



2008

Miller, Sally Oral History Interview

Gwenn Browne

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/esohc>

Recommended Citation

Browne, Gwenn, "Miller, Sally Oral History Interview" (2008). *Emeriti Society Oral History Collection*. 28.
<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/esohc/28>

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the University Archives at Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Emeriti Society Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact mgibney@pacific.edu.

FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS
UNIVERSITY OF THE PACIFIC ARCHIVES

Sally Miller (1967-2000)
Professor of History

December 8, 2008

By Gwenn Browne

Transcription by Kamile Jureviciute, University of the Pacific,
Department of Special Collections, Library

Subjects: Development of Women's Studies, Affirmative Action, Persons: Jake Jacoby,
Malcolm Moule, Cliff Hand.

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

MILLER (SALLY), 1967-2000

DECEMBER 8, 2008

[TAPE 1, Side A]

[Begin Tape.]

BROWNE: I'm Gwenn Brown and I am interviewing Sally Miller and it is the 8 of December 2008 and we are in the UOP library. Starting off, Sally, what years did you serve and what were your official titles?

MILLER: I came to UOP in 1967, and I was on the faculty until I retired in I believe the year 2000. I'll amend that in a minute. I officially retired then. I was hired as an assistant professor, and I had already been that elsewhere, so I was hired on the same step, and moved up I think pretty quickly when I retired to full professor.

BROWNE: And we probably should say in history

MILLER: In the department of history, that's right, and after I retired in 2000 I continued for 4 or 5 years with one component of my work and that was previous to retirement for the last several years I had been the editor the founding editor of the John Muir Newsletter and I continued with that. It was equivalent to teaching one course. And that maybe until 2005.

BROWNE: Ok. What circumstances brought you to Pacific?

MILLER: Well, I was teaching in Midwest, I was from the Midwest, my degrees were from the Midwest, and either coast seemed very attractive, and so I was looking for positions in New York and California. I was also kind of interested in being at a small college because my whole education had been at large multi-versities, a phrase we had then, and I think I was tired of the anonymity that that suggests, and so I thought a small college might be an attractive place to be and so this was in the west and it was a small college. So it seemed the right place.

BROWNE: Good! What were your first impressions of the city and the people in Stockton?

MILLER: My first impression was of the weather, because I came out here for my interview around Washington's Birthday from where I was teaching at Michigan State; it's a real snow belt there, and of course we were deep in snow, and I came here for the interview, and some people were wearing sandals! I couldn't get over that, and I thought whatever the job is, I think I want it. So the climate, which probably has brought some people to UOP.

BROWNE: I had exactly the same experience

MILLER: What are the other parts to the question...

BROWNE: your impressions of the city and the people

MILLER: The city, I think I wasn't at that point aware of this being a very diverse community in terms of demographics, and I was kind of appalled and it seemed like everybody looked like everybody else, and when I saw an occasional black person I was very happy about it. I wanted some big city diversity, even though I was here in a small town, smaller city than my background which was from Chicago. So I liked diversity and I was concerned about there being a lack of it. I didn't want to be teaching only children of well-to-do and my first impression was maybe that was going to be so. Just simply the white, well-to-do, and so as maybe I became more aware of the diversity, and as there began to be a lot more diversity I was pretty pleased about all that. Impressions of the city... The city is full of trees which Stockton likes to say about itself and that's I think attractive and I like the fact that there is access to the water here. This is a very nice delta, very nice aspect of Stockton, even though many people don't have that since there is not a lot of public access, but that's a terrific thing. For many years I did live on the water so I made the most of it. So that's a unique aspect of life here. The downtown was deteriorating by the time I got here. I think the year before Weberstown had opened, and so I wasn't here for when the department stores began to move out, but apparently in no time at all the downtown pretty much collapsed. It's like there wasn't a downtown. So that's another of my impressions.

BROWNE: What were your first impressions of Pacific, its physical appearance and faculty, staff, students, and administrators of the campus?

MILLER: That's certainly a multi-layered question. Impression of the campus; it certainly does look like what a university campus should look like. I was used to Michigan State which president Burns had a relationship to because they have cluster colleges and he tried to, he visited there to try and build on what they did or to try and at least look at how to go about the business of having cluster colleges, but it was just, it looked more like an industrial plant than it looked like a university. And it was then it had largest student body in the country; 37000, perhaps something like that. So this was intimate, and it was attractive, and had buildings with ivy growing on. And just again what a university should look like, so I had a very positive impression. On the other hand my department was near the Quonset huts, Bannister Hall, which was maybe a step up from Quonset huts...

BROWNE: Well it used to be navy barracks...

MILLER: Yes okay that's it. So the department where we were and I came in '67 and we stayed there until '82 or '83 and it was really like being in a dungeon and the social sciences were there, kind of off by ourselves, our whole division and our facilities were terrible. I would be embarrassed when someone would come, say someone from the Record, to interview me or some professional colleague. It was as hot as could be. It was so miserable in summer or spring, and then early fall and winter was damp and we couldn't heat up the place. No carpeting. The building was upscaled after we moved out,

some administrators moved in, but it was like being in the dregs those first fifteen years there.

BROWNE: And back in those days we were beset by the peat dust, as were the books, as they stood on the shelf.

MILLER: That too, yeah. So our location was a very poor one and I suppose it's often true that divisions can be off by themselves, so we and the social science in that one building across from the building which at the time housed the practice rooms for the piano students and that could also be a problem when you... People practicing and you are trying to give a lecture or have a seminar in a one large room. So that could be an issue.

I think I was going to say something else about it, but I lost it now. It can be the pattern, I think, that departments, divisions are off by themselves; I think in our case it was a lack of being able to mix and know what was going on. I think it was an isolating experience being over in Bannister, when increasingly the heart of COP was in Wendell Phillips.

BROWNE: Ok was there someone at Pacific who was especially helpful in your initial orientation to Pacific?

MILLER: My department chair was Malcolm Moule and I enjoyed meeting him and looked forward to working with him when I was interviewed, and then he was gone that next year. He and his wife were I think in Denmark teaching for the year and doing a lot of travel, so he'd been helpful, it seemed like he would be helpful, and he was when he came back but he was gone that year. It was not so good, it was kind of like "sink or swim," and nobody really stepped to the fore. So I think that year was kind of a void, trying to get into things, trying to learn one's way around, but there was nobody doing any mentoring. I think it was probably a harder experience for me as a woman than a male faculty member might have had because, and I've probably mentioned it a few times, in this interview today, but it was difficult being the only woman in the division. There was another woman in one of the departments, but she totally removed herself and did not interact at all, just went to class. Yes, so I was virtually the only woman in the division. I think that made it a more isolating experience, that I did not always know policy decisions, or did not know the rumors. Sometimes these things were learned in the men's room, so I didn't know. So I would say the first couple years could be called hard years.

BROWNE: Okay. Now we're moving into academic programs. Describe the changes that you observed in the curriculum and/or academic programs during the years you worked at Pacific.

MILLER: When I came here the dean was Jake Jacoby, and he was very enthusiastic about a program change that he was trying to design for the college. And right now I can't recapitulate what it was – it never came in to effect, but I think it would have taken us across the departmental lines. And he was trying to convince people to go in this direction and to implement it. I can't remember these details, but he was only here

another year or two and then he moved to Mississippi, so I can't remember. But anyway, this curriculum change he was talking about didn't come to pass. What we did get a new dean named Bill Binkley, the main curriculum change that I remember had to do with our freshman program and it was called I&I Immigration... Imagination and Integration

BROWNE: No, Innovation and Imagination

MILLER: I didn't think innovation was the word but okay. And in the beginning I was very enthusiastic about it. It seemed like it would give you a lot of leeway for whatever creative impulses you may have, and it would be a different kind of experience for students. It wouldn't be the usual ... the old-fashioned introduction for freshmen into college work, but to the extent that students had more responsibilities than they might in the more typical introductory courses. I'm not too sure if it really worked; they weren't willing to put out the work many of them, and the creative aspects of it I think in time got lost. Faculty worked paired off and that was good to work with someone who studies philosophy ... myself in history, some of that could be good but sometimes these linkages, that's what we called them, linkages became rather unworkable. So it was an experiment that we had for some years, probably longer than we should have, and it had more promise than what came out in performance. Also as part of that we had winter term between the two semesters, where students would take... I think it was four courses per semester. In January they had just one course responsibility, where they could work closely with this instructor of their choosing, or they could go off sometimes it was something where you could study abroad, or could be like a field-trip, and I was very enthusiastic about the winter term. For me it led to all kinds of interesting directions where you could really focus on some small subject that you couldn't otherwise. So given the kind of time permitted and you could take field-trips with students, and I did some of that. Something on the ethnic press became a big interest of mine in those years,, and so I had the winter term more than once and took field trips to San Francisco where students could meet editors and journalists of mostly Asian newspapers, but whatever newspapers were there in foreign languages or even an Irish paper. So I think that had a lot of promise and think for some of us that worked well ,but again things never work for everybody,and so for some it didn't work well, Then again the problem of students not necessarily taking things seriously enough, and so for some of them January became really time they could manipulate to go skiing most of the month. And I do not know how much that lasted. Maybe it was 5-6 years. I'm trying to think in terms of the various offerings I had. I'm sure it wasn't a whole decade of it, but eventually it just seemed it wasn't wise to continue with this.

BROWNE: One of the reasons was that they didn't collect tuition for that semester. I think if they had been able to charge tuition, it had lasted longer. Okay let's move on. Describe the courses and/or academic programs that you helped to develop at Pacific.

MILLER: Within the department I did some special topics that I was happy to work on. And I also, maybe this I should be mentioning first, I also developed a course in Urban History. Now this was the late 60s, and all of a sudden urban studies was all the rage having to do with some of the upheaval in society and the... sense that cities needed

attention, so urban studies began to be considered an important part of the curriculum that all colleges should have, which we did not have and we didn't within history have any urban specialist. None of us had trained in that. Because I did courses that often were in the area of social history, it would seem logical that I could work this up, and so I did. There was an effort to join together with other faculty who were either urban specialist or were trying to retrain themselves as that, so in geography and sociology and political science, myself maybe somebody else, so we had an urban studies it was major. And at first since as I said, "all the rage" we got very good enrollment and enthusiastic students. I remember having an urban history course with about 70 students and history didn't tend to enroll that way. You were often happy to have 30 and later at some point we were happy to have 20... So the urban work was very popular to begin with, and then it was like that phase was over. And those of us who had been doing that work were kind of sorry to let it go, but eventually the department didn't think it was a good idea that we continue in the urban program, and I don't remember what happened with the other urban offerings, if they continued, but I know that urban major had disappeared.

BROWNE: I think it became a minor in sociology.

MILLER: Oh that's very possible. So urban history as part of an urban studies program was one thing that I did and another, this became almost then a career commitment of mine, and that was also a response to the 1960s and the various upheavals. So if we needed urban history, and it seemed we did, and urban studies, well, we certainly needed women's history, and eventually women's studies. And so that fell to me too, and it was logical, I was interested, and I was the one woman in the history department, which I'm not sure I've yet mentioned on the tape I was the only one... Yes I have. One woman in the division almost, virtually, and one woman in the department. And so I was interested in this, and then I remember the moment it clicked in my mind to work in this area. It was my first sabbatical, and I had gotten a grant from the American Philosophical Society, and I was doing some research in my area of specialization, which had to do with history of social democratic movements, which my thesis, my dissertation had come out of that. I was researching in these famous archives in Amsterdam having to do with history of social democracy and communism, anarchism and all those adjacent kinds of topics. As I was going through the records there, there was this Eureka moment and that was.. All of a sudden I began to be aware there was a lot women activists involved in this particular movement that was I studying. I had never given it any thought. When I came back I was ready to research that and also teach in that vein. And so my first, that was in 1971, and so my first offering of a women's history course was in 1973, and I offered that course for the rest of my career. It became my fundamental offering and on the basis of that, I eventually joined with other faculty who were also interested in aspects of what would become women's studies, and we began to develop that here at Pacific, at COP with probably some participation beyond COP, but I can't think for the moment. In one way or another probably, but not in terms of the courses.

BROWNE: I think more cooperation came when the cluster college closed and many people came into the COP department...

MILLER: So women's studies became a commitment in the part of some of us if not on the part of the university, that we were offering these courses but to set up a program, there didn't seem to be much enthusiasm by administrators. And so a couple people before me had tried to get support for studying women's studies program, and it didn't quite happen. Those pioneers tried and it didn't quite happen, and then it fell to me and in my time, this is the mid seventies, then I and some others were offering courses within our departments, tried informally to coordinate those courses so that students if they wished could take a cluster of these courses and eventually a minor. And eventually we did have a minor, I don't think we had a, no we didn't have a major, only a minor. I was the informal coordinator, but never in terms of any release time. I remember one administrator whom I in general very much respected and liked and had a lot of affection for, and he said to me "I believe the women's movement is the most important revolution of the 20th century but we can't afford it. I don't know if I should be mentioning who that was or not.

BROWNE: Make your own choice.

MILLER: That was Cliff Hand whom I had a lot of affection for. He believed that was really very important, but we just couldn't afford it when it came to dollars and cents.

BROWNE: But you did eventually get it because I remember a number of programs that you put on that enriched the college not just your minors, people you brought in to speak and....

MILLER: Yes I'm glad you're prodding me to go on with this. Yes that was the most important part of it, it seems to me. We were offering courses within the department and then formally as best as we could tie them together and eventually a minor resulted. But it was a lot of rich programming: bringing in speakers or having movies, films and different things. I think it certainly did add an important dimension to our programming, even if it wasn't seen as central, but it would be important to a lot of the young, some of the young women, very important to them.

BROWNE: And you might want to mention that in this time the school began to hire more women faculty. When you and I came there were not very many women, but as they hired new people there was a better representation of women among the new faculty than there had been among the old faculty.

MILLER: I think it was different....I think it was so minimum that it was hardly noticeable that we came. Myself and my interviewer today came within a year of each other, and we very much came to a male institution as far as the faculty.

BROWNE: When I came a year after you did, I had the same impression.

MILLER: Okay and it didn't change much for many years. After all the hiring that was done in what I'll call the central disciplines of liberal arts. Now I want to say it in a way where I'm not being negative, fields like history and philosophy and literature, these were

not where a lot of hiring was being done, began to hire in business and engineering and things like that. So our faculty was pretty much set, and so we didn't have a lot of new blood coming in. It wasn't until my generation began to retire that there was really a lot of hiring, and then you got a diverse faculty, one that looks more like the real world than what it was for all the years of my generation here. So where someone else may remember some women that got hired, it was very minimum, because we just weren't growing in what I think are the essential disciplines.

BROWNE: Yeah because the old general education program that existed before we came onboard for INI had emphasized history, religion, English

MILLER: Languages

BROWNE: Languages too

MILLER: Yes, and then with the move nationally to drop those requirements that impacted very harshly, and these various disciplines that were just mentioned, and remember the languages, modern languages, fighting like anything to hang on to foreign language being a requirement. Of course they lost that bout, as it was being lost nationwide, and I think these disciplines suffered as a result. In retrospect I don't think it was such a good idea that all these requirements were done away with, but we were going with the flow...

BROWNE: Who were the individuals that were the most memorable and why?

MILLER: I think Jacoby, Jake Jacoby whom I just worked with at the beginning of my career. I've already mentioned in this interview that then he left to go be an administrator in Mississippi. But he was an important figure locally. He was an institution locally, his whole family so involved with Pacific. I felt a tie to him as a sociologist who dealt with areas that I dealt with. And so he had done important work with early community here of East Asians, South Asians, and it increasingly became very much my second field of interest after women's history, became immigration history and ethnicity. So even in the very beginning his work, his pioneering work in that area and his significance in the community too so he'd be the first one. Then the second one of importance to me in my career here would be Malcolm Moule, who was the individual who really built my department in my generation, and I think he was a chairman in my first seven or eight years I was here and then we began to move as a college towards having rotating chairs. He was very important in terms of our curriculum and just a key individual. Then Cliff Hand who was actually in retrospect, he was our dean for only a short period of time moving from his work as English professor and the clusters and the English department and then became our dean

BROWNE: Associate dean. He was associate dean before he was dean. He didn't stay dean very long because he went to be a vice president.

MILLER: So I think he was maybe dean just a year or two, but he was an important figure in terms of the curricular changes we were about at the time. I always found him a pleasure to work with, I had a lot of respect for him so I'd have to list him. Now are we talking just about administrators now?

BROWNE: Just says individuals and I was going to ask you don't you want to mention Donna Baker? She was not a mentor to you but I think you were a mentor to her.

MILLER: Donna was someone who came around '69, I think, yeah that early, but I didn't know her at first because she was in modern languages, teaching German in modern languages. She was a Harvard PhD and managed to string together a number of fellowships, and she wasn't here very much. But we became very good friends, in fact I'm going to see her tomorrow when she comes down from Davis, but she was one of those who tried just before me, who tried to develop women's studies. Another one I think of very important individual I think of so positively would be.....

[End Tape]

UOP ARCHIVES FACULTY EMERITI INTERVIEWS

MILLER (SALLY), 1967-2000

DECEMBER 8, 2008

[TAPE 1, Side B]

[Begin Tape.]

BROWNE: So would you describe the students with which you were familiar?

MILLER: When I came here in the late 60's we had students that I think were a joy to work with, and it had to do with the times in which our society, in which was living and what we were going through. So students who cared about the society were involved in social issues, whether civil rights movement which was kind of winding down, whether issue of the war was heating up, or whether the issue of women's rights, which more and more began to be seen as an important social issue. And my courses lent themselves very much to consideration of these kinds of topics. I always liked to deal with them in terms of having revolved in the past, but also the ramifications for the present, and so it's one of these things we can discuss in class and those students wanted to and...

BROWNE: As you were saying when you were not on the tape that in the 80's student body was sort of []

MILLER: Then that would change but for example I had this course which was my favorite called American Intellectual History and the title after awhile scared people off. But it just meant the history of ideas, ideas that were significant and different eras in our history. At first it was just such a pleasure to discuss ideas whether democratic representation, or minority issues, or a whole, beginning of environmentalism even, it was just a pleasure. Then by the 80s I ended up having to give up that course because students didn't want sink their teeth into things, they didn't want really to discuss. That

was in terms of curriculum one of the things I most regret that I had to give that up because couldn't get the students to involve themselves anymore in discussing issues. That had been not a lecture course either, so if the students are not going to participate and involve themselves it just wasn't workable anymore.

BROWNE: Okay, would you describe the faculty?

MILLER: The faculty that... A lot of mid-westerners I was surprised at this at how many mid-westerners there were here. Seemed, every other person was from Iowa, which really surprised me, and so many out of ministerial background in that era; now that would change.

BROWNE: Yes when we first came every second person was ordained in something.

MILLER: Yes, I was really surprised at that. In fact when you... at that point, filled out basic questionnaire, application I mean for faculty, they had on there even to indicate your religion. And I thought that was really surprising, and I didn't think it was considered appropriate anymore.

BROWNE: We were church related in those days. It was end of '68 that we separated from the Methodists.

MILLER: Oh okay, so this is why. This was '67. I wasn't hesitant about writing down Jewish, but I didn't think it was appropriate that it be asked, even though it was church related but I can see that... the background of it. But we were on our way to becoming a different kind of university, that we soon became quite distant relationship to the Methodist church. What else?

BROWNE: So just talking about that will be...

MILLER: People had degrees from major universities, and it was expected that you have a PhD and that you finish it, not being an ABD but dissertation but there were a good number I'm sorry to say that when they got their degree and then finished their degree, they're hired, they finish their degree, and then especially when they get tenure, a good number that then never went any further. They kind of lost their interest in pursuing their discipline, and I was sorry about that; I would have preferred to have fellowship with people who are real active in their professions and publishing. In fact I always went, wherever there was a opportunity, I always went to national conferences and that was a way to feel really alive, find out what everybody is working on. In your own department you can't do that because everybody has a different specialty, but also that a lot of people weren't too involved; they were concentrating on their teaching and didn't feel the need to go beyond that. Whereas now with the faculty, they really realized, that they must publish too they have to be involved researchers; that now that is part of the job, whereas before it was sort of lip service, and it wasn't part of the job. We as a faculty, we didn't do much graduate work; not all of the departments had masters degrees, and we did for maybe the first half of my career here. After a while I was willing, and in fact it was the

right thing to do, to let go of that program, and maybe we should have kept it because we do have some primary sources within the field of history at the library: the Muir Papers and some other major ones. But I don't think it can be a rich program when students don't have one another to react, graduate students to study with, to react to, and so forth because all our graduate students, the few that we had in courses that were essentially undergraduate courses, and you would assign them a little more work. So I don't think that's the best way to go through the graduate program. So I thought it was the right thing and we decided, administration asked us, we decided yes, we'll let the program go, and I think we made this right decision. When we were asked, the other side of it, if we want to offer a doctor of arts in history, as English had decided to offer a doctor of arts in their field, and for the reasons I've said that we can't offer full programming for graduate students, I'm glad we didn't go in that direction. Although I would have loved to have the opportunity to do more graduate work! I only did graduate work when I taught abroad, the three different stints teaching overseas. I enjoyed that very much. In fact at one point I was interviewing, hoping to get into a university where there was more graduate work, and the opportunities that came up didn't seem like the right ones, but I did miss not having a complement of graduate students, but this is an undergraduate university, and that's the truth of it.

BROWNE: What were your impressions of the administrators? The interview leaves you the opportunity to say you really weren't that familiar with them and says describe the ones with which you were familiar.

MILLER: When I first came in we had for a very short time we had a powerhouse, we went through a lot of vice presidents, and we had one Jack Bevan who was really a powerhouse and he stayed a year or maybe only two years.

BROWNE: Yeah no he was at least two years because he hired me and he was here my first year.

MILLER: So he was here then three years. He would have shaped this university, who knows how, but he really really shaped it. But he didn't stay terribly long. Probably went through a lot of people. The presidents stayed forever, but we had a series of vice presidents, but people didn't put their, they didn't put their stamp on programs I don't think really. I remember very well when President Burns died it, was so sudden, so surprising. In fact I was on a camping trip around Humboldt and saw in the Chronicle... San Francisco Chronicle, a paragraph said the president suddenly was gone, and so we hired, I shouldn't say we, I didn't do it... Stanley McCaffrey and he was here for about seventeen years maybe 15-17 years. I remember his inauguration, it was a big festive event, it was hot as anything, we're all dying sitting in the heat

BROWNE: Emily Knoles fainted in the middle of it because it was too hot.

MILLER: But I don't think he did much, and others can speak of this better, but I don't think he did much that was a great advantage to the university. Well I don't know these are just opinions; I didn't work that much with the administrators since I wasn't in, by

choice, I wasn't on the academic council. I think in the last few years of my teaching, and then subsequently with President DeRosa, that we had someone more who put a stamp on the university than those who preceded him, and did some positive things.

BROWNE: Did you want to make any comment on the staff?

MILLER: Just that they tend to be under appreciated

BROWNE: and overworked

MILLER: Yes overworked, and the staff people, with very little pay, tend to keep the departments going, so they're worth their weight in gold.

BROWNE: The next group is the regents

MILLER: The only one I ever had anything to do with would be George Wilson and I guess I won't comment.

BROWNE: I was thinking you might know Joan Darrah

MILLER: Oh of course. Joan Darrah. Yes. Joan evolved in a certain way, she was looking for direction I suppose after an empty nest after the children were gone, and she was doing the EDD here. When we, some of us, Judy Chambers and myself and others, were on a committee that would result in the first Affirmative Action program. Joan was our gofer, she was the individual who took the notes and found out things for us and ran things down. And then all of sudden she's a regent, but I think she found her way and obviously became a very important person in Stockton, she became our mayor. So yes and I knew her through the League of Women Voters as well.

BROWNE: Okay, the last group included here is the alumni.

MILLER: I often have good relations with students after they leave, particularly the very good students. They feel close to their instructors, and they want to keep in touch, and they do for a few years, and typically then they get a life. Then you don't hear from them so often. But I have contact with some students dating back to 1971 is the oldest I can remember. It's always nice to find out that what you have achievers; just lately a student a student that was mine in the 80s was on honored here on campus, but I don't think I can...

BROWNE: Yeah well I would and I think you just did draw the distinction between the people you know who have graduated and the alumni sort of as a group. They don't seem to me to be the same thing. The next area: describe the university programs that you feel were particularly significant. And then the second part of that is there asking for changes.

MILLER: How those programs might be changed?

BROWNE: No, what changes you saw in these programs

MILLER: Oh, I think maybe I really did some of this. I and I had seemed like an important program, and then it sort of fizzled. And the various programmatic changes of the '70s - we started with enthusiasm, and then it sort of slipped away, but I think I'll stand with what I said half hour ago or so on this.

BROWNE: The next theory is controversial issues. Describe the controversies that emerged during your period of service.

MILLER: Well there was a couple different things that may be emerging in my mind. The faculty, it seemed to have issues about faculty governance, particularly not the early days that I was here, and try to establish a system of faculty governance, and have some autonomy in terms of academic council. And there was that time I can't remember what McCaffrey did and then... What was it? [??] Monroe was the head of the academic council

BROWNE: Well

MILLER: And then he resigned in the midst of this turmoil

BROWNE: It was and I think it was the first major one involved football and hiring of a football coach.

MILLER: Well, the issue of football was a constant one until finally it was done away with. The faculty seemed to be out of step with the regents by constantly pointing out that we couldn't afford it and too many of our resources were going into it. So from time to time there'd be upheavals about it such as the one my interviewer just referred to. I often wasn't involved in much of these things because of not being in governance, and trying to use my time for writing, publishing, to amplify my teaching. I often tried to keep a distance from things and not even know what was going on. So I suppose in that way I wasn't that much of, I wasn't a good citizen in that area.

BROWNE: The next area is students and I think we may have already covered some of this too. It says what do you remember about the students and their activities during your years of service. How did the students change and how did you adapt to their changes?

MILLER: I have some of my remarks to allude to these kinds of issues, that students became less serious in the course of my thirty three years here.

BROWNE: Or more serious in another sense that is they had very narrow professional objectives, and they didn't have that broader interest that you talked about earlier.

MILLER: That first they'd be interested

BROWNE: How many units and what grade can you get in your course

MILLER: Less and less really interested in... curious about the world and interested in things ,but rather became more focused in pragmatic ways: will this get me a job, will this look good on my resume. With that kind of mindset they were moving away from the liberal arts, where more and more student population going toward the professional schools, and we went through a phase, what I call the central liberal arts. We went through times where we had really a dearth of students that it was really serious whether we could keep our faculty if we were going to be shrinking so. And so in terms of interested students and inquiring minds and numbers of students early in my career, and by the '80s we really were worried about bodies and sometimes we might do anything to get a few more bodies, really worried for the sake of our department.

BROWNE: The question is how did you adapt to these changes in the students? You already mentioned the loss of your intellectual history class; can you mention any other adaptations that were necessary?

MILLER: Well I offered coursework in immigration history much more frequently than any other course because the university began to care about diversity. We did have a diverse student body, and in the School of Ed there was a requirement that students take things like immigration and so I just offered that course at the drop of a hat, so that I could give students what they wanted and that would be good for our department too. So that would be a major thing right just trying to do anything that related to this kind of diversity just so that our offerings would look attractive

BROWNE: Okay, the next area is progress and evolution. What issues were involved that stood out in your mind as important to the growth and development of Pacific?

MILLER: Well I think without doubt it has to be my work in women studies. That had I not been so single minded about that we wouldn't have... It would have taken much longer for us to get this kind of programming that now we have under gender studies, and now with contributions from people across the face of the university. It was always a struggle but I'm really glad I put time into that, so that we could meet interests that students have and the needs of the times.

BROWNE: Where did the energy come from for progress at Pacific?

MILLER: It came from adrenaline because you do these kinds of things on top of your regular responsibilities, and it is without pay and it's without release time very often, but just because you just think it's important, we should be doing this as a university.

BROWNE: Has Pacific met your expectations? Explain why or why not?

MILLER: That is such an open-ended question I don't even know what it points to. The expectations I had when I came?

BROWNE: Yeah I think that's what they're referring to

MILLER: Okay well it met my expectation in terms of one of the things I wanted here is a small school experience, so that I could know my students. When I taught at Michigan State I could be in a whole crowd of students and I wouldn't know anybody. You didn't see your own students coming and going. It was just too fast, whereas here it was very different. So the intimacy of it I did like and it did meet my expectations although sometimes it could be too intimate, and that's when you have small classes and you just have those few students again and again and you don't have others coming in so, new people with ideas; so for awhile those small classes that was not so good. But altogether yes it was good. My expectations in that area were met.

BROWNE: The question here about the community. What contributions do you feel Pacific has made to the local community?

MILLER: I think it was in 1969 the big issue that we would have a community involvement program and begin to bring students in from the neighborhood so to speak, from the south side of Stockton. All along there had been, as we understand, that there had been some resentment that this was only a white institution which didn't care about Stockton, and having a community involvement program worked against that. I think it did good things for individuals who maybe otherwise couldn't have gone to college. Over the years it's my sense of just one time I was on the committee dealing with, in some regard, dealing with the area of the fellowships and financial support for students. I developed great respect for how much is done to put together programs so students who can't afford Pacific can have packages, we all know here, about package of loans and grants and scholarships and go to a school where they can't on their own afford. And I think that's a marvelous thing, of course the state has helped too, but that's been very important and it's been very useful to the university too. It made us an institution that looks more like America than we would look otherwise.

BROWNE: Okay what was the community's response to these efforts?

MILLER: I think with some guarded optimism what's Pacific doing this for? But I think it's definitely been good in the various low income groups and different ethnic groups I think it's been very good. I mentioned earlier in this interview that I... when I was first came here I didn't want to be just be teaching the children of white well-off families, and by the late eighties I looked around and I found how often it was that whites were in the minority of some of my classes, so our student body has just changed dramatically. For the good I guess.

BROWNE: What community changes affected Pacific?

MILLER: I think probably it's... the remarks I've already made, I don't think I've anything to add to that

BROWNE: Would you identify one or two events that remain a burning memory from your experiences at Pacific?

MILLER: Yes and the key one is being the only woman in the social sciences, and I had some very heavy negative experiences, burning to this day, that I did not have much of a welcome. I feel like I had 20 years of isolation actually being marginalized within my own department. I am even psychopathic in this regard, so my experience was not good within the department, and it was very good when I began to meet more people beyond the department and the division. I was up for promotion and I think it might have been for associate professor, not full professor yet, but I could be wrong about that. The outside person in my committee, in the first draft of his report wrote up something about the fact that my work is good and very positive and then on the other hand “she is not mixing with the department very much so maybe we don’t want this kind of a person,” [...tenure] we don’t want this person. Well I hit the ceiling and I said I’m not accepting this draft, it has nothing to do with the quality of my work, and I got that sentence taken out. That’s my most burning experience that I remember to this day, but all together the sense of marginalization, which I do think of in terms of my early not so good experiences here.

BROWNE: Okay, are there anecdotes about your time at Pacific that you would like to report?

MILLER: I don’t know how to do this other than... I had some good experiences with a few different individuals. I had my one oddball so to speak department colleague Don Grubbs, who was capable of all kinds of bizarre things including cooking eggs in his hotel room. We were at a convention and it happened to be in my hometown Chicago, and he asked if I could get eggs from my mother so he could have free eggs to cook in his room. That’s not too academic an experience but I don’t.... I’m trying to think of something that might be more professional or germane example, but I think I’ll let it go.

BROWNE: Okay the last question is what have we not covered in this interview that you would like to discuss?

MILLER: I think we are going into the various areas that I thought we would, so I think that’s it.

BROWNE: Okay well thank you very much for the interview, we’ve now contributed to the history.

MILLER: Thank you for your time.

[End Tape]

End of Interview