations. In the summer of 1970, one Plattsburgh alumni write to Angell:

During these days of conflict and radicalization, it is refreshing to read your report of events on campus during the May 70’ crisis –

Congratulations on “keeping your cool” – and in publicly displaying your faith in the new generation. It made me doubly proud to be an alumni of P’burgh.<sup>130</sup>

President Angell certainly “kept his cool” during the events following Kent State and his respect and cooperation with this younger generation proved to be one of his greatest assets.

People were particularly appreciative of President Angell’s detailed report on the events surrounding the eventful week called “Letter from the President”, which was not available to me.<sup>131</sup> One Plattsburgh alumni wrote to Angell expressing his support for the demonstrations:

Let this letter express sincere thanks for your special report on the week of “Cambodia-Kent State.” Such a tall and detailed account of events and communications deserves a special degree of respect and praise. As an alumnus of Plattsburgh State, I am proud to hear of the cooperation which developed during the week of May 4.<sup>132</sup>

Another letter sent to President Angell expressed similar praises as an alumnus wrote:

I read with much interest your “Letter from the President” regarding student unrest at the college, and your splendid method of handling it. You did a marvelous job and I was so proud of you and your staff...It is fortunate that you are blessed with the ability to handle young people and difficult situations so well...I was so pleased to note that Plattsburgh was

not among those colleges where the student uprisings were  
mismanaged.<sup>133</sup>

As violence erupted on many campuses in America, many alumni, students, and community residents were able to appreciate the leadership of Angell as he prevented any violence from occurring at Plattsburgh.

In another letter sent to Angell, alumni continued to show their support for Angell's administrative abilities as they wrote:

We would like to commend you, the faculty, and the student body at Plattsburgh for the excellent manner in which recent critical issues have been handled on campus...the peaceful and intelligent reactions to events are a tribute to the open lines of communication which have always existed. The community, alumni, and friends of the college are most fortunate to have a person of your outstanding caliber to lead faculty and students toward solutions to critical issues affecting all. We are proud to be Plattsburgh alumni.<sup>134</sup>

Again, those who saw the eruption of violence and protest at college communities were able to hold a greater appreciation for President Angell and his dedication to non-violence.

Angell's actions even gained recognition from professors at other schools as one Princeton professor and Plattsburgh alumnus wrote to Angell saying:

My hope is that this letter will be one of many which you will receive from the alumni of the college expressing appreciation for the special report in which you informed us of the response of the college to the crisis on campus...The report itself is to be commended and is representative, I believe, of the decisions and actions taken by you and your colleagues during the troubled days of May.<sup>135</sup>

Letter like these are a clear indication of the role President Angell played during the events following the Kent State shootings. His ability to take control of the situation and provide leadership for the students in the midst of campus unrest is evident as students, faculty, and alumni all praised his actions and dedication to peaceful protest. Without Angell's support and unique presidential qualities, Plattsburgh may have erupted in violence, as was the case at numerous schools across the country.

Well aware of the fact that protest and campus unrest can spark at any minute, President Angell and administrators developed a plan in the summer of 1970 to "prevent campus disorders" for the following school year.<sup>136</sup> One particular reason for this extensive planning was because President Angell was taking a leave of absence for the 1970-71 school year. Essentially, the plan was a document consisting of 6 pages and was created by President Angell and a select few faculty members and administrators. The plan was titled "Confidential Preliminary Proposal To Prevent Campus Disorders, 1970-1971" and it essentially organized separate panels of personnel, one for 'consultation' and the other for 'action', to advise the President and develop a course of action in the wake of student unrest.<sup>137</sup>

The plan then addressed the responsibilities of each personnel and labeled the duties of the President as “responsible for all decisions and actions that may be called for to prevent or to resolve a campus disturbance.” The overall goal of the ‘proposal’ was expressed in the plans summary as it stated:

It is important that we move immediately to implement our plans to prevent recurrence of last year’s disturbances. We should take as much time as is necessary to arrive at a workable plan that will, hopefully, meet any and all disruptive situations. If you understand your responsibility and if you fulfill your responsibility...we can act with confidence.<sup>138</sup>

Angell’s ability to adapt and plan for the future is not only what made him an effective university president, but helped him earn the respect of the students and faculty at Plattsburgh. At a time when many university administrators sought to suppress anti-war activism among students with sometimes violent methods, President Angell assumed the responsibilities as president, allowed the students to take their own courses of action, and displayed his support for student protest. As a result, SUNY Plattsburgh was able to steer clear of the violence that consumed many campuses.

As the war in Vietnam continued to polarize Americans on the home front, the protest movement had begun to fade by the early 1970’s. As many abandoned the movement due to its inability to bring the war to an end, major activist organizations began to spilt and fragment due to internal conflicts. However, the success of the protest movement cannot be measured by its inability to end the war in Vietnam. Instead, the

movement brought numerous social issues to light and gave a voice to a new, young generation and for that reason, can be viewed as a success.

Although anti-war demonstrations among college students often turned violent, SUNY Plattsburgh managed to remain peaceful through the tumultuous years of the Vietnam conflict. This was in large part due to the support and leadership of the campus' administration, especially that of President George W. Angell, who was solely committed to insuring peaceful means of protests. For the student protest movement of the 1960's, Plattsburgh represented a haven for peaceful protest as one student wrote in the *Cardinal Points*, "Plattsburgh struck out for peace with peace and persistence. Hopefully the rest of the country and world will listen to our non-violent appeal and in like manner, non-violently look toward their neighbor with true PEACE IN THEIR HEART and help in their hands. On this note, the *Cardinal Points* brings its second semester to a close."<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E. Thomas Moran, telephone interview with Joe Orth, March 10, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth J. Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> Adam Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1997), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Charles DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 15.

<sup>5</sup> Penny Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 5.

<sup>6</sup> DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 7.

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<sup>7</sup> Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Garfinkle, *Telltale Hearts*, 6.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 4-5.

<sup>11</sup> “Forum: The War in Vietnam,” *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), March 12, 1965.

<sup>12</sup> “13 From College March on Washington,” *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), April 23, 1965.

<sup>13</sup> Jeff Leen, “The Vietnam Protests: When Worlds Collided,” *Washington Post*, September 27, 1999.

<sup>14</sup> David Barber, *A Hard Rain Fell: SDS and Why it Failed* (Oxford: University of Mississippi Press, 2008), 17.

<sup>15</sup> Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks*, 79.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks*, 80-81.

<sup>17</sup> Author preferred to not disclose his name, e-mail message, March 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 131.

<sup>19</sup> No author, “Teach-in Draws Hundreds,” *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), November 23, 1965, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Dan Lageroose, “Doctor Angell to Open ‘Teach-in’ Like Discussion,” *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), October 29, 1965, 1.

<sup>21</sup> No author, “Special to the Northern Light, SDS Announces ‘Teach-in’ Speakers,” *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), November 9, 1965, 3.

<sup>22</sup> “The Vietnam Question,” Teach-in, November 1965, Feinberg Library Special Collections, digital recording.



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<sup>23</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>24</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>25</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>26</sup> “Teach-in Draws Hundreds.”

<sup>27</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>28</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>29</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>30</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>31</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>32</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>33</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>34</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>35</sup> “The Vietnam Question.”

<sup>36</sup> No author, “Talk of the Clown,” *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), February 16, 1966,

4.

<sup>37</sup> “Talk of the Clown.”

<sup>38</sup> Gerry Capone, “Go Home Yankees: Demonstrators Interrupt College Chorale Trip,”

*Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), March 29, 1966, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Capone, “Go Home Yankees: Demonstrators Interrupt College Chorale Trip,” 3.

<sup>40</sup> Capone, “Go Home Yankees: Demonstrators Interrupt College Chorale Trip,” 3.

<sup>41</sup> No author, “And Now, The World Knows,” *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), March 10, 1967, 10.

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<sup>42</sup> No author, "Northern Light Interview: Dr. George W. Angell," *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), March 10, 1967, 9.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 136.

<sup>45</sup> No author, "Northern Light Interview: Dr. Said Shah," *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), April 7, 1967, 9.

<sup>46</sup> "Northern Light Interview: Dr. Said Shah," 9.

<sup>47</sup> Dr. G. Shin, "Shah Victim of Ugly Procedures," *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), May 19, 1967, 5.

<sup>48</sup> No author, "The Month of Debate," *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), March 19, 1967, 15.

<sup>49</sup> "The Month of Debate," 14.

<sup>50</sup> "The Month of Debate," 15.

<sup>51</sup> No author, "Northern Light Interview: Joseph Mosier," *Northern Light* (Plattsburgh, NY), May 19, 1967, 8.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> "Northern Light Interview: Joseph Mosier," 9.

<sup>54</sup> "Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> George Angell, "Protest in Not Enough," speech, SUNY Plattsburgh, August 1967, Feinberg Library Special Collections, digital recording.

<sup>56</sup> "Protest in Not Enough."

<sup>57</sup> "Protest is Not Enough."

<sup>58</sup> "Protest is Not Enough."

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<sup>61</sup> “Protest is Not Enough.”

<sup>62</sup> “Protest is Not Enough.”

<sup>63</sup> “Protest is Not Enough.”

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