Frank Allard

The following is an interview with Frank Allard. He was a student at Humboldt State College from 1964 until 1970, majoring in music and a secondary teaching credential. The interview was done in March of 1984 by Jeanie Allard, his wife.

Jeanie: Your name, please.

Frank: My name is Frank Allard.

J: And when did you attend Humboldt State?

F: In the fall of '64 through '71, '70 or '71.

J: Did you enter directly from high school?

F: Yes. Straight from high school into college.

J: What was the general atmosphere at the college when you attended?

F: Pretty conservative. We were sort of an outlying campus, away from everything. Didn’t really have hippie movements at that time, at least the first part. It was a pretty small hometown college honestly.

J: Did you see a change while you were there?

F: Yes, gradually the college got larger. I’m sure people found it a place to go within the California State College system and be away from the bigger cities and get a fairly good education. It gradually expanded and we had more people coming in and more diversity of the type of people too.

J: Did the activities on campus change with that?

F: Well, for a lot of people they did. There was a change in types of parties and activities. There was a general feeling of trust between students and professors and change gradually as we went along. There were all kinds of problems on other campuses, draft problems at that time that were, they demonstrated against it and talked about it.

J: Do you recall the beginning of the SDS on campus.

F: No, not very clearly.

J: But it was there.

F: It was there.

J: Were you active in any college organizations while you were there?

F: College organizations, like...

J: Any kind of student groups, either clubs or class?
F: The only group that I really participated in was the marching band. I played and sang in several groups. I never belonged to any other clubs or groups.

J: What kinds of things did the band do while you were part of it?

F: The Humboldt State Marching Band was a part of the Music Department at that time. It wasn’t an actual extracurricular activity or an outside club. It was in the Music Department. We had our uniforms and we marched in parades and we marched at the ball games, did our formations. It was an interesting experience. Of course, it is somewhat cumbersome marching with all those clothes – trying to get around a field when it is very foggy and that happened several times to us.

J: Did you take part in games outside the home games as well – did the band travel?

F: I don’t think we did much traveling. I don’t think we did any traveling. I think most of our games that were played were on campus. There might have been one, one game possibly in San Francisco but I am not sure.

J: Were there, did you take part just in football season or basketball season as well?

F: Just football.

J: Was there a pep band, do you remember, during basketball season?

F: I think there was something going on but I didn’t participate in that aspect.

J: Did you take part in any other musical groups while you were there?

F: Oh, I took part in the college choir, Madrigal singers and played in the concert band, symphonic band and on a few occasions played in the orchestra, too.

J: Did any of those groups do any traveling?

F: The Madrigal singers traveled to, well, they made a round-trip to Fort Bragg and some of the smaller areas in southern Humboldt and Mendocino and a lot of the smaller schools. Had a nice trip. We played large audiences in a lot of the smaller communities. The bands went to some of the smaller communities also they traveled to Crescent City, played several different concerts. I guess we also went to Willow Creek.

J: Was it done in an effort to interest music students or just provide cultural events for the general public? Was there any ______ that you were given?

F: I think probably to let them know that we were there and we were available. It was good PR work and it was good for the communities. There was such a distance between Humboldt, Del Norte and Mendocino Counties. How far away we are from everything.

J: Were there other kinds of social activities going on besides the games on campus?
F: There were lots of—several fraternities and sororities operating at that time and service clubs like the Spurs to do service during registration and some private things going on, not many that I was participating in except through the Music Department.

J: Were there dances or general activities for the student body?

F: There was Lumberjack Days and there was special homecomings, special activities with lots of celebrations. We marched in parades that were special, there were dances. There were students at that time with very loud, very noisy rock bands. They were very popular at the time. _____.

J: Did you attend any of those dances?

F: Several of those until they got to the point where they were too noisy for me.

J: Were they widely attended or was it a fairly small group?

F: They had a good turnout, I’m not sure how much of the actual college population was there, but they usually had a pretty good turnout. Lots of dancing motions, physical exertion, energetic youth dancing.

J: Did it usually follow a game or another activity, or was it independent?

F: Usually following a game.

J: In looking at the Lumberjack from that period of time there seemed to be a pretty large number of outside entertainment brought in. Was that _____ students?

F: Yes, we saw Johnny Mathis there and we saw Al Hirt come through with his Dixieland group. It was very nice to see the professional entertainers come through with their own touring group and perform for us. They had usually very, very good sellout crowds.

J: Did that take in the adjoining community as well as the college or…

F: Yes.

J: Was attendance fairly widespread then?

F: I think there was a mixture, I think there was a good representation of college population students and community people who were interested.

J: Was it a variety of groups that came?

F: I think it was a pretty wide variety of groups. I can’t off the top of my head remember any of the others but the two that stick out in my mind was the Al Hirt Dixieland group and Johnny Mathis came with backup singers and a whole orchestra, light show and everything. It was very nice.

J: _____ a reference to Glen Yarbrough, the group that he sang with later on

F: The Limelighters.
J: And other folk singers that _____ had come.

F: Like Peter, Paul and Mary and the Brothers Four. I think there were several groups that came through.

J: The other on-campus activities that were held – games, Lumberjack activities and that sort of thing. Did they attract folks from the community as well as from the college?

F: Not as much as you might think. I think it was more of a student activity type thing or recreation. Let some steam off and have fun, relax a little bit.

J: Did you live in the general area before you came to Humboldt State?

F: Yes, before and during. I spent most of my youth in the surrounding area _____.

J: Did you choose Humboldt because it was close to home or for a particular _____?

F: Well, both of those reasons were necessary. I liked the fact that the college was close. That was one of the reasons that I went, because it was close. _____ I couldn’t afford it and they had a music department and I really wanted to study music, I was interested in that more than anything else.

J: Was the music department highly rated at that time? Did you really look into it?

F: I didn’t.

J: How did you feel as a student – the relationship between the community of Arcata and the community at the college work?

F: I think it worked pretty well when the college was small, like when it was around 2-3,000 students when I first went to school there. I think as the college grew, they had to buy property, expand and students began to exert some voting force in the community things began to change. Along with that the decline, slow decline of the lumber industry caused some friction and misunderstandings on both sides.

J: What about the students in Arcata itself? Was there any kind of problem as the student population changed, with more people coming in? Did that create any problems for Arcata?

F: I think it caused some people to be unhappy with the fact that there was a need for more apartments and more student housing. These weren’t really tax paying in the sense that other businesses or communities would be. They were students who did not have a lot of money, had to have cheap housing to make it at school.

J: Did students of the student body seem to make an effort to bridge those problems with the community?

F: I think there was some through the student council and staff but I was not real cognizant of the workings that went on there.
J: Since you were there into the early 70s, did you see or take part in any of the activities that I read about occurring as a result of the Vietnam War or the Kent State _____?

F: No, I was for the most part too busy just trying to get through. I couldn’t afford the time to stop and think about it. I thought there was a lot of strength on both sides. I really didn’t quite know where I stood on it.

J: Were you personally affected by the war situation because you were a student and deferred?

F: Yes. I was drafted, had to go for my physical for the Draft Board and was like a lot of other young men at that time, kind of sweating the idea of having to go into the armed forces, especially going to Vietnam. It didn’t seem like a very positive thing to happen. It didn’t seem like there was anything that could be won or settled or finished or turned around _____ negative thing and that bothered me a lot. That sort of tied me in with some of the feelings that groups were protesting about the war and the problems that were happening there. Tied me in with them a little. But, I still was trying to get through school and get done.

J: Did those draft papers come when you were still a student?

F: Yes, they did.

J: And you had student deferment until a certain _____?

F: I think I had a student deferment until I graduated. Then I had to go for the physical. When I finished my 5th year, I would get my teaching credential and had to go. I was granted a 1Y _____.

J: Do you have any particular, vivid recollections about Humboldt while you were there?

F: Well, yes. There are lots of memories as you start sitting here quietly and thinking about them. I guess the one that sort of stands out that was a definite embarrassment was marching in the Lumberjack band during a half-time show at Humboldt State and having a date afterwards making sure that all of marching clothes would fit over my clothes I was going to war to the dance afterwards, so I wouldn’t have to try to find a place to change and go through all of that hassle changing clothes. We marched out on the field for a very foggy half-time show, went through a couple of art formations and I was aware that my pants were becoming looser. The button apparently had slipped out of the button hole and before I got further into the show, my pants were falling down and I was pulling them up with both hands, my horn I couldn’t play because I was pulling my pants up. Finally, I had to stop in the middle of the show, pull up my long coat that was part of our uniform, take the white gloves off, lay my horn and music on the ground and pull my pants up and button them. I think I’ll probably always remember the audience laughing and the band turning around and laughing. It was somewhat embarrassing but I’m sure I will always remember that.

J: Were there any physical changes about the campus while you were there – buildings constructed or reconstructed?
F: Well the one that affected me the most was the fact that the new art and music buildings were put up and were being constructed while I was there and the department was getting larger. There was talk about building other buildings on the campus and they were building more student housing, dormitories on campus. And it was a general expansion time. As I look back now, I can see that it has been continuing since I left school, continually building and enlarging facilities and updating, it is really nice to see.

J: Is the major music department building that is there now the one that was being constructed when you were there?

F: Yes, it is.

J: Did you have an opportunity to use any of that building before you left?

F: I think for part of one year or most of one year, I'm not sure of the time frame exactly when it was finished. But we had to use it a little bit, not nearly as much as I would have liked. There were several things I wanted to use like electronic music lab, stage, the recital hall. It was really a nice place to play and practice in.

J: Was there _____ in the old music building that was still there?

F: _____

J: The theater, was that constructed while you were there or before?

F: It was before.

J: Was it a fairly new building?

F: Yes, it was a fairly new building and had a lot of use _____ as I am sure now a days, but they used to make it work. It was a very nice facility, had a large stage.

J: Do you recall any changes in the library during the time you were a student?

F: Yes, they moved – I have it down in my _____, I think they moved the library from the top of the hill. Or they had just done it and built a new building down below Founders Hall, below the music department. It was quite an addition, I think it had 3 floors and it was much larger and much more convenient to use. It was a nice new modern facility. It was really, had a lot of materials.

J: Did you live on or off campus while you were there?

F: Off campus. Never did live on campus.

J: Did you live at home or what were you...

F: I lived at home for, I think 3 of the years I went to school. For the rest of them I was married.

J: Where was graduation held?
F: The graduation was held on the football field. You marched in around the track and you were seated and they read our names. You had a little piece of paper with your name and handed it to the person who was doing the announcing, he read your name and then you marched across the stage and got your diploma and marched out. It was a fairly long graduation process. It took quite a while to get all of them in. I don’t know how many it was at the time, quite a few students. It was kind of a large, cumbersome ceremony.

J: The entire school graduated together.

F: The entire school graduated together.

J: Were there speakers and all that sort of thing?

F: Speakers, special music, benediction, invocation and all the things at a traditional graduation.

J: And members of the total faculty took part then?

F: I think that all the faculty took part, unless for health reasons they couldn’t walk in or march in. They had a very colorful entrance with all the robes _____ time consuming.

J: Were there off campus speakers as well or do you recall?

F: I don’t remember.

J: You said that you spent most of your time involved in the music program, did you graduate in music then?

F: I graduated in music, yes.

J: And have you used that training?

F: Yes, I have been teaching music now for 13 years in what I guess you’d call a middle school, it’s a 5th through 8th grade. I’m not sure that’s really a middle school. I teach almost all of the music in the school.

J: Have you continued to have contact with the folks at Humboldt State or any involvement with the music program there?

F: I’ve taken a summer workshop in chamber music and I am continually associating with what used to be my old teachers and professors at Humboldt who are now sort of my colleagues in our music association, or MENC. It has taken a while but I have sort of adjusted to the fact that they’re my colleagues now and not my professors. That was sort of a hard jump for a while.

J: What kinds of things do you as music educators do together?

F: Well, I have to qualify that. Not all of the campus music professors belong to MENC.

J: MENC is what?
F: Music Educators National Conference. Some of them belong and are very active, a few are very active, and some are sort of on the periphery and others you never see. The same with the CR campus. But, we try to plan special music events for students and elementary and high school and to give them opportunities they can’t get with just their own school curriculum, like chorale festivals, where all schools participate and the chorale groups to hear each other and share music. The same with the instrumental, get all the bands and orchestras together to play. Special “honor” festivals and special students of various groups to participate in music together. We have a solo ensemble concert, we sent people to prepare for solos, quartets or small groups. And then the jazz festival also every year. So we’re pretty active.

J: Have these things been going on for a long time?

F: Yes, the honor festivals have been going on for a number of years. In fact I participated in them when I was going to grade school. I’m not sure how long the jazz festival has been going. It has been on for a while and then off and back on again. I’m not quite sure about the solo ensemble.

J: Were there other kinds of music activities on campus at Humboldt State before you were a college student in which you were involved that maybe interested you more in the music career that you pursued?

F: Yes, one of the things that really helped whet my interest besides having a good musical experience in high school, was that Humboldt State had with several local music teachers outside the college, planned what they called a summer music camp. It was about 2 weeks I think, and we brought our instruments and we played in bands, orchestras and we played and everybody had to sing, too, we did some singing. We had use of the swimming pool, use of the tennis courts, and we had several special outings to do special things. It was a really nice experience, we had good staff and people came to enjoy music and learn some things, too. I’d say about 100-120 kids would show up and spend a couple of weeks on campus. It was a very nice, relaxed learning experience.

J: You participated in that in high school?

F: I participated in that in high school, yes. It was a summer music program for high school students.

J: And the camp, it was on campus?

F: It was on campus, yes, some students did use the dormitories. I, of course, lived close enough I could get back and forth pretty easily. But it was good.

J: Were many of the people who participated from out of the area?

F: Most of them were local high school students.

J: And Humboldt doesn’t do anything like that anymore?

F: I don’t think Humboldt does any summer music festivals, camps or anything. There’s nothing aimed at elementary or junior high students. _____
J: In the classes that you took, were you required to take some particular general education courses?

F: I’m not sure what your question is.

J: Did you have to have English and PE and History?

F: Yes, we had to take a sampling of almost everything – school of education, psychology, you had to spend two years ______, you had to take so much PE. Some of the PE classes were two units. You had to take an art class, had to take a science class, two science classes, speech class, theater arts classes, a broad smattering of classes from several different departments.

J: When you spoke about your 5th year, did you have to continue then to complete your credential or why did you go for a 5th year?

F: I went for a 5th year because, to become a complete, I’d get a lifetime credential and be a complete teacher. You could teach on a provisional but that meant going back and continuing and as long as I was here I wanted to finish it in one shot and not have to go back. Especially if it was granted as a life credential and you didn’t have to go back and renew.

J: So then you were involved not only in the Music Department but in the Education Department.

F: Yes, I was.

J: Where did you do student teach?

F: I did my student teaching at Arcata High School under Ruth Carrol and Woody Thompson. I spent some time in her, Miss Carrol’s vocal department and learning how her classes ran, some of my student teaching time there. I spent some time with Mr. Thompson, Woody Thompson’s concert band and then spent time with his classes working with the students.

J: Did you feel all of that then gave you a pretty good basis to do what you planned to do?

F: Yes, it was a good start. I had lots of experiences. I got to see different kinds of students in two classes. It did not really prepare me for what junior high was going to be like. Junior and high school are very different types of schools and they have very different kinds of students. The aspects of junior high students, you can’t talk to them or work them the same way you can high school students ______. It took me a little while to adjust to junior high and more experience would have been nice.

J: ______ offering on campus when you were there?

F: Yes, I think it continued after I left. I’m not positive. My aim was at secondary music. My credential was a secondary credential, major in music.

J: So that meant you spent more time dealing with ______?

F: It was there on campus. I hardly ever went inside the building. I didn’t know anything about ______
J: Are there any things that you would like to _____? Do you have any recollections that strike you about anything on campus while you were there?

F: Well, I think there are two or three things that as I look back, I don’t think I was fully aware as I was experiencing it. One of them was the fact that the college made such a population change from around 2,500 to 3,000 students up to about 7 or 8 or 9. That required enlarging staffs and changing classes, building new buildings and general changes on the campus that while you are going to school at the same time is noticeably there. The fact that this was following several assassinations of major personalities in our political structure, the fact that there was quite a bit of social unrest with the Vietnamese war, all of that following with the students recruiting, the draft, objections against the war, the awful waste of money and materials. That all had to have had an influence and was there and was very noticeable at the time. I think I came out of it with a pretty good education. I wish there were certain areas in my background now like history that I had spent more time with, especially things like piano. I wish I’d gotten more experience in jazz and smaller ensemble music. Those are things I’d go back and do later on. I suppose that one of the other things that caused problems, has to upset students and caused misunderstandings is the fact that we went from a semester system which was a half year of classes and then another half year, to where we went every quarter, three quarters a year instead of two semesters. That caused more time to change each year, the fact that you had to register, have finals, time off and then register, have finals, it seemed to break up the year a lot more. Classes were shorter, there was less time to learn that area and it seemed to really chop the year up. I really kind of liked the semester system much better. There was more time to do things, do extra things, and still learn all about the subject, more about the subject than you could in the quarter system. I had problems making my units work. They offered one special 1 unit science class when I started school and I couldn’t see any reason for taking it and somewhere I missed the information that I needed it for graduation. So when they added up my general units for science I was 1 unit short and that was the class I hadn’t taken.

J: Some of those things fall through the cracks while they were changing from one time schedule to another.

F: One time schedule to another and the fact that, like any student, you don’t always hear everything that you think you heard. You know, it’s said and you hear it but it doesn’t mean that you fully understand the meaning. It causes problems and it worked itself out fine.

J: The changes also required calculation changes on the part of your units because semester units and quarter units aren’t the same.

F: Yes, I’d satisfied the requirements but I hadn’t satisfied the unit requirements. I had taken the right classes but hadn’t fulfilled my units.

J: Are there any other things that you can think of?

F: No, I think college is still a very neat experience. Now that I’ve gone through it the way that I have, I’m glad where I’m at. But I think sometimes, for some people anyway, at least the ones I see a lot now,
if they could spend a year or two working before they go through school, I think they appreciate it more. I kind of wish in some ways I had done that, too. Spent some time outside of the classroom, out in sort of “the real world” and got some experiences and then come back. I think school would have meant a lot more then.

J: Thank you for your time.