

BACKGROUND

The Civil Rights Movement and the Vietnam War occurred on a near overlapping timeline in the United States in the '60s and '70s, resulting in waves of political demonstrations nationwide. Students played an important role in many of these protests, both as organizers and participants. Scholars and journalists have written extensively about demonstrations at institutions such as Columbia University, UC Berkeley, and Syracuse University. However, student activism reached beyond these three schools and headed to Broome County, NY, where students at Harpur College, now referred to as Binghamton University, were extremely politically engaged with the national movements occurring at the time.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- Did students in Harpur College engage in activism related to the Civil Rights Movement and Vietnam War? What form did it take and what types of pushback did they encounter?
- Has the shifting political culture at the university as well as in the local Binghamton area influenced the ways in which certain historical events are remembered or forgotten?

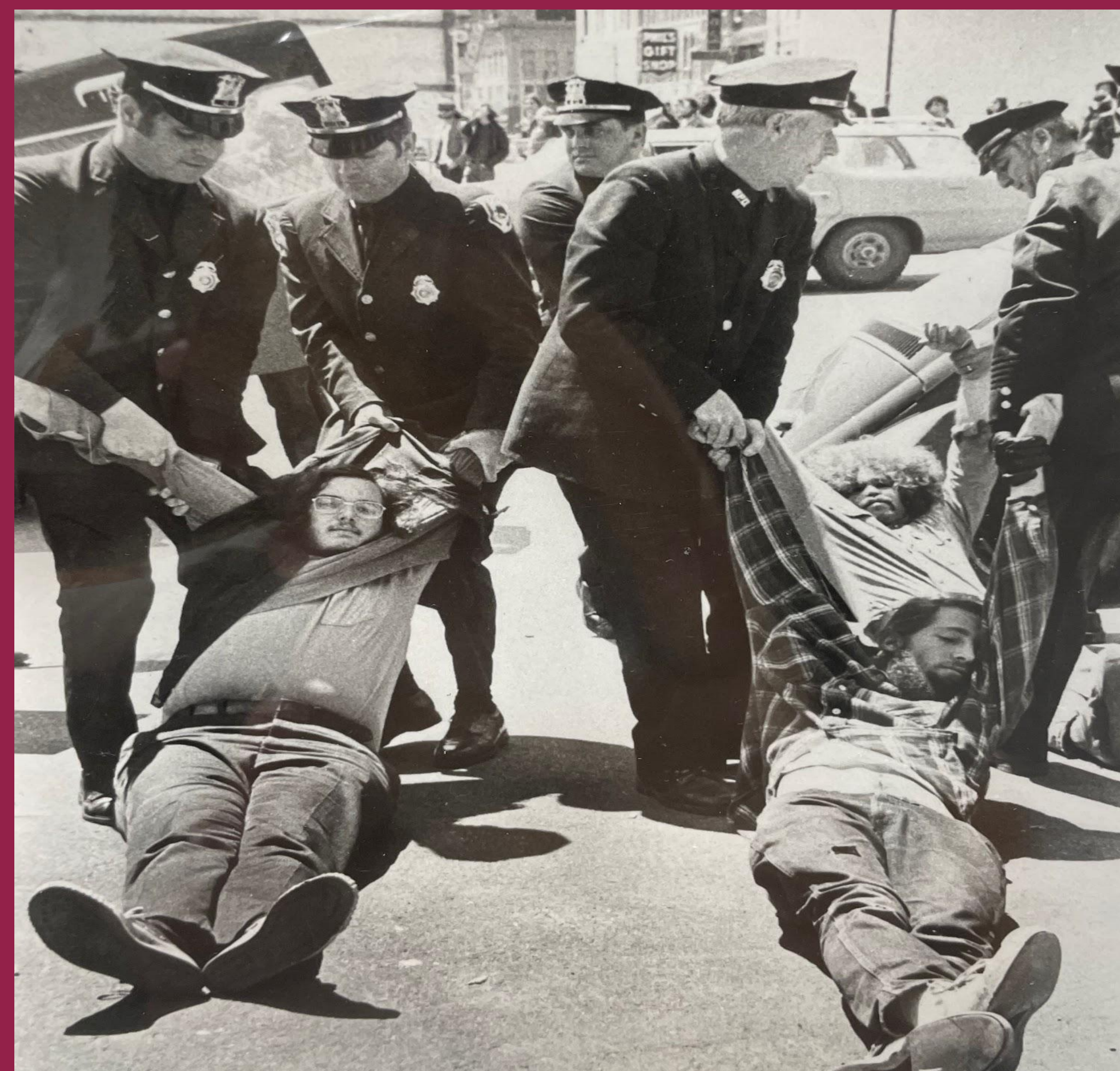


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Overshadowed but Not Devalued: Harpur College, A Hidden Gem of Political Activism

Source Project: Mapping American Prejudice Stream

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Top Left: Depicts a candlelight vigil held in remembrance to students killed at Kent State and Jackson State University. (May 5th, 1971)

Top Right: Showcases Peace march that took place on Binghamton University's campus. (May 6th, 1970)

Bottom Left: Displays student demonstration at Binghamton Federal Bldg against mining of North Vietnamese harbors. (May 10th, 1972)

Bottom Right: Sign placed in protest of U.S Military action in Southeast Asia. (May 6th, 1970)

METHODOLOGY

The Pipe Dream, Binghamton University's newspaper, formerly known as *The Colonial News*, served as the main reference for primary sources. The archives of the newspapers, specifically from the time period 1962-1972, had numerous instances of student activism, whether it be sit-ins, teach-ins, physically blocking faculty and administrators from entering university buildings, or obstructing efforts to target students for enlistment. The **Broome County Library** as well as **Special Collections** in Binghamton University's library contained numerous helpful documents and photos to help contextualize the research.

SIGNIFICANCE

There is a **limited amount of academic literature** that directly references Harpur College and its history. This scope becomes narrower when looking at student activism related to the College specifically in the '60s and '70s. At most, there were mentions of what Harpur College students did at other events, such as organizing a bus down to the March on Washington or protests at the University of Buffalo, but there **has not been a critical examination** of the history of student activism on Binghamton's campus, making our project one of the few, if not the only one taking such an intimate look.

FINDINGS

- Most student activists' efforts were geared towards the anti-war movement as opposed to the Civil Rights Movement.
- Most pushback against the anti-war movement on campus came from Harpur administrators, who went as far as issuing severe disciplinary action against student demonstrators.
- Most pushback against Civil Rights activism on campus came from Harpur students.