

Henion occupation results in probation

On a cold, damp Monday afternoon 16 black students walked into a house-like structure on the lower end of the Loras College Campus. Several students stepped into the offices on the main floor, and another group hurried past the hallway and up the stairs to the second floor. For all practical purposes, Henion Manor was under their control.

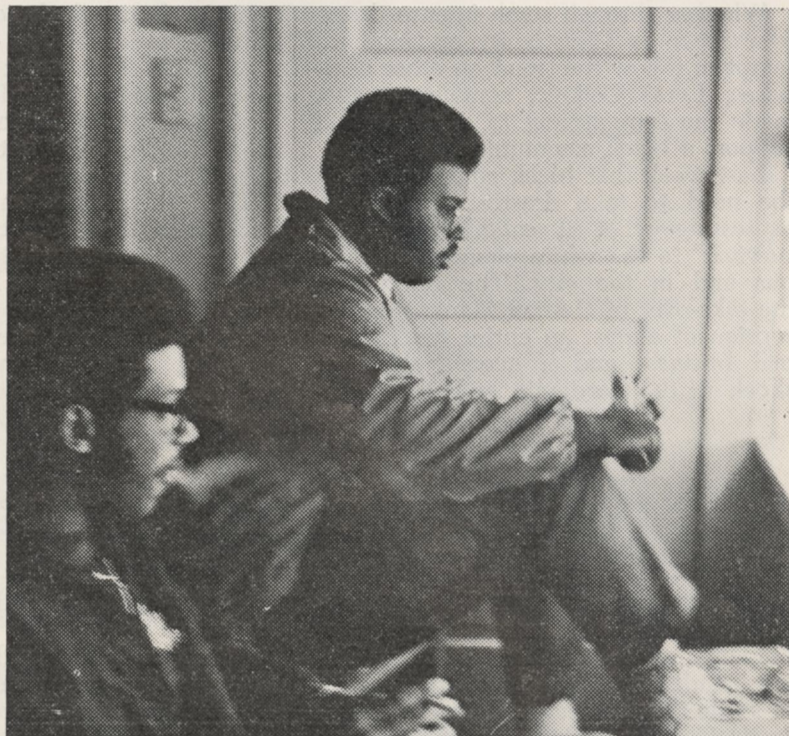
Almost immediately, groups of white students started to form across the street. Students gathered in the lobby of Binz Hall were treated to a display of acute observation on the part of a college security officer. The gray-haired man arrived shortly after the occupation began, and after standing in the street for a few minutes observing the Manor, walked into the Binz lobby and announced to the students, "They're in there, all right." With that he proceeded across the street to the parking lot and started to hand out parking tickets.

Student Senate Vice President Patrick Winn arrived at Henion Manor shortly after 3:00 p.m. The black students had entered the house about 1½ hours before that time. Standing in the wet grass, Winn spoke to several students inside the house who were huddled at a downstairs window. They made it clear to Winn that they wanted to speak to Msgr. Driscoll — no one else.

When Msgr. Driscoll walked to the front porch of the occupied building, nearly 100 white students had gathered on the front lawn of Henion Manor or across the street in front of Binz Hall. The chilly weather and gray skies lent a certain somberness to the entire situation, but the levity with which some students treated the occupation made a person wonder if the whole thing was really happening.

"Well what do we do, Mr. Jackson." With these words Msgr. Driscoll began his personal confrontation with the black students led by Tom Jackson. The twenty minute session at the porch was followed by meetings throughout the night.

A chill wind accompanied the night's darkness as each side formulated its replies to the other side's proposals. Ocia Drake, representing the black students, and Fr. Cabey, moderator of the Black



Pictured above, left, President Driscoll negotiates with black students on the front steps of Henion Manor, while inside, above, right, black students sit and watch in the administrative office building they occupied on Nov. 3. Below, spokesman Tommy Jackson meets reporters in front of Keane Hall to announce that the 16 black students will stay in the hall despite the college's suspension of them Nov. 8.

(Photo by Jerry Streff)

Student Union, travelled between Keane Hall and the Manor carrying the messages which they themselves had carefully prepared in order to insure a minimum of misunderstanding.

From the outside, a person could only detect a few banners proclaiming the fact that it was occupied. Inside the house, nothing was left to the imagination. A table blocked the front door. Immediately inside the door was a student seated on a chair watching the activity on the street below. Several students walked about the building carrying short, dark clubs not unlike those carried by M.P.s.

This was the situation at 9:45 Monday evening when news media were allowed inside the house to learn of the BSU's reply to the latest administration proposal. When the conference was over, most of the students had crowded

into the office of the alumni director to watch the press coverage of the occupation on a portable television, which they had brought in some time that evening.

Across the street, student hostility was becoming more apparent. Far from aggression, their feelings were expressed in the form of mockery — treating the affair like a joke. One scantily-clad student ran to the porch from Binz Hall and threw a beheaded duck at the foot of the door. The symbolism of the act was not apparent that night, and is probably lost forever among the shivers of a chuckling Duhawk who was perhaps a few dollars richer for accepting a dare.

Other students were more outspoken in their disapproval of the situation. A junior stood in the Binz lobby insisting that the police should be called in, and the BSU members thrown in jail. At



one time 30 or 40 students stood in the street, but dispersed quietly when a city patrol car arrived at the scene.

Tension had risen among the students, and activity uncommon at that time of night was visible throughout the immediate area. At 1:30 a.m. an undetermined number of blacks arrived at Henion Manor and were admitted inside the house. Speculation increased as to the likelihood of an all night occupation.

At 2:00 a.m. the visitors departed. Shortly afterward two black students walked from the Manor and informed Fr. Hayek, Dean of Students, that they intended to end the occupation. A group of white students stood in front of Binz Hall and watched the occupiers leave the house one by one carrying boxes of food and piles of blankets.

The next morning under a blue sky and warming sun, Henion Manor stood as if nothing out of the ordinary had occurred in the last 18 hours. Inside, college employees straightened out furniture, and by afternoon operations were continuing as usual. Even the duck was removed from the porch, and relegated to a position of far less significance inside a garbage can.

The end of the occupation and the clean-up of Henion Manor did not signal the end of the controversy. On Tuesday a press conference at which Msgr. Driscoll

and Tommy Jackson both delivered statements made it clear that the administration and the BSU had not reached a final settlement. The conference drew quickly to a close when the black students left the room as President Driscoll was making his final remarks.

As the end of the week came nearer and the Disciplinary Board commenced its hearing of the case involving 16 black students and their occupation of Henion Manor tension once again began to rise. After nearly 17 hours of deliberation, Msgr. Driscoll announced the suspension of the sixteen. This heralded a series of meetings between the president and Rev. George Clements of Chicago who suddenly arrived in Dubuque to argue the case for the suspended students, who refused to leave Keane Hall.

The meeting lasted through the entire night. At this time black students from the University of Dubuque and Clarke had joined the Loras students on third floor Keane. Because of this development, Dr. Robert Giroux, President of Dubuque, and J. Bennett Tate, Dean of Students at UD exerted pressure on Msgr. Driscoll to reduce the penalties imposed on the blacks.

At 4:00 a.m. on Sunday a harried Msgr. Driscoll reached a decision to change the suspension to probation. The tension of the week had decreased. Confrontation was temporarily set aside.



Henion Manor, the administrative office building across the street from Binz Hall takes on a new look during its occupation by Black students.

(Photo by Jerry Streff)