Coed at last
What’s the fuss? ask males and females arriving at W&L

By Mark Bowes
News Leader staff writer

LEXINGTON — The young men and women arriving here from 38 states and one U.S. territory behaved like many other college freshmen away from home for the first time: anxious but eager to begin a new experience.

The fact that for the first time women were arriving here to attend Washington and Lee University — breaking a tradition older than the United States itself — seemed lost in the typical first-day collegiate frenzy of moving in, unpacking and making new friends.

A scattering of parents, many of them alumni of the 236-year-old school, and a small squad of reporters, were among the few people yesterday fussing over the school's switch to coeducational status.

With the weekend arrival of 423 new students — 107 of them female — W&L's standing as one of the nation's last, all-male, undergraduate nonmilitary colleges passed into history. The others include Hampden-Sydney College in Virginia and Wabash College in Indiana.

"I really didn't think about (being one of the first female students) once I got here," said Dorothy L. Mills. "I'm not walking around very much conscious (of the fact) that I'm going to a school that used to admit only men."

Ms. Mills, 18, from White Plains, N.Y., sat talking in her Gilliam Dormitory room while she waited for her roommate to arrive from Newport News.

On the two floors below her room, young men were doing much the same. Although many remarked on the novelty of being in the first coed class, more seemed concerned about yesterday's sweltering temperatures, and how to stay cool.

"Many observers here say the real test of W&L's sexual integration will begin when the upper classmen arrive this week. In campus surveys conducted last year, a majority of upper classmen indicated that W&L should remain all-male," Ms. Mills said. "And he was a senior — and he's gone now."

A great majority of W&L's new students attended coeducational high schools, which, at least on the freshman level, will aid the transition, W&L officials say.

"It's going to be a natural for them because (many of the students) don't know anything different," said Anne Schroer, W&L's new associate dean of students. "When the upper classmen start arriving, that's when you'll notice some difference."

Ms. Schroer, who began work three weeks ago, is one of two new women administrators at W&L. Both were hired to assist in the changeover and, among other responsibilities, will act "as a sounding board" for women students, she said.

"I was very encouraged to see men and women helping each other," on campus, Ms. Schroer said, adding that many male students "are just looking forward to having female friends."

Robert H. Manson, 18, a freshman from the Richmond area, said he likes the decision to admit women, but "it didn't have any bearing" on his attending W&L.

"It's much more relaxed than just with guys," said Manson, a graduate

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