

True Confessions of My Early Years at UVic

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When I arrived at the History Department of UVic in September 1966 my initial problem was not navigating the maze that was the Cornett Building but avoiding the “Wet Paint” signs that adorned this brand-new building. After successfully dodging them, I made it to the 3rd floor where Mrs. Jean Reid, the secretary, warmly greeted me, presented me with keys to the building and to my office around the corner, and an assortment of office supplies including a blue mark book. Classes did not start for at least a week so it was an opportunity to meet colleagues in a relaxed situation. I had known Charlotte Girard casually at UBC but otherwise the only colleague I had previously met was Sydney Pettit, the long-time head of the department who had interviewed me the previous November in his office on the Lansdowne campus where Camosun College now resides.

At the time of the interview, I had finished my comprehensives and was about two months into my thesis research. The baby boomers were beginning to arrive at the university. Thus, those of us from the relatively small cohort born during or just before the war were expected to report to classrooms and complete our dissertations while teaching full-time. Academic jobs were rarely advertised. In some cases, department heads seeking new faculty contacted their equivalents in departments that offered graduate degrees; in others, graduate students wrote to those departments where they thought they might like to teach with an outline of their qualifications and their interest in a position

if one were available. One evening, when I was working through a particularly boring box of B.C. Electric Railway papers at the UBC library, I went to the reference section, browsed through university calendars, and drew up a list of places where I might like to teach or that might be able to use my services. Because my research was in B.C. history, I wanted to stay in the province if possible. I didn't bother with UBC since I wasn't aware of any vacancy. Simon Fraser was brand new and was just starting to hire but it was a little too close to home. While my parents offered very comfortable and hospitable accommodation, I wanted an apartment of my own and the best affordable apartment building that was reasonably close to SFU overlooked their backyard! Thus, UVic was at the top of my list. Moreover, it was near the Provincial Archives and the Legislative Library whose resources I needed for my research. My second choice was Calgary and the list followed a more or less geographical order heading eastward after that. Before writing letters of inquiry, however, I thought it prudent to check with Dr. Margaret A. Ormsby,¹ my thesis supervisor and the head of the History department at UBC to ask if I could use her name as a reference and

¹ No student addressed her by her first name, Margaret, at least not to her face. Students knew that they had “arrived” when faculty addressed them by their first name rather than by Miss, Mrs. or Mr. If the term “Ms.” had been invented, it had not yet arrived in B.C. Similarly while some of the older men referred to Mr. Pettit as “Syd,” I don't think any of the younger people did.

inquire about any special tricks in writing a letter of application for an academic position. However, she was out of town. Because she would be busy catching up with her work on Monday and Tuesday, I decided to visit her on Wednesday.

At the time I was living on the UBC campus. On Tuesday afternoon, I found a note from her in my mail box to the effect that Mr. Pettit at UVic was looking for a Canadian historian and, if interested, I should see her. I was at her office the next day. She told me to write a letter mentioning her name; I did. By return mail, I got a letter from Mr. Pettit saying come any Tuesday or Thursday for an interview. No time or place was mentioned. I replied that I would come on a certain Tuesday. On the previous Saturday, I was my parents' home to attend the wedding of the daughter of family friends. This, of course, was before the days of answering machines let alone the internet. As it happened, my parents were having some redecorating done. A housepainter answered the phone and took a message that I was to report to a certain room and building on the campus. No mention was made of the time.

I'm not a morning person and the idea of the 7 a.m. ferry did not appeal so I took the 9 a.m. sailing. By the time I found the Lansdowne campus, it was almost noon. I thought it unwise to visit just then as Mr. Pettit might feel obliged to take me to lunch. Little did I know that there was no Faculty Club and the faculty brought their lunches from home. Moreover, I wanted to check a couple of items at the Legislative Library so went there before returning to the campus about 2 p.m. when I was sure Mr. Pettit would be back from lunch. He was there and he was steaming. "Where had I been?" My answer, "the Legislative Library," was a good one. "Hadn't I got his

message to come in the morning?" "No," I said," a housepainter took the message and gave me only the name of the building and the room number." Snorting that Hitler was a housepainter, he quickly explained that he sat around all morning waiting for me and now was leaving for an all-afternoon meeting on the Gordon Head campus. There goes the UVic job, I thought. However, in those days official transcripts were not required so when my University of Toronto transcript arrived a few days later, I made a copy and sent it as an excuse to complete my file along with a covering letter apologizing for having inconvenienced him. He replied with an invitation to come on a specific day at a specific time and place. We had a pleasant chat for a half hour or so about the sad state of the *British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, a journal that had been published out of the Provincial Archives since 1937 but whose most recent issue, dated 1957-58, had appeared about 1962 without any prospect of another issue. He began the interview by telling me the job was mine but the Dean had instructed him that candidates who did not come from afar had to be interviewed. He told me that I would receive a two-year renewable appointment as an Instructor II with the understanding that I would be promoted to Assistant Professor as soon as I completed my Ph.D.² When the contract arrived, it was for only one year but it was renewable so I did not object. The story may be apocryphal but I was told that my colleagues only learned of my appointment at the American Historical Association

² Symbolic of the fact that most new instructors arrived without completed doctorates or with an M.A. or less, there were three ranks below the rank of Assistant Professor. Lecturers normally did not have a M.A. but might be working on it. Instructors I had an M.A. and Instructors II had an M.A. and had completed doctoral studies except for the dissertation.

meetings in late December when a UBC professor mentioned that they were pleased that UVic had hired one of their graduate students.

The department was quite small. The senior historian, that is the only full professor apart from Mr. Pettit, was Toby Jackman, the British historian who in many ways was more British than the British, although he had been born in the United States, grown up mostly in Victoria, and received all of his university education in the United States. Senior in length of service to the department was R.H. (Reg) Roy who taught, in rotation, all three of the senior Canadian history courses. Reg and I soon determined that if we were related it was a very distant kinship. His Roy ancestors had come from Scotland to settle on Cape Breton Island while mine had come from France presumably well before 1763. Nevertheless, our shared names caused some confusion for students. Some years later, one of Reg's students in the Canadian survey tried to write my exam which was quite different and was being written in a different row in the gym. Other students were shocked when they came around 5 p.m. with essays that had been due a half hour earlier and asked: "please take this home to your husband and tell them that it came in at 4:30." When I told them that I didn't have a husband and that they should turn it in at the office the next morning, they went away disappointed.

Because History 102, the Canadian survey was compulsory for students in the First Year of the Elementary Education programme and the schools were crying for teachers, it was swamped with students. Only a few people were excused from teaching the course. Mr. Pettit confined himself to European history; Toby Jackman, to British history, and Jim Hendrickson to

American history. Almost everyone else taught a section of History 102. Charlotte Girard was a historian of France but had done some research in Canadian diplomatic history and later wrote a book on Canada's external relations and so was considered very well qualified to teach the course. George Shelton, who was primarily a historian of European ideas, had a section. So too did Alf Loft. Alf was an experienced high school teacher who had come to the History department from the Faculty of Education and taught a section of the Canadian survey along with a section of the 20th century survey and the European survey. Alf was much loved by his students but he had no tolerance for what he deemed disrespectful behaviour. For example, if a young man came to class wearing a ball cap, Alf would immediately tell him to take it off or get out. I wonder how Alf would fare in these days with its concerns for students' rights.

My first assignment included teaching two sections of History 102. Ernie Forbes, who also joined the department that year, and I were given a four page mimeographed outline of the course that seemed rather heavy on exploration and the fur trade, the two aspects of Canadian history that I considered the least interesting probably because my acquaintance with explorers dated back to a repetitive British Columbia Social Studies curriculum that seemed to take us up and down the St. Lawrence River more often than Jacques Cartier. The prescribed textbook was W.L. Morton's *The Kingdom of Canada*. I later met Morton, a charming gentleman, and read some of his other books, especially *Manitoba: A History* and *The Progressive Party*. They were important contributions to Canadian historiography but his textbook can best be described as dull although at

the time there were limited choices. If any of my students of that era read this, I must confess that I did not read it cover to cover until some years later when the *Canadian Historical Review* commissioned me to write a review essay of survey textbooks in Canadian history.

The Kingdom of Canada, however, was much livelier than the text I used when I studied History 102. Another confession. I never finished reading the prescribed textbook, never attended a class, and never submitted an assignment but got a B-. What was my secret? At that time British Columbia offered Grade XIII as the equivalent of first year university and the grade for the entire year was based on a single three-hour exam. My very wise Grade XI Social Studies teacher told several of us who were doing well that the Grade XI and XIII courses were very similar and that if we read the Grade XIII textbook, paid a \$3.00 fee to the Department of Education, and passed the exam we could get credit for a first year university course. It was an easy way of getting a credit but it was not a profound educational experience.

At UVic, to provide some relief from Canadian history, or more likely, to fill a gap in the staffing of the department, I was assigned to teach a section of History 101, the 20th century survey. Although it purported to be a survey of the 20th century, it was almost exclusively European history. European history was not my strong point but I had taken History 101 as an undergraduate at UBC where F.H. Soward, the inventor of the course, had lectured to some 300 students at a time and I took a course on aspects of inter-war European diplomacy as part of my M.A. studies. I didn't entirely agree with some of the interpretations in the 132 pages of typed, single-spaced notes that Mr. Pettit provided

for the course. However, he based the exams on these notes and included some very specific factual questions that had the advantage of being easy to mark. One didn't need to know any European history to teach the course although it was wise to check on the pronunciation of names and the locations of places on a map before going to class. Pettit had taught the course for many years and presumably had some asides to fill in the time but I had few and my class seemed to take dictation fairly quickly. Well before the end of the second term, I realized that I was going to run out of the notes well before the end of the term. I didn't want to 'fess up to Mr. Pettit so took it upon myself to add a couple of lectures cribbed from a book on the history of Communist China. Thus, I may be the first person to teach Chinese history in the department (this was long before I was interested in the history of the Chinese in Canada). Again, a confession to students. I don't think I told you that there wouldn't be anything on China on the final exam.

Dictating notes was not very exciting. To get out of the course, I volunteered to teach a third section of the Canadian survey in my second year. Fortunately for the students, the university had adopted a rotating time table so that it wasn't always the same class that got the first, second, or third time round of the lecture. The second was usually the best as there was time to iron out problems in the first version but by the third, I was bored and I expect the students were too.

In my second year, another young colleague joined Ernie and myself in teaching Canadian history. That was Christopher Rowe who was fresh from Liverpool, the home of the then very popular Beatles, a link that Chris used to advantage with students. His specialization was

European expansion. He was very knowledgeable about explorers but once Canada was explored, its history was brand-new to him. However, he was a quick study and a good actor. With some guidance from Ernie and myself, he convinced the students that he was an expert on Canadian history. With the confidence that a year's experience had given Ernie and myself, Chris's moral support, and the bravado of youth, we began to divert from the prescribed course outline and, after inventing a common exam that had so many questions that students complained it took too much time to read them, we convinced the department that the instructors in the Canadian survey should, within very general guidelines, be responsible for creating their own exams. That, of course, meant that we also could adapt the course outline to suit our own interests and choose an appropriate textbook. By then too, the colleagues who preferred to teach European history had been excused from teaching the Canadian survey.

After two years of teaching, Ernie left to pursue doctoral studies at Queen's. After he returned two years later we launched an experiment in team teaching. We booked a room that held 150 students and proposed to take turns lecturing though we would often attend each other's lecture and break the class up into small groups for tutorials which we would teach. The Registrar's office was not familiar with this idea and the time table required students to register separately for lectures and tutorials. The system was so complicated that only 75 students had the intelligence and diligence to register in our section of the survey. At that time, entering students did not require more than 50% in each of their Grade XII courses. The theory of this open admission

policy was that not all high schools in the province were equal so students should be given a chance to prove themselves. Alas, most students who entered with low marks were not well-prepared for university studies. Thus, failure rates in first year History courses tended to run between 20 and 25%. After each set of exams, Alf Loft would inquire about failure rates. When we reported that only three of the 75 students had failed, Alf accused us of us getting soft until we explained that our experiment had drawn an unusually able and motivated group of students. Because Ernie accepted a position at New Brunswick, we did not repeat the exercise.

Going back to 1967, Chris Rowe was not the only English import to arrive that year. John Money came as the department's second British historian. Since all of us were still in our twenties and the other members of the department seemed "very old," even though some were only in their thirties, we developed our own social life which along with Ernie's wife, Irene, and John's wife, Helen seemed to revolve around going to each other's homes on Saturday night to have dinner and watch the hockey game. With his wife, Elaine, Bill Sloan, a graduate student who had played semi-professional hockey, often joined us to explain the finer points of the game. Since none of us taught graduate students, there was no conflict of interest.

While Ernie was at Queen's, three sessional lecturers (Don Chard, Don McGowan, and Helen Wright) and J.M.S. Careless, who came as a visiting professor, replaced him. Careless seemed to like Victoria because he returned to teach in several summer sessions and the department certainly wanted to keep him but it was difficult to leave Toronto. Jan Kupp, a former Dutch commando who

entertained his students with war stories, also came that year and taught New France as well as the survey. Kupp was the fastest marker that I have ever known. Shortly before he retired he moved to the Fraser Valley. He taught two sections of the Canadian survey with a total of about a hundred students. They wrote their final exam between 9 and 12 a.m. and before he left to catch the 9 p.m. ferry, he marked all of their exams. A student who failed appealed. Since I happened to be in the office, I was asked to review the paper. Kupp had made no mistakes in the marking.

In the meantime, I had been working on my thesis during the Christmas holidays and the summer breaks. It was a good arrangement. During term time, I was usually able to spend at least a day a week at the Legislative Library but by April I was keen to do more on the thesis and something else other than preparing lectures, teaching classes, and marking papers; by September I was tiring of the B.C. Electric Railway, the subject of my thesis, and looking forward to working with students again.

During my second year, with the thesis well underway and knowing that I could get a job elsewhere, I approached Pettit with a request that I be allowed to teach an upper year course, either post-Confederation Canada or Canada West of the Great Lakes. Pettit was amenable but it would depend on which course Reg Roy was prepared to relinquish. I suspect that that was a relief for Reg who was then developing a programme in military history. He decided to surrender the West which meant that I had to give myself a cram course on the history of the Prairies about which I knew very little. By then, however, I had learned a few short-cuts in preparing lectures or, more precisely, I had learned

that there was a limit to the amount of information that students could absorb and I could present in fifty minutes.

I enjoyed teaching the Canadian West and learning about the prairies, but within a few years, the opportunity arose to create a course just on British Columbia. The speciality of Jim Hendrickson, who had succeeded Pettit as chair of the department, was the 19th century northwest, particularly Oregon. Given the popularity of American history and the general growth of the university and the department, within a few years the department had three other American historians, Ted Wooley and Brian Dippie as well as Bill Leary who only stayed a few years. Jim saw that the American section of the department was in good hands. Moreover, he had discovered a treasure trove of material relating to colonial British Columbia in the Provincial Archives and so began his important work on colonial British Columbia.

The division of the West was fine with me. While I had taught the Prairies I had done no primary research on the region nor was I likely to do so as I had plenty of opportunities for research in British Columbia. The question that Jim and I faced was how to make two half courses out of British Columbia history. It was obvious that the division would be chronological and that he would teach the early period and I the later but where was the divide to be? If you look at the current calendar under History 354A and 354B and 355, you will find that we agreed to disagree which was the way in which the department resolved many issues. The 354 sequence ends at 1900 and 355 begins at 1885. Jim thought 1900 was a logical divide but apart from it being possibly the most confusing year ever in B.C. politics, I could think of no reason, other than symmetry, for making it the

divide. I could see 1903 and the beginning of party politics as a possibility but, as one whose early research was on railways, I thought that 1885 and the arrival of the Canadian Pacific Railway marked the major turning point in the province's history. Although Jim has been retired for almost two decades and myself for almost one, our successors regard our decision, despite the overlap, as a sound one or perhaps they have not read the calendar description!

With the West being divided into British Columbia and the Prairies and with the department's interest in Canadian regional history, we needed a Prairie specialist. We advertised for one and got two: Ian MacPherson and Alan Artibise. We hired the pair of them because of their complementary interests in rural and urban history respectively but, if I remember correctly, the Prairie course was divided chronologically at 1905 when Alberta and Saskatchewan were created as provinces. Getting both of them was a minor coup as the University of Alberta was also hiring a prairie historian that year. Alberta had interviewed both of them and liked both of them but was negotiating with a historian who was slightly more senior. The Albertans did not think there was any hurry to act if their first choice did not accept their offer since they would be quite happy to have the one we didn't appoint. What Alberta did not know was that we were negotiating with our dean to hire both of them. During this time, the Western Canadian History Conference took place at Calgary. Historians love gossip but despite the temptation to share what would have been the juiciest gossip at the conference I managed to keep my mouth shut. When their first choice did not accept their offer, the Albertans were shocked to discover that both of their backups were coming to UVic.

My arrival on the campus in September 1966 coincided with the first time that all of UVic's facilities were on the Gordon Head campus. As mentioned earlier, the Cornett Building was brand-new; so too was the MacLaurin Building (Education). The Library with its handsome façade, the Elliott building (Science), and the classroom block known as the Clearihue Building were a year or two old. Outside the ring were some residences, a small Student Union Building, a campus services building on the current site of the bookstore which incorporates some of it. Campus Services included a tiny bookstore, a coffee shop, a branch of the Bank of Montreal and, in the basement, a hairdresser's shop as well as the university print shop. The main structures outside the ring were huts left over from Gordon Head's days as an army camp. Several years after I arrived, the former officers' mess was turned into a Faculty Club which provided a welcome relief from home-made sandwich lunches.

Although the Cornett had a number of classrooms, most of my classes seemed to be in the Clearihue Building which consisted only of the present classroom wing. Where the computer labs are now on the main floor were two airless classrooms holding about 60 students each. Teaching in them at 8:30 or 9:30 was not too bad but by 10:30 they were extremely stuffy. They had no windows and, if there was a ventilation system, it did not work well. It was difficult for all to keep awake.

If I remember correctly, when I first had to trek over to the Clearihue it was over a boardwalk. Landscaping had not yet come to campus. The area between Cornett and Clearihue, now the home of the First Peoples' House and a tidy garden, was a swamp. One winter the large puddles in it

froze. An overnight thaw thwarted my plan to skate on them. One day in the spring, as I sat in my office waiting for any students who might come, I was browsing through a copy of Premier W.A.C. Bennett's budget speech. Attractively presented and circulated to everyone who was in any way on the government's payroll, it was set out like the annual report of a prosperous corporation which Bennett thought B.C. was. Since it was almost time to go to class, I only had time to look at the pictures. One page featured the province's contributions to higher education. I instantly recognized a view of Simon Fraser University and the new Forestry Building at UBC but the brown building surrounded by sweeping lawns, colourful flowers, and well-tended shrubs puzzled me. Then, in the small print that identified the photographs I discovered that it was the Cornett Building. On my way to Clearihue for a class, I looked back at the Cornett Building. Yes, it was the building in the photo but there were no flowers or lawns. And that was before Photoshop! It did, however, make a good anecdote to illustrate Bennett's financial policies when I taught History 355.

Initially, we had few visual aids apart from maps, chalk, and blackboards. A few maps were attached to the wall above the blackboard and could be rolled down somewhat like an old-fashioned window blind and usually, but not always, would roll up when not needed. Most maps were on stands somewhat like a movie screen. A stand could hold up to a dozen or so maps and one could flip to the appropriate one but had to be careful or the whole stand could crash to the floor. In time, the department acquired slide projectors. Although some commercially prepared slide sets such as *Canada's Visual History* gradually appeared it was usually necessary to pick slides from

two or three sets and put them in a carousel. Because the slide sets belonged to the department and the Canadian survey had multi-sections, after each class the slides had to be returned to their original order since other instructors needed to use them and probably in a slightly different way. It was possible to get slide sets made on campus but it was only economical if they were done in groups of 24 or 36 (the number of images on a standard roll of film) and it could take a week or two for them to be prepared. In addition, using slides meant lugging a heavy slide projector across the campus since only the rooms regularly used by History in Art had slide projectors permanently installed and they were kept in locked cupboards. Most classrooms, however, had screens. In the late 1980s, the arrival of the Overhead Projector and a photocopier that made transparencies made it possible for each instructor to have their own sets of images which could be made in seconds. Powerpoint was just coming into use when I retired. It seemed very complicated and I decided that for the short time that I might be using it I would not invest the time and energy that younger colleagues seemed to spend in working with it.

Technology, however, has become simpler. Shortly after retiring, I gave a workshop for students who would be presenting papers at the Qualicum Conference. While playing with a new laptop, I discovered that Powerpoint was installed on it. Ah, I thought, I'll do something with Powerpoint to show the students that it isn't reliable and that any paper that depends on illustrations should have a backup such as transparencies. I prepared a title slide and, just in case it did work, inserted a typo. I presented my memory stick to one of the students in

attendance who promptly got the system up and running, deliberate typo and all! I did make my point about the need to proofread. However, when I brought out my “just in case” backup, the overhead projector didn’t work!

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the department was growing rapidly and endured growing pains as there was conflict between the “old-timers” and the newcomers. As one who arrived in the early stages of expansion, I was somewhere in between. I had sufficient experience to know that some ideas for reform were unlikely to work but insufficient experience or wisdom to know of ones that would. The big issue was the role of the chair as the university was in the process of shifting from department heads who seemed to have almost omnipotent powers to chairs whose exact role was undefined. As a Canadian historian, some of the issues reminded me of the campaign for responsible government in the 1830s and 1840s. Was the chair responsible to the electors (the department members) or to the governor (the administration)? I had the good luck to be on my first study leave when the issue was at its peak and so was spared some of the anguish experienced and emotional energy expended by some colleagues.

As mentioned in the history of the department, the time of the crucial vote coincided with the final game of the Canada-Russia hockey series of 1972. Although I was on leave, I was eligible to attend the department meeting and vote. My good friend Ernie Forbes was not on leave but he was a very keen hockey fan. We had different ideas on the role of the chair. He phoned to ask if I intended to go to the meeting. Since my new work at the

Legislative Library on the treatment of Asians in British Columbia had reached an exciting point I did not want to give up a morning of research. As students of Canadian political history Ernie and I knew of the parliamentary practice of pairing; we agreed to do so. Ernie got to watch the hockey game in the comfort of his home and I got to do my research although, since I was buried in the stacks, I listened to the game on a transistor radio. Even without the radio, I would have known the result. I think that almost everyone in the Parliament Buildings was following the game. When Canada won a loud cheer could be heard even in the depths of the stacks.

The other major conflict did concern me. Because we had so many students, the Canadian historians felt badly done by when new appointments were to be made. While we liked the idea of making additional courses in European history or new ones in Asian history available to students, we felt that the Canadians needed more tenure-track appointments and should be less dependent on sessional lecturers. We were quite upset when one colleague referred to the Canadian survey as a “cuckoo course” until he explained that he did not mean “cuckoo” in the sense of “crazy” as we understood the word but rather in the ornithological version in which the cuckoo tends to shove other birds out of their nests. From time to time, other issues were contentious but they tended to be transient. The important thing was that although at times the department divided into factions, I do not recall any occasion during which colleagues refused to exchange pleasantries such as “Good morning.” Much more significantly, they never took out their disagreements on students, a situation that has occurred at other universities. Because I lived close to the downtown

hotels, I often chauffeured candidates for positions to the campus. During the course of these trips I always mentioned the department's sense of collegiality. If it was a pleasant day I also made a point of giving them the scenic tour; if it was rainy and dull, we went by the most direct route.

In retrospect, the Canadian historians were probably not badly done by given the market conditions in the early 1970s, an era of rapid growth. The department did appoint several Canadian historians to tenure-track positions on the understanding that they would soon complete their theses. Unfortunately, not all did and, given the market, they were replaced with sessionals, most of whom also had Ph.D.'s in progress. While sessionals could attend department meetings and many did, they were not expected to serve on committees or to have any responsibilities apart from teaching. By the mid-1970s, however, the supply of Canadian historians at least met demand if not exceeded it. As we began to replace sessionals with colleagues who had their degrees and some teaching experience the sense of the "Canadians vs. the Rest" began to disappear although the Canadianists still felt they were doing a disproportionate amount of teaching. As the Canadians added to their ranks with such strong appointees as Peter Baskerville, Chad Gaffield and Eric Sager, they were no longer outnumbered or underappreciated.

I haven't counted the number of students I have taught over the years but with an average of about one hundred a year (in later years, I sometimes had a reduced load because of graduate advising) over almost forty years it must be in the thousands. With one exception, a student with psychological problems, the only

discipline problems were plagiarists. As doing historical research is often very much like detective work, the sometimes time-consuming work of proving plagiarism yielded the satisfaction of "gotcha" when the source was found. While plagiarism was never condoned, the university had only a very general policy about punishment and it was up to the instructor to apply the penalty, usually a "zero" for the assignment.

Most students were a pleasure to teach. It would be invidious to single out any of them but there is one exception. Were she still with us, she would be embarrassed to be singled out for she was exceedingly modest and did not realize the extent of her talents. That was Maureen Dobbin who was tragically killed in a bicycle accident while she was serving as a parliamentary intern in Ottawa and whose memory is honoured by a scholarship in her name. She is the only student whose research interests forced me to audit a course! In the early 1980s, historians were just beginning to become acquainted with the computer and Chad Gaffield offered an undergraduate course on the computer for historians. Maureen signed up for the course and asked to do an essay requiring computer analysis for her research paper in the History of British Columbia. Thus, I had to audit the course to find out what the computer could, and could not, do for historians. She finished her project for my course and got an A+ for it; my project, I fear, fell by the wayside. Essay marking coincided with completion time but the course provided me with an appreciation of how others could use statistical methods to analyse historical material.

While I always enjoyed teaching undergraduates, working with graduate students was usually more exciting since their research was uncovering new material

and I learned a lot from them whether I was the principal supervisor or just a member of the committee. Over the years, I had several stints as graduate advisor and that was usually a rewarding experience especially when it involved offering scholarships to students who gladly accepted them or seeing students complete their theses. Of course, it is sad that unlike my time as a graduate student when one felt it was a duty to get out and teach and finish the thesis later, not all of our graduates have been able to find the kind of positions for which they are well qualified. In the course of the orientation lecture to the first class of incoming students that included several Ph.D. candidates. I warned them that if they thought the successful completion of their studies would guarantee them an interesting and well-paying job, they were likely to be disappointed. If job security and financial rewards were their goals, I suggested they transfer to Camosun and take up one of the trades. My idea was promptly quashed by a new Ph.D. student who reported that a sibling, a fully-qualified electrician, was unemployed.

I don't think I have ever seen committee work of the administrative kind written into a job description but it is understood and unavoidable. I quickly learned, however, that the trick was to find out which committees were likely to be interesting without being too onerous and to volunteer for service on them. The department's graduate committee was always interesting particularly in dealing with admissions and the awarding of scholarships although seasonally it could be quite busy. At the campus-wide level, I remember one very boring ad hoc committee in the early years whose mandate was to define the difference between a faculty member and a member of

the faculty. I don't recall if we ever made the determination or satisfied the dean who was a linguist. The faculty's Curriculum Committee, particularly when it dealt with all of the Arts and Sciences, could also be boring as we debated whether a comma or semi-colon should separate points in the calendar description of a proposed new course, but it did keep one well-informed of what was going on in the rest of the university especially when the institution was rapidly expanding its offerings. As to the commas and the semi-colons, the University Secretary eventually decided that debating them was a fruitless exercise and a waste of the time of relatively high-priced help and so hired a professional editor to do that and to insure consistency across the campus.

Serving on the Senate never appealed to me as I found the two meetings that I had to attend to present committee reports were incredibly dull. However, the Senate Committee on Admissions, Re-Admissions, and Transfers could be quite fascinating. It deals with appeals from students who have been denied admission, re-admission, or transfer credit. Some students, such as one who had appendicitis during the university entrance scholarship exams, had legitimate reasons for not doing well but others demonstrated amazing creative talents to explain their low marks and perhaps could have found a career writing scripts for soap operas. Unfortunately for them, creativity rarely impressed the committee.

On the whole, however, UVic students have been great and some exceptionally so and it has been a delight to watch their progress after they graduated. Occasionally, former students have stopped me on the street. Usually because they were one of many in a class, they realize

the need to identify themselves and that often brings back memories of them. I remember one who admitted that he hated an assignment that required him to summarize and criticize prescribed articles on a 3" x 5" index card. He was now working for the provincial government writing précis and the experience with those index cards had helped him get the job. Did anyone ever doubt that teaching and learning were rewarding?

It is the students, of course, who make the university but I was also fortunate in having congenial colleagues and an administration that let me get on with my teaching and research. Moreover, most of the time the university had the resources to

provide rewards such as funds for travel to conferences and merit pay. It was exciting to watch the campus grow from a very young university that was still emerging from its status as a junior college to one that is now a major institution of higher learning. And, of course, the department changed dramatically. Not only did it grow in size but, especially in Canadian history, it emerged from a role that was primarily of providing a service to the university and its Faculty of Education to one that, as external reviewers have agreed, can take its place among any of the leading departments in the country. I confess that I am proud to have been part of that experience.