The following is an interview with DeEtte Franek Harrison, who was a student at Humboldt State College from 1973 until 1979. She was an elementary education credential candidate. She currently lives in Cottage Grove, Oregon. The interview was done in May of 1984. The interviewer is Jeanie Allard.

Jeanie: Okay, the first thing I want to do is ask you what your name is and where you’ve been, now.

DeEtte: Now. DeEtte Harrison and I live in Cottage Grove, Oregon. I’ve been there for a couple years.

J: Was your name different when you attended Humboldt?

D: Yes, my maiden name was DeEtte Franek and I entered college right out of high school.

J: So you didn’t have any external experiences in between times.

D: No, summer vacation into school.

J: And what was the college like when you attended?

D: It was mostly casual dress. With the people, they wore Levis, the more holes and patches the better. Backpacks were very popular. Health food was very prominent. People were into eating granola and all those good things.

J: Did they sell that stuff in the...

D: They sold some frozen yogurt and types of things down in the Rathskellar and that area. Down there you could go get that. A lot of people brought their food in their backpacks.

J: Now they have a lot folks who have set up card table at lunch time and sell pizza and sell...

D: No. Or if you went up in Founders Hall, in the little vending room there, you could get candy bars and coffee and coke ____. It wasn’t really health food, in the vending machine.

J: And it still isn’t. Did you notice any changes while you were there? Did they build any buildings or redo anything about the facility itself?

D: The major thing was the increased size of the library. Where they 2-3 times increased the size of it. That was a big undertaking.

J: It was at the same site and...

D: They just added onto it.

J: How did that affect you as a student?

D: It was really crummy crawling over all the construction crew and things trying to get to the library. It was just, made it more spacious. They really stressed comfort for couches and chairs and carpeting and
things. It was a nicer place to go and study. The complaint though was that there was only one card catalog on the bottom floor. If you don’t get all your information the first time you’d go up and down stairs a lot. An elevator might be nice.

J: They do have one but no one ever uses it. I don’t know if it is off limits or what.

D: I think it’s just the service people.

J: I think so. I thought maybe my old age would help. What buildings did you attend classes in?

D: I was down in the Ed-Psych building which now has a new name but I’m not...

J: Harry Griffith Hall.

D: Harry Griffith Hall that was just changing as I was leaving. A lot in Founders Hall, a lot of English and social sciences classes in there. A few in the art and music just because I took a few GE classes in there. A few in the science building and then a few over in the PE building. Those were the ones I used mostly.

J: Was PE required at that time in your general education?

D: No, it was only, I didn’t take any stressful PE. I took folk dancing, social dancing, I took a fitness class that was just for my pleasure.

J: Did you have to have a freshman activity course?

D: No. No swimming.

J: No nothing.

D: That was not required.

J: But you were you required to take some science? Is that why you were in the science building?

D: Uh huh, that was part of GE.

J: Did you belong to any campus organizations while you were there?

D: Not a one. There weren’t many groups and things going on. I think if you lived in the dorms you’d be more likely to join something, just to do. My freshman year I was living at home and then sophomore year I was married so I didn’t really have time to be joining groups and fraternities. Or sororities, those were kind of out. So I just drove my car, tried to find a parking spot, went to class, went to the library and studied, went home.

J: Was there much evidence of many organizations on campus?

D: Oh, in the Bulletin or on the kiosk things were listed. There were a lot of Christian things going on and things like that or maybe sports-minded might get together for volleyball games and they had their
own little tournaments and things like that. I wasn’t active at all in student government or anything. If you wanted to do that you could really get involved in that.

J: Were a lot of the people backpackers? Did they have some kinds of outdoor groups now? Do they have...

D: Yeah, I think there were some you could join to go out for a weekend and do those things. I just wasn’t really into any of that.

J: Did they at, while you were there, have a homecoming event?

D: Uh huh. I think it was all centered around Lumberjack Days in early May. They set up on the back field. They had a little town that was constructed with little concession booths and things to do. That was all part of it. They’d collect burnables for a big bonfire and I think they did have a parade downtown Arcata around the square and things maybe once, but it wasn’t really a big thing to do and it lost interest.

J: They were, by then, past the float-making stage and...

D: Pretty much, maybe one or two floats but it wasn’t a big production. It was kind of dying out although a lot of people attended the little town because there was beer and things. That was the big thing for the weekend.

J: The marching band at the time, did they have the marching lumberjacks? They now have a male chauvinist pig band. Were either of those...

D: Well, I think they were called the Marching Lumberjacks. They wore their work jeans and their plaid work shirts and were pretty squirrely in what they were doing. But it was a real small group. They’d play for homecoming and some of the games but it was a really small group.

J: Did you attend games as a regular?

D: Yeah, only because my husband liked to go. I usually looked at the cheerleaders or looked in the crowd, see what everyone was doing it. Because, usually Humboldt lost anyway.

J: What was your major emphasis? Why were you there?

D: I always wanted to be an elementary school teacher and that had been my goal all the way through. I took college prep courses in high school and as I entered college they were just changing from Fisher to Ryan and I got to be one of the first groups to go through all the way. It had changed that you didn’t just major in history or English. You picked an emphasis and had four choices. I chose social science mostly because I enjoyed the history and things of that nature as opposed to being math-science, art-music or the English_____. Then you had your GE and they initiated a new phase in that you had to have an emphasis phase in that, also where you had a complete unit in that. I took the English one in that, along with Ed courses. I completed it in four years and then went one more year to obtain my clear credential and got my student teaching done at that time.
J: Have you worked with that since you graduated?

D: I worked one year. I started out as a sub, on-call. The principal asked me if I was interested in doing a teacher’s aide job half day. So I did that. Then also I was on-call sometimes the second half of the afternoon or just not be an aide that day. I used that and then children came along, twins. I’ve been at home since. But, I would like to go back to teaching once the twins are, say in first-grade or something. It would be enjoyable again to get back into the classroom.

J: What years were you there?

D: I started in the fall of 1973 and then I went for 5 years until I obtained my clear credential.

J: Then you graduated between, before you were, you graduated at the end of 4 years and then finished the 5th year?

D: Went on. My 5th year was strictly student teaching and finishing out all the Ed courses that were required. I had my BA at the end of 5 years. But, without your credential it wasn’t much good. So I opted to go ahead and go that 5th year. You also had a choice of teaching at the end of your 4 years if you had your degree and then working on your clear credential. But, I thought I would rather get it done now rather than waiting until family and things came along. But, some people I knew went straight into teaching and then they had to pick up summer courses or evening courses or correspondence courses to make up that clear credential.

J: Was there a limited time to do that? Do you know?

D: I think it was 5 years but I wouldn’t bet on it. Although, one thing I learned as going, being a first person through this program was to get everything in writing. Then they couldn’t say “oh it’s changed, you can’t do that.” I was frustrated a lot in the Ed department with them saying “oh you can’t do that, you have to do this.” You figure that you’ve taken, you know, 12 extra units that are garbage.

J: Okay, you said there was some kind of schedule change or time change while you were there?

D: When I first entered as a freshman classes were all 50 minutes long and they ran mostly on a Monday through Thursday or Monday through Friday if it was a 5 unit class. The second quarter they changed it. I don’t know if it was statewide, with all of the state universities. But, they wanted to utilize more class time and cut down on costs so they increased the class time and changed it to a Tuesday–Thursday course or Monday, Wednesday, Friday. Because, as a freshman I could finagle my schedule around so I only went Monday through Thursday and had a 3 day weekend. So, Fridays were not utilized and so that changed in 1974 I’d say.

J: Did it make it more difficult to make up your schedule then?

D: Yes. It was harder to fit things and classes were unusual lengths and if they went too long the instructor almost needed to give you a break in-between just to get out of there for a while. It was a long time taking notes.
J: What is your most vivid recollection of the time you were there?

D: Personally I remember just all the hassles with being the first class going through the Ryan bill, of having to talk to the Ed department, having to talk to your advisor, which mine was in history, it was Dr. Mahar. Going up and talking to the credential people up in the administration building and trying to get everyone to coordinate and agree on one thing. There was always a big hassle in just knowing you were going the right route or if you were going to take 10 years in getting your BA because things kept getting messed up.

J: When you graduated, did they have a whole ceremony or was it divided by the...

D: It was divided up by schools then. Mine was in the social science emphasis with education. And, we graduated at a certain time in the gym. Other people were scheduled at other times, say in the theater or out on the football field in different areas. We all graduated the same day but at different times.

J: Were most of the people, the faculty that was there just from your department or were they school-wide faculty that they brought into each area?

D: Well, in my case, there were some education people and also social sciences so there were some history professors and economics and things of that nature.

J: Did you have special speakers, outside speakers or faculty speakers?

D: We had a faculty speaker although I don’t recall who it was and we had our assemblyman, Barry Keene speak. I was very disappointed with his speech because he was campaigning on our graduation time and he was mostly concerned with all the wonderful things he had done with right-to-die.

J: Oh, fun thing to talk about at graduation. Is there anything else that you can think of? You lived off campus all the time.

D: I had it planned down if I hurried and had 10 minutes to drive to school and could find a parking spot close, 10 minutes to hike up to class and I could make it every time. Parking was a big problem unless you had an 8 o’clock class. You had to drive around and around until you found somebody leaving. Then maybe 2 or 3 people were fighting over one spot.

J: It’s still the same way. I think that’s all I can think of to ask you.

D: All right.

J: Thank you.