Freshman Camp for Women: 1964
By Susan Croll, CW'68, GPU'94

At a recent meeting of the Association of Alumnae’s 100th Anniversary Planning Committee, Penn songs became a topic of conversation, as we considered having some music as part of the celebration. This led my 1968 classmate, Barbara Russo Bravo, and me down memory lane, to Freshman Camp 1964. Just before the beginning of our freshman fall semester, the women of the new entering class boarded buses outside of the Women’s Residence Hall (now Hill House), which took us to Camp Green Lane, in the Poconos.

Shortly after we boarded the buses, the two Penn juniors who were leading Freshman Camp, Judy Seitz (later University President Judith Rodin) and Prudy String, handed out documents that were to become our first Penn homework assignment. The document included the lyrics to all of the Penn songs, including The Red and the Blue, Hail Pennsylvania, Drink a Highball, Fight On Pennsylvania, Cheer Pennsylvania, and a song entitled Pennsylvania Women’s Song. Our job was to learn the melodies (which they sang for us) and the lyrics – and quickly – since we were to be tested on them frequently (i.e., asked to sing them) during the freshman camp experience. Over the years, through football games, graduation, Homecoming and Alumni Weekends, we have sung most of the songs repeatedly and will always remember them. However, subsequent to Freshman Camp 1964, I never have heard the “Pennsylvania Women’s Song” sung at any Penn event.

Does this woman look familiar? Hint: she went on to be Penn’s first woman President.

Barbara and I treated the other 100th Anniversary Planning Committee members to our rendition of the Pennsylvania Women’s Song (to the tune of Till We Meet Again).
Pennsylvania, here’s a toast to you.
Pennsylvania, royal red and blue.
Memories of friends and fun,
Things together we have done.

And so before our college days are through,
Let us pledge our loyalty anew.
To keep forever, sweet and true,
Pennsylvania.

The sweet melody and lyrics were enough to keep this song in Barbara’s and my memories for the past forty-eight years, along with other memories of Freshman Camp – such as sleeping in cabins on army cots; eating Rice Krispies out of paper bowls, and participating in cabin to cabin competitions to compose and select the Class of 1968 women’s class song and class cheer. As our class approaches its 45th reunion next May, the women of the Class of 1968 can proudly declare: “We don’t even need a cheer. ‘68’s the greatest year!”