

Charlie Teske
Interviewed by Susan Fiksdal
The Evergreen State College Oral History project
Interview 2
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Final

Begin Part 1 of 2 of Charlie Teske on 11-3-16

Fiksdal: Okay, we are ready to go here.

Teske: Well, before I go on a bit about how my experiences as a guest professor in Germany may have had impact—certainly upon me, but may have had impact upon Evergreen—I want to go way back, Susan, and just establish a few things that I’ve been thinking about since our last conversation. One of them is the significance of my having been born in 1932. It turned out to be the year with the lowest birth rate in the 20th century. And what that means is that there weren’t all that many of us. I think the same would hold true—I don’t know when the birth rate started going down—whether it started right after the crash of 1929—but at any rate, the birth rate in 1932 was the lowest, and it remained fairly low through the next four or five years of the Depression. People didn’t have the money to be thinking of having families and so forth.

Where that came home to me, I began to notice that whatever age I was, was the wrong age for advertising; that the ideal for how old you were supposed to be never hit me. And then, when I started teaching, and read some good articles in a book I was using about advertising, I began to realize why they had never targeted me. These people are smart. They used demographics, and I and the people of my generation—or half-generation—we were negligible. Why bother with us? Go for the people who are there.

And so, as I once griped to my son when he was about in his late twenties, I said, “whatever age I am is wrong. When I was 15 or 16, 17, you were supposed to be in your thirties, and suave and still unmarried. The dream was Cyd Charisse dancing around in a penthouse doing ballet, and her husband, Tony Martin, in a tuxedo holding a martini.” That you were supposed to be like that, and the Cole Porter songs were aimed at that. So I get to be 30, and all of a sudden, I’m supposed to be 17, and be the leader of the laundromat.

I was griping to my son about this, and he looked at me and he said, “Yeah, but you never had any trouble getting a job, did you?” And he was quite right.

There weren't that many of us around. Then, you add to that, Susan, the way in which a lot of people who might have wanted to become teachers were instead serving in World War II. And some of them, yes, were able to come back, use G.I. Bill and start teaching. But it was as if there were an eight-to-10-year slice, where the number of available people for college teaching and even for college administration, was relatively low.

I know, when I became that age—what?—age 36, the Associate Dean of the Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences, an older colleague said to me, "In the old days, you would have had to have been 10 years older before they would have looked at you for this kind of job." It's in that sort of context that there was, for potential faculty members, a seller's market. You get the idea—okay, at Yale, when I entered—

Fiksdal: Let's stop for a second.

End of Part 1 of 2 of Charlie Teske on 11-3-16

Begin Part 2 of 2 of Charlie Teske on 11-3-16

Fiksdal: I caught you in the middle of a sentence I think.

Teske: Yeah. You can get an idea about the way in which the ages of my age-mates, and slightly older and slightly younger, what they were facing when they wanted to go into teaching. Now when I was in graduate school, I was not really aware that the Baby Boomers were coming. But the main educational policy people knew that the Baby Boomers were on the way.

So you can get the idea that when I entered Yale, there were 27 of us first-year English majors. I don't know how many of us actually went through the whole thing and got our doctorates. I would say probably about 12, at most 14, out of the 27 eventually got the doctorates. But uniformly, those colleagues whom I was able to track all got fairly good jobs, either really prestigious, private colleges or universities. By the early 2000s, I was getting newsletters from the Yale Graduate Department of English talking about how they were admitting 12 people because there weren't the jobs out there. Of the 12, nine were getting their doctorates, and five already had full-time jobs. Think about how that changed.

Things were even such that in my third full year of residency at graduate school—two years and then going to Germany and then that third year—the campus was being visited by representatives of various universities, trying to recruit. You had the hiring people coming to Yale, Harvard, Columbia, Princeton and so forth, to try to recruit people for teaching. That's the way things were. Leaping way ahead, Susan, I think the important thing to recognize there is those conditions still obtained in the early '70s, which means that when we had—I think we stopped counting at 1,900 unsolicited applications for

the faculty and the 100 faculty positions of our first two years. It was at least that. It was at least a function of about 20 to one of unsolicited applications to positions we had open.

It was, of course, then a few years later that people who had thought that the Baby Boom would never end were sort of taken by surprise. Also, between us, there were a number of people who should not really have gone to graduate school, who did it as an alternative of going to Vietnam. Then, when they got out, they added to—so all of a sudden, it switched from a seller's market of the people selling their wares to come and work, to a buyer's market of those who actually did the hiring.

As a future historian is thinking about the opening of Evergreen and other schools at that time, I think it's important to realize what the demographics were, and what the- the pressures were. That's point one from the past.

By the way, it sounds as if I'm pontificating. I'm simply saying the way that I saw things, and sort of tried to build them into my *Weltanschauung*, my worldview. They may be wrong, but for better or for worse, that's the way I was thinking.

We shift to my senior year at Lafayette College, and one of the great courses that I had there was called "Social and Intellectual History of the United States." In the process, as part of the intellectual history, the teachers and the text were making the point that the early colleges had been set up on the English model, but largely to produce ministers and teachers ah- to go out into the wilderness and spread learning.

I once asked an actually friendly, if you can imagine, Harvard professor—he had been running a workshop on oral tradition—and I said, "Did you have other people working with you from musicology and other fields and so forth?"

He said, "At Harvard, not only do you not work with other Harvard people, you don't work with other people in your department."

I said, "Well, I'd heard that, but I didn't want to believe it." [laughing]

He said, "No, he said you have to realize, when Harvard was founded, its graduates were supposed to be able, with a few books, to go off on their own and be completely self-reliant."

But that has caused a whole lot of problems, Susan, that the very fact that both the great studies in oral tradition—the singer of tales and so forth— that began at Harvard. And the big ballad study of Francis James Child and George Lyman Kittredge started at Harvard. You would think that they would get together. No. The ballads belong to the English Department, and the oral tradition studies—the south Slavic epics and so forth—belong to Comparative Literature. They were two different departments, and they didn't talk. This had really repercussions for the nationwide study of these issues.

So we learned that about the original colleges. Usually, the recipe was that it would be a particular denomination and a particular area that would get the college started.

Now. Teachers did have titles. You might be a Professor of Rhetoric or a Professor of French. No, by the way, modern languages—languages actually spoken—did not start getting taught until around the 1890s or something like that. Why should you bother studying French? Go to France! If you were college and university material, you could have the wherewithal to go to France, or Italy, or Germany or something like that. You did not have the Modern Language Association; I think that was founded in the 19-teens or something like that. So if you were studying literature, you were studying Greek and Latin, of course. If you went into divinity, you studied Hebrew. It was undergraduate schools largely, and the professor might have the title of Professor of Rhetoric, or Professor of Greek, or Professor of Mathematics, but there were no mathematics departments or classics departments or anything like that. That's not how things were organized.

Then, and I meant to look up Johns Hopkins, about where his money came from—it is Johns, not John. Johns Hopkins wanted to have a university founded in Baltimore. He took this very bright, very ambitious man, Daniel Coit Gilman—who had before been, I think, involved as a high administrator in the beginnings of the California system—and he sent Gilman to Germany for a year or more to study the way the German universities functioned. Gilman came back, and when Johns Hopkins opened in 1876, it opened as the first graduate school.

Before that, if you wanted to get a doctorate, you had to go study in Europe. If you were in philosophy, philology, literature, classics and so forth, you went to Germany. Francis James Child of the Child oral traditional ballads went to a university in Berlin and studied with Jakob Grimm at University of Berlin, and had in his study a big oil painting of Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm as his intellectual forebears and so forth. There was no such thing as getting your Ph.D. in America. Johns Hopkins was first, and then others started following.

I first ran into Gilman in this course on social and intellectual history. It was just a kind of by-the-way—it was a point made among many points—that in the American educational system, the first universities were on the model of the German university, and they started in 1876. But you just sort of filed that fact away. Later, when I got to Germany and began to witness what was going on there, and realized that the Gymnasium was not like the freshman, sophomore years.

Fiksdal: Of high school?

Teske: No, of college. I don't know how the lycée works, but the Gymnasium, because I had studied in Germany, I was asked at Oberlin and here at Evergreen, if a student came with study in a Gymnasium, I

was supposed to be the one who worked out, with the Registrar, how much credit that amounted to. I had no problem with a person having finished a Gymnasium of having him enter as a third-year student.

Fiksdal: We did the same with students who went to lycée in France.

Teske: Okay. So that was the cutting point. But in a four-year American college, you still see the residue. You have your distribution requirements, and then you usually declare a major for your third year. But the premature specialization has penetrated from the graduate school down into the undergraduate school, so that people began to think, in their freshman year. If you're going to be pre-law, pre-med, pre-physics, you have to be already focused. As I said in writing a little while ago, the whole idea of education as a citizen, and education for richness and personal development, you'll find that at the beginning of catalogs, but the rest of the catalogs will all be, here are your required courses, here are your distribution requirements, here are your electives, and so forth.

Again, as I say, every English instructor or French instructor in the undergraduate program of university is looking forward to the day of being able to teach graduate students, and having the prestige of being able to teach fewer people and fewer hours further up the ladder. In a Gymnasium, you don't have that. There may be aspirations, but that's separate from the way in which you are rewarded and so forth.

Carrying on along this line, think about the rewards structure. Publish or perish. The departments run the undergraduate schools to the extent—and did I ever see this when I was in the Dean's office at Oberlin—somebody is a hot publisher; gets an offer from outside. The dollars are limited, and so the college council that at Oberlin made the decisions on hiring, firing, promotion, even salary levels—

“We're going to lose him unless we pay him more money. Where are we going to get it?”

“Well, we were going to give So-and-So over here a raise, but he loves the school. He's worked so hard at the school, we're not going to lose him. So let's take the money and”—and Oberlin is one of the more civilized and humane places. It could get so bad that when, at a late night meeting, when the council was going through things—and see, as Associate Dean, I was at those meetings *ex officio*—I sat next to the Dean, and I spoke when I was spoken to. But a colleague was up for tenure. He had just published a book. The higher powers of his department were not—he was not in great favor with.

In their putting out the recommendation—saying that he should not be given tenure—they said, “Well he did publish a book, but it was mainly a student textbook.”

I put up my hand and I said, “Wait a minute. I don't think that's a student textbook. So far as I know, that is a study- a critical study of modern French literature.”

They said, “Are you sure?”

Well, one of the senior members of the department, I happened to know, was sort of on his side. And this was, I think, 9:30 at night. I said, “Could you suspend discussion? I’m going to go and call.”

He was out walking his dog, and he was going to be coming back. I waited by the phone, and he called. I said, “Look, we’re in the midst of discussing So-and-So’s possibility of getting tenure. Was his book, his new book, is that a survey put out to be sold to undergraduates, or is it bona fide scholarly work?”

“Oh, he said it’s a bona fide scholarly work.”

I went back in; the discussion changed; he got tenure. But it means that you are putting the control of the undergraduate teachers, who are teaching your students, you’re putting the control into the hands of “the field.” There were a number of times in those two years in the Dean’s office that my Dean and I tried hard to get—this is before I knew anything about Evergreen—to get some interdisciplinary programs going—drama and dance, things that really fitted together. We would think that we had an agreement, and then people would go to their professional meetings, and come back and we were told, “No, you can’t do that.”

I hadn’t really thought before about how much the educational policies of even a separate, freestanding undergraduate school would be in the control of the department. I don’t know how it is in France, but in Germany—we use the term “department.” In Germany, it’s called *ein Fach*, which means pigeonhole. It’s not a department, it’s a compartment. There’s even the term among the laity called a *Fachidiot*. This is a person who has learned more and more about less and less until he finally knows everything about nothing, or a very small amount. This is what Gilman let loose on American higher education, without realizing what was going to happen when you had undergraduate schools feeding graduate schools.

I could carry on a lot, but exactly that kind of discussion was very much on our minds in the planning year of Evergreen, and in the year before. Ah, we got to telling war stories of what had happened to our students. I’ll regale you with just one, because it fits your background.

When I was in the Dean’s office, I participated in the hiring process. Now the real decisions, the way Oberlin worked, the deans proposed and the Faculty Council disposed. They were the ultimate voters. So when there would be a faculty opening, it would be the department who would bring the list of several candidates to the deans. Then the arrangements would be made for them to visit campus. In their day of visiting, besides holding maybe a noontime performance or lecture for interested faculty

members and students, they would be meeting as many members of the Council as they could, as well as members of the department.

The first meeting of the day would be with the Dean, who would run down the dollars-and-cents matters about when TIAA-CREF would cut in; what the benefit structure would be; what the assumptions would be. It would be more or less the Dean having a checklist, just talking to the person about, here's the background of the job you're—what it means to be a faculty member here.

Then there would be these other meetings during the day, and I would be at the end of the day. I would be the last person. The members—not so much of the department but of the Faculty Council—if they came away from their interviews with questions that they hadn't asked, or they hadn't thought to ask, they would call my secretary. So I would have a list of the things, a checklist—"Be sure to ask about thus and such; be sure to ask about so-and-so." My job was to tidy up, and also just maybe talk a little bit about the advantages of being there with the Oberlin Conservatory.

I got to see all the candidates. In the first year in the Dean's office, one of the candidates—a very bright, very attractive candidate—was a man who was doing his dissertation at the University of Geneva in French. But he was in the Political Science Department; that's the job he was going for. Well, he was hired, and we were glad to have him.

The next year, in my position as Associate Dean, I worked with what was called "private reading." Now, this helped prepare me to be the head of Contracts at Evergreen. Private reading. If you were a junior or senior, and you were carrying, I think, a B average, you were allowed to take one of your five courses as a private reading course, which would be like an Evergreen Individual Learning Contract. But I had to sign them as Dean. Whereas at Evergreen, I tried to establish the pattern that the Dean would check, but still the real deal was between the faculty sponsoring and the student. Whereas at Oberlin, I was the gatekeeper.

There were times, Susan, I am sad to say, that colleagues would call me up and say, "Well, Charlie, I signed off on this, but it wouldn't hurt my feelings at all if you turned them down." Good old faculty member, bad old Dean, ok?

In the fall quarter, a young woman, whom I'd taught two years before, in "Introduction to Literature," came to see me in the Dean's office. She had a problem. She was a Political Science major, but she had taken a lot of French. And what she wanted to do for one-fifth of her credit was to do reading in French political science journals. Perfect! Great!

Well, what was the problem? She had gone to the French Department to look for sponsorship, and they said, "Oh, we don't know anything about political science. We couldn't do anything like that."

She asked me is there anything I could do? I said, “Look, you don’t know about him because you’re an advanced student, and he just joined the faculty this year, and is teaching basic courses. But here’s this man”—she, of course, had heard his name—“here’s this man new in the department, and he’s doing his doctoral dissertation in political science in Geneva in French. Why don’t you go talk to him?”

She came back about a half-hour later, all smiles. Yes, he was willing to work with her. He’d even lent her French journals to start her study.

I said, “Okay, fine. But you should go up and tell the French Department that you found somebody.” She came back down in about twenty minutes, almost in tears. They would not allow it. If there’s any credit given that has anything to do with French it has to come through the French Department.

Do you know what the solution was? Took us about two weeks. We made the Political Science teacher a part-time, temporary member of the French Department, so that he could take this perfectly rational contract. Susan, at that time, I was doing faculty office assignments, and I was about ready to put the French Department on the roof, I was so mad. This was at one of the better, more humane places that that kind of nonsense would go on.

I learned about the limitations of the German university, and the difference between—again, that brought home to me this problem of loading the German university on top of the English undergraduate college, without planning for it. I grant you, it probably took until maybe 1930’s before the departments got that kind of strength and momentum. But believe me, they did. [laughing]

Fiksdal: Once they got it, they didn’t let go.

Teske: Yeah. That was a fairly important thing that got planted first in my senior year of college. But then, as I studied in Germany, and then went back as a visiting professor, I began to figure that out in my mind.

I had read John Dewey, but it was still more something, shall we say, practical like that, that I’d actually lived through, and then, at Oberlin, run into with trying to work with students.

There was another case. Again, a young woman I’d worked with before- two years before. She came in and, all smiles, she said, “I’m so happy. Just had to share this with you. As a senior, we get to register first, and then within the seniors, there would be a certain range—K through N—gets to be the very first to register.”

She had hit it not only as a senior, but in the lottery, she was right in the very first group to register. She was able to put something together, where she was studying in Chaucer, medieval religion and philosophy, medieval music, and medieval visual art, all at the same time. “Isn’t that great?”

“Wow, is that great!”

She left, and then I started thinking to myself. Well, how else can you study? Why should we rejoice so much when, but the sheerest luck, a person would be able to put together the things that she should have to know?

Another war story. I had a student, advanced course, where we were working on Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and so forth. At the same time, he was taking 17th Century British History, and he was taking a course in religion that included dealing with Puritanism. He came in and asked, “Instead of my writing three separate papers—a Milton paper for you, a Puritan paper for Professor So-and-So, and a Cromwell rebellion paper for- couldn’t I write one large paper that pulled together Milton as Puritan in his service to Cromwell?”

Perfect sense. I called up my colleagues, and “It wouldn’t work, because who would give him credit for what? Sorry.”

Fiksdal: Unless it were in sections or something.

Teske: “Sorry.” Yeah. “What you propose is, yeah, and I really like” This was just some of the background. Now I did not leave to get away from Oberlin. I had tenure. I loved Oberlin. The bright, interesting colleagues, huge library, the Conservatory. It was great Susan. I didn’t come out here to get away from there. But it was just, there were things piling up that I thought one could do better.

Another issue, when I got to graduate school, along about the third year, when we were getting ready to start thinking about looking for jobs, one of our either beer-or-cheap-red-wine late-night bull sessions—and, of course, these were interdisciplinary; that was one of the great things about being in the Hall of Graduate studies—and our group were discussing whether we wanted to go teach in universities or teach in colleges. In large part, it depended upon what our own training had been. If we had been trained at or done our undergraduate work at a university, then we were likely to think that. I enjoyed my undergraduate work at Lafayette, so very much that I—despite the attempts in graduate school to get you to thinking university, that’s what counts, that’s what counts—I still, no, no, I wanted to go to an undergraduate school.

At any rate, one of the guys in the group said—and I’ll tell a later story, which is really bizarre, when we’re done here—but he just came out with a dictum. He wanted to teach at a university because “colleges were places at which you taught, and universities were places at which you learned.” Susan,

that has stuck with me all this time, and a large part of what's going on is my trying to prove him wrong. That the teachers can learn at colleges.

I put it to you—and I think you're a good example and I'm a good example, too—that we have learned more being able to teach with this range of colleagues, in this sort of atmosphere, where we will have a bright idea, and instead of being told, "Oh, no, you can't do that," being told, "Yeah. Go ahead."

Evergreen has the most remarkable way of calling people's bluffs. They come charging in saying, "I'd like to do thus and such." As I found out later—a whole lot of us who signed on at the beginning, when the college had not really become defined yet—starting with Charlie McCann; I'll keep that for a separate topic. But we decided in our interviews to test the school, and we couldn't believe that they were serious in what they were saying. So we thought, okay, we might as well let everything hang out. And we did. [laughing]

They said, "Oh, fine. If you want to do that, come. That's what we'll do."

I don't know if you had this in talking to people back at Michigan, people that other schools asking, "Is the State really letting you get away with this?"

Fiksdal: Oh, yeah, they did ask. Also, they couldn't believe I had left a job that I already had in order to get my Ph.D. in linguistics. Why would I do that? "You already have a job."

Teske: Yeah, and that your school would back you on that, and try to make arrangements so you could do it. I don't know whether you've had this with students that you've known, but I've had at least three or four students who have gone either—I think two of them were off-campus conferences that they were the only undergraduates at the conference. One of them was with the composer, Howard Hanson. Another was a woman I was able to help get an internship at Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. She decided, there was a program in the Department of Labor manpower program, which was being used to support the arts. She was very much interested in arts management. That's why she wanted to go to Kennedy Center. She just, being an Evergreener, as a senior, she called up the administrator at the Department of Labor, made an appointment,; went over and talked to that person and said, "Look, this program is great, but you ought to know that there are these problems and these problems."

At the end, the person said, "Well, Miss So-and-So, where are you doing your doctorate?"

"Oh," she said, "I'm a senior at the Evergreen State College."

"You're coming to see me, and taking that initiative?" [laughing]

Again, one of our students in the "Roots of Our Romanticism" program, she had her heart set on becoming a music librarian. She had been looking around, and there was situation where there was a

State University of New York branch that was near Rochester, and it used the Eastman School of Music music library as their training ground. She wanted to go visit.

Well, she was the first member of her family to go to college, and when her parents heard New York, they assumed she'd end up as a hooker on 42nd Street. She said, no, that this is upstate. They're not going to give her any money to go to look at something in upstate New York.

Well she knew that the "Roots of Our Romanticism" was one of three programs that was getting special National Endowment for the Humanities funding, which included money for research projects. She said, "Well, what I'm doing doesn't really fit with what we're doing, but I know there's some money there and if you could give me \$100 for a bus roundtrip to Rochester, it would really help a lot."

I said, "Okay. Look, we have the money, and I'd like to do it, but we have to do something for the program."

Well, here we are "Roots of Our Romanticism." The retired head of the Eastman School of Music at Rochester was Howard Hanson, and one of his symphonies is called the *Romantic Symphony*. He was a champion, in the midst of 12-tone music and so forth, continuing to write in the 19th Century Romantic vein of symphonies.

A young composer and monk and flute player, Ronald Hurst, was teaching with me. I said, "Ronald, is Howard Hanson still alive?"

Ronald said, "I don't know. I can look it up." He came back and he said, "Yeah, Hanson's still alive, and he's living in the Rochester area."

I said, "Julie, could you do the correspondence, and maybe phoning around, and set up an interview with Howard Hanson?"

Our program, after all, was "Roots of Our Romanticism" *our* romanticism, Susan, we were still tracking, not just from 1798 or so; we were tracking continued examples of romanticism in our culture now.

I said, "Take along a tape recorder, and try to get an interview with Hanson."

She had an hour interview on tape with this composer, and former head of Eastman School. She told him about the program, and he deliberately made a lecture for us, and gave her a signed copy of his *Romantic Symphony*. At the end, he asked her, "And where are you doing your doctorate?" [laughing]

And she said, "I'm a junior at the Evergreen State College."

But at any rate, to me, that was extremely important. It's so amazing how something like that will get under your skin: "Colleges are where one teaches; universities are where one learns." I didn't

believe that and I wanted to teach at Oberlin, and I wanted to— insofar as I had influence, to shape Evergreen toward that mark. And so far, I think it's . . .

Fiksdal: It's been working yeah! (laughing)

Teske: When I look around and I see—and not just with other people than myself—when I see how people have grown in response to the opportunity to develop, and the challenges. I know this carries over also into individual contracts. When I was asked by people, quite candidly, “Won't students tend to use these individual contracts that they negotiate as ways of goofing off?”

I said, “For every one student that might goof off, there will be either or nine students who will do much more work, because it's their baby. They signed up for it.”

That was what was hanging over me in graduate school. I was very glad that I was able to get to Oberlin, and got out there ok. With Germany then, I don't know, this sounds ah—disingenuous, that on the one hand, I can say, I really liked the experience, and I liked the people. But here's what was wrong with this system.

Fiksdal: That's okay.

Teske: But it is true that that is what happened. Oh, as an aftermath of that, during the time I was there at Göttingen, the head of department, who had been my very gracious host, ah mentioned that he had a student who was doing his first doctoral thesis—right down my alley—on the connection, the very tenuous connection, between oral traditional and what are called—I don't know what they would be in French, but the literary ballads, and would I be willing to talk to him about his dissertation?

Well, I did, and he was very pleasant, and we got along. He asked me “If there's anything I can do for you”—and at that time, my son, Boris, was five, and I said, “Listen, if you, with your connections, could find somebody who might be willing to be a babysitter.”

“Oh,” he said, “I'll do it.”

At least three or four times, in Germany, he was our babysitter.

I got back to Oberlin. The head of German Department called me. He said, “When you were over there at Göttingen, did you happen to meet a young man named Thus-and-Such and So-and-So?”

I said, “Yeah, yeah. I got to know him fairly well for his work, and also being a babysitter.”

“Well, we have, as you know, each year, a year-long appointment for a German university student to come and be a conversation tutor here for German House at Oberlin. Usually, there will be one of our department who will be over in Europe, so they will interview candidates there. But we didn't have anybody this year, but you were there, and he says he knows you. Could you recommend him?”

Fiksdal: Perfect.

Teske: I said, "Oh, perfect."

When he came to Oberlin, he came with the assumption that he could continue working on his doctorate with me. I had to explain to him that Oberlin was an undergraduate college. But he still continued. The end of the story—it ends very happily—is he married one of our brightest students, who had herself spent some time at university in Berlin. I don't know what happened to them, but they surely have my blessing.

Here was this difference, undergraduate college- try to describe an undergraduate college to a German professor, and especially a private college.

Fiksdal: They just won't understand it.

Teske: They have no comprehension. I think there's only one institution in Germany that is privately funded. It's a sort of highly advanced MBA business school in the Ruhr for executives, and that's paid for by the big steel and coal industries and so forth. But otherwise, they know nothing about . . .

If it's bad enough to explain an American undergraduate college, try to explain Evergreen. One of the things—and I'll put in the plug here, I'll ask Randy (Stilson) to put in my cover story into the other material—we were visited by a German professor and his wife for about three weeks in 1990? I think they were here in February. They came and lived in the dorms—had no car—and he spent three weeks studying us, because he was from the University of Bielefeld, and he was a higher education specialist. And what they were trying to do was to have a bridge program between the Gymnasium and the university; 'cause their problem was the last two years of the Gymnasium—where you usually went for six years—the last two years would feel like the third and fourth years of college, being very rich.

Then they would go to the university, where now, because of the funding situation, lectures would have 500-600 students listening. Proseminar, which had been meant for maybe 30-40 students would have 120. Haupt seminars, which was meant for maybe 20 students will have 40-some. Obet seminar which was made for seven or eight students, will have 20. For the first two years, a lot of German students are just sort of wandering around bewildered.

Ludwig Huber had come to a conference in the U.S. in the East, and he had asked, "Where can I find a model of what would be the most up-to-date, cutting-edge undergraduate education in the U.S.?"

The people all said, "Come to Evergreen."

Fiksdal: Wow

Teske: He wrote the President or Provost, and showed up. And even though his English was great, they still said, "Well, Charlie, will you be his host?"

Well it was- no, excuse me, it was '93-'94 that he was here, so it would have been February of '94. I sort of attached him to our program. He would go to lectures, and he would go to seminars. Right at that time, we were studying the pre-Socratics and Socratic dialogs. He was really struck by this. Here we were, Setsuko Tsutsumi, Don Finkel, Al Leisenring and Tom Grissom—physicist, classics, and, of course, Al was a classicist, a classics major, before he became a mathematician. Setsuko and Don Finkel, who had been a philosophy major before he was in educational psychology. The very idea that people who didn't have degrees in classics would be discussing Greek authors, that got him.

Then he attended some of our seminars. "It's amazing. The students are engaging Socrates as if he were alive now, and arguing with him and so forth."

I think he met with another advanced program, and then the Jim Strowe's geology group contract. About the second week, he said to me, "The one thing I haven't been able to visit are individual contracts."

I was handling one, one of the brightest students that I had ever had; one of the greatest contracts. This student, Susan, he was the kind of person—I was taking him through epics, major genres. For example, when we were working on *Beowulf*, and reading also the *Battle of Maldon*, which is a short, fragmentary piece, but it's done in Old English in the same pattern. He didn't like the translation of the *Battle of Maldon*, so he wrote his own,

Susan: Oh my gosh!

Teske: For a one-week assignment in his contract.

The week that I got his permission that Dr. Ludwig Huber should come and sit in, we were working on ballads. I'd given him a paper that I had written about the process; about how a lot of what we call the "smoothest, best, most powerful oral traditional ballads" started as doggerel street poetry; where it had been some huge, lurid crime or something like that, that the publisher would have a hack poetaster who would write out, "It was on the evening of duh-duh-duh-da-da, and this was very sad to see." Then that thing goes out, gets into oral tradition. You run into it 100 and 200 years later, and it's all polished, and it's almost getting into Jungian territory of myth and so forth.

Well, this was right in the middle of the Tonya Harding-Nancy Kerrigan scandal with the Winter Olympics, where Tonya Harding had tried to have Kerrigan's, legs broken, her competitor. That was the big scandal in the paper. Not only did Phil Chase read the ballad paper that I'd given him, and read a whole lot of the ballads. What he did, he wanted to surprise me every week with some new tack. He wrote the *Ballad of Nancy and Tonya*, and he started it with a newspaper account. And then he did it as a broadside lurid ballad. Then he turned it into one of these noble, simple, you know.

Fiksdal: How clever.

Teske: I was just sitting there with the jaw dropped. It was so funny. We went over to the CAB for a cup of coffee, and Phil, on the way over, was just filling the German professor's ear with how great it was to be working on a contract, and to have this kind of—yeah. At any rate, this man wrote about a 25- to 35-page report in German of his experience. He had just—the poor fellow, he had to, first of all, explain to his German colleagues how American undergraduate colleges worked, and then explain how Evergreen worked. When I read this, he sent it to me and said, “Is this okay?”

I said, “Look, is it okay with you if I translate this?”

He said, “I don't see why. I mean, you know all this stuff.”

I said, “Yeah, but the advantage of having somebody from another culture, in another language, come and look at you, and what you're doing, this is a tremendous boon to us.” I translated it, sent my translation back, he made some corrections. That's in the archives.

Fiksdal: Wow. That's quite a perspective.

Teske: Yeah. It would be like Oliver Sacks's, *The Anthropologist from Mars*. Somebody dropping in and trying to describe what goes on. Of all things this connects with what we were talking about with the architecture, I thought that he would look at our buildings and just put up his nose by comparison with the great German universities. No, he was not comparing us to Heidelberg or something like that. He was comparing us to the universities that were just sort of thrown together after World War II.

He really liked our campus. He said all of the arrangements on the campus demonstrate the functionality of fitting the architecture to the program—and, of course, he was totally knocked out by the fact that on the main campus—not with A dorm, but with the main campus—that the trees were higher than everything but the clock tower.

At any rate, that thing exists in my translation. Anybody who is listening to this who wants to know more about Evergreen, should go have a look at it.

Fiksdal: Yeah.

Teske: That resulted in a very big juxtaposition of German system and our system. Are there any other things that you're curious about, about my having spent a semester as a faculty member in Germany, or at least as a quasi-faculty member in Germany?

Fiksdal: Well, I think, given some of the things you've said, it would be interesting to know how you were treated. In other words, what sort of respect, how you were called, sort of what went with that as a teacher there? I mean at Evergreen, of course, we ask that everyone use our first names. No one ever called me “doctor,” and I did kind of want them to after a while. [laughing]

Teske: All right. Well, I was actually thinking about the good man, Prof. Dr. Karl Heinz Göller, who was there when I was a student, he was an instructor when I was a student at Bonn. I ran into him again nine years later, and he was Head of Department at Göttingen. Then he moved to be the founding Dean of a new University of Regensburg, founding Dean of Humanities. He was doing what I was later on going to do here.

Fiksdal: Exactly, yeah.

Teske: We got talking, and he was fascinated when I talked to him about what was happening with Evergreen. We were sort of trying to cook up, not an exchange, where we would exchange in the same year, but that I would go teach for him for a year, and then I would be his host, and he would come teach at [Evergreen]. But then it struck me. The poor man; he was a German teacher, very humane, very civilized. But I can just imagine an Evergreen student saying, “Well, Karl Heinz, I respect your attitude about this, but frankly, no, I can’t agree with it.”

Heart attack! “Argh-h-h-h!” [laughter]

Fiksdal: Because this just isn’t done.

Teske: That isn’t how things work. The German professor, there is a dignity, which would emanate from a German professor. Well, there is an extended story that I told you during the blackout of our digital recorder last time. I was mainly there to do my own research, but because of the way in which I was welcomed—part of which was an offer to teach; and because I wanted to do research, I had to turn down the teaching. But since it had been offered- the department had two full professors, and since they had offered me the job, even though I hadn’t taken it, I was regarded as the third-ranking person in the department.

Fiksdal: That’s just extraordinary.

Teske: I did give a very well-paid lecture to about 1,000 people. I gave it in English, because German formal style is still beyond me. But I gave it in English, and, as I mentioned, five minutes before I was to give a largely improvised talk—improvised on notes—the host said, “Oh, by the way, you will give it in Oxford English, won’t you?” Which resulted in me giving a very bad . . . But they’re serious about that.

When years before, I was on the ship going over to Germany, there were some German students who were returning. Now typically what happens with the Fulbright groups, when you were going, the whole group would go together on the same sailing, but when you were coming back, you had your choice of several sailings. But there still were a number of German students who had been in the U.S. for a year, and were now returning to their German universities.

After we'd been out a couple days, there was an announcement. "If you were going to University of So-and-So, Fraulein So-and-So will be in this lounge to chat with you, if you're interested in learning things about where you'll be going." Well, there was a young English major woman from University of Bonn, who was on the trip. We talked several times in that group, and I think another time individually. But when we got there, the Americans went to two weeks of orientation and five weeks with families, and our sailing was mid-September, the University began the first week of November so it was about two months before I saw the German woman again.

About the second week, I was sitting in between classes in the Erfrischungsräum, the snack bar, and here came this young woman, whom I'd met on the ship. She came in, was getting herself coffee, and just looked terrible—sad and so forth. And she saw me and came over to the table.

And I said, "What's wrong?"

She said, "I was just thrown out of Professor Doctor Shirmer's advanced seminar, because we were doing something in English, and I said, 'rather' (flat American a)

Fiksdal: Instead of "rah-thuh"?

Teske: Instead of 'rah-thuh'." He, without directly looking at her, said, "If Fräulein So-and-So has lost her sense of proper English during her year in the United States, she might wish to absent herself from our company for a week, until she has gotten real English back." That's part of your Germanic training.

But really, I have never lived sort of higher on the hog than I did when I returned as a "visiting professor." And I could play things both ways, because I was—what?—33, and there were a bunch of the teaching assistants who were older than I was. We could either play it that I was their superior, or we could play it that I was one of them, and we could move back and forth. At any rate, that was very pleasant. I must say, another mother-pin-a-rose-on-me thing.

My dissertation was done. I had my doctorate. The reason I was in Göttingen is that in order to follow the connection between the English and Scottish oral traditional ballads as they metamorphosed into the literary ballads, if you think about pity and terror, the pity side stays in England and produces Wordsworth. The terror side, you have to go to Germany. That's when you begin to get the ghoulish imagery, probably because of the lasting effects of the lurid imagery of the Thirty Years' War—1618 to 1648—imagery of skulls and hanging and so forth.

But it's in Germany that you get the—well, when Coleridge writes about the nightmare, Night and Death, in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, that's German. You can't get there by staying in England; you have to go to Germany. The center of that, of English, a fascination with English—we would have called it "pre-Romantic" movement—was the University of Göttingen, because it had been

founded by the House of Hanover, which was on the British throne. If you were a German, and you wanted to study things English, you would go to Göttingen; and if you were one of the few English people who wanted to learn German, you would go to Göttingen.

Fiksdal: Hm interesting- It helps me understand.

Teske: That was a real center, and the library was not bombed in World War II. There were a few shell fragments. You could go in and find out which member of the young Germans, who were following what was going on in English, and doing their own versions of that, you could find out who took what books out in what week in 1775. That's why I was there, and that was really exciting.

The tavern still stands where the group called the "poets grove" would meet on the second floor once a week. You can go up there and look at the room and have a beer where these people in the 1770s were meeting.

But, well- just take it from me, no English tradition going through Germany—no *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a whole lot of English Romanticism—gone. You have to track that. That's what I was doing there. I was refining my dissertation. I wound up trying to get going on the way to a book.

I'd started in Edinburgh Library, the National Library of Scotland. I had spent five weeks in the British Museum. Then I got to Germany, and was beginning to do this. This one day . . . in the U.S. at that time, if you wrote an article in English literature—a historical article or a historical critical article—the usual time- you would submit it all over the place, but only one place at a time. You were encouraged to type a clean first page, because otherwise, it would sit on somebody's desk and get shopworn. Might take six or seven months before you would get a nibble, and then it would be publication probably two years from now.

Well, sitting there in Göttingen in December, and Head of Department comes into my office and says, "By the way, Professor So-and-So, from whom you took the Carlyle and Ruskin class at Bonn, he's visiting today. He's at the University of Erlangen. Would you like to have lunch with him?"

"Oh, man, that'd be great."

We had lunch, and after lunch, he said, "Oh, I'm taking my turn as editor of a publication in English Lit. Would you have anything for me?"

Oh, boy, there was my first chapter of my dissertation- it really didn't belong with the rest of it. I thought, if I can take that, and break it off, and polish it . . . I shifted gears and worked through the rest of December in doing that. Because then, if that gets into print, instead of having to redo it in the book, I can just quote it and move on. I sent it to him in early January. It appeared in the journal in April.

Fiksdal: Wow. Talk about quick turnaround.

Teske: Of course, the journal, half the stuff would be in English, half in German, and a lot of the German professors were writing their articles in English. The journal is called *Anglia* and it's the equivalent of PMLA here. It's my one world-class thing. [laughing]

Susan, that article was not really in my field, because it dealt with a poem from 1715. My field really is 1770s through about 1830s- Romanticism. I had two offers—one from Notre Dame, one from the University of Cincinnati. They didn't say they had read the article, but the job was for early 18th Century, or the Augustan period, late 17th, early 18th.

Fiksdal: Based on that article.

Teske: The only reason they would have thought that, "Oh, here's a new name. We don't know this guy's name. We like the article. Let's get him while he's cheap." I didn't go.

Fiksdal: No. Well, that would have been kind of a struggle to sort of get there and say, "Well, I'm just really going to teach Romanticism."

Teske: Yeah. But it indicates- so anyway that was the German experience. I don't know, it seems that here I am, talking against publish or perish.

Fiksdal: Well, we're always thrilled when we get published.

Teske: Well, and with that speed. I didn't realize—I thought it was some little thing, not the main German English Lit journal, so that really pleased me.

That gets me back to Oberlin. Now, there are things that went on in 1967 through 1970 at Oberlin that were extremely important for my—whatever contribution I could make to Evergreen. The I guess first thing, chronologically, would have occurred in the fall of '67. Here I have to go back a little bit. Oberlin was one of the 12 colleges in the Great Lakes Colleges Association. There were six in Ohio; three in Michigan; three in Indiana. That had been formed in the early '60s.

There was a sort of something that was going around in the early '60s. You had your Associated Colleges of the Midwest. That was the next group west from ours. These were all private, fairly small schools. Why did they get together? One big thing was that they wished to be able to offer—they could not all duplicate the same resources and interests. Languages and culture, all the schools would have had, at that time, something going in German, French, Spanish; beginning, most of them would have something in Russian; maybe a little something in Italian. But what are you going to do with other languages? As the group got together, Oberlin handled Chinese; Earlham in Indiana handled Japanese; Kalamazoo in Michigan handled Swahili and East African culture; I think Wooster was Hindi. If you really wanted to study that, you could transfer for a year and concentrate on that kind of thing.

Also, some of the colleges had summer programs overseas, some didn't. Well, this was a way that a person from any one of the 12 colleges could take advantage of a summer program of any of the others.

Something that got to be very important for me, and in part for Evergreen, and Evergreen students, the National Science Foundation had been formed as a reaction to Sputnik, and the demonstration that the Soviets were ahead of us in space travel technology, so the National Science Foundation started—when?—'59 or something like that.

Kennedy had this dream of having something in the humanities, and something in the arts, that would be the equivalent of NSF. There never has been an endowment for social sciences. And social sciences, the way that it's turned out, if you're doing quantitative things in the social sciences, you get your money from National Science Foundation. If you're doing interpretive things, you get it from National Endowment for the Humanities.

For example, if you are a political scientist, and you were doing patterns of voting- statistical patterns of voting, you get it from National Science Foundation. But if you were doing an analysis of Supreme Court decisions, you get it from—

Fiksdal: Actually, we have the same thing in linguistics. I'm always in the humanities area, because I do qualitative work, but there's plenty of quantitative.

Teske: Right. And the phonologists would be over in the—

Fiksdal: Yeah, that's NSF.

Teske: Ok, you know what I'm talking about.

Fiksdal: Yeah.

Teske: But that's why we have three rather than four. Kennedy did not live to see the Endowments started. But when Lyndon Johnson had his huge landslide, and was also, quite frankly, trying to prove that he was not a barbarian, that he would carry out Kennedy's ideas here. You had, in 1965, the foundation of the Humanities endowment and the Arts endowment.

Now for the consortia, this was a godsend. It meant that instead of having 12 different hands reached out pleadingly to funding sources, you could have one hand representing all 12 schools, doing that. There was a Natural Sciences coordinator, there was an Arts Coordinator, and there was a Humanities Coordinator in the Great Lakes Colleges Association.

In the fall of '67, here the newly founded National Endowment for the Humanities was trying to look around for ideas. What should they fund? What would be their function? Well, instead of just going around and asking a whole bunch of different schools, they arranged things so that our

Humanities Coordinator would have a conference, where a main officer of the endowment would be present, and the representatives of the 12 schools. What the discussion would be is, how could the Endowment be most useful in the humanities?

We had an art historian who was the Oberlin representative to the faculty- so there was a special faculty that met maybe two times a semester, where all the schools were represented. But here was an extra meeting in the humanities. He asked me if I would like to go, and another colleague, a philosophy teacher, if he would like to go—"I know it's short notice, but could you go with me this weekend, it's an overnight deal. We'll pay your flight and everything"—to this conference? I got there, and I was sitting there in small, seminar-like meetings with the Great Lakes Colleges Humanities Coordinator, and the representative of NEH. I started speaking out—not belligerently or anything like that, but just some ideas that I had.

Well, apparently, that went over rather well. The next spring—wait. That would have been November of '66, the endowment had just been founded the year before. But the next spring, in '67, I got a call from the humanities coordinator at Kalamazoo. He said, "Could you drive up here and stay overnight with me? I have some things I want to talk about with you."

I got there and he said, "Okay. He said another man and I"—and this is another man who had quite a bit to do later with Evergreen. And what's her first name Beluccia Brown? Our faculty member, who started in Vancouver? Oh, god.

Fiksdal: Who started in Vancouver? Well, Lucia Harrison.

Teske: Lucia Harrison. Yeah. She lived in Morris Keeton's house when Keeton was Provost at Antioch. This was Morris Keeton, who later became an advisor to Evergreen. Keeton and the Humanities Coordinator had been offered the chance to do a book, but Conrad Hilberry, the coordinator, realized he could not do a book, and do his teaching at Kalamazoo, and do the Great Lakes Colleges thing. Would I take over for him as Humanities Coordinator?

He had two irons in the fire where he already had started discussions about grants. Would I take over from him, write the grant proposals? One of them was for a big conference—run that—and then the other kind of program that they were just beginning to talk about, would I be willing to work with that?

But, Susan, he did—and this turned out to be very useful—he did make the point, he said, "If you're going to do this, you don't get a salary as a GLCA coordinator. But you're going to be writing grant proposals, and you are then going to be the project director. Make sure to pay yourself enough that if, in the still of the night, you find yourself saying—"Here I am, doing a full slate of teaching,

running the Oberlin English Honors program, and why am I doing this?”—that it will be worth your while. As it turned out, I could not be paid more than 100 percent of salary, so I got paid in the summer.

Fiksdal: Oh, nice.

Teske: The work was year round, but I got paid in the summer. I became the Humanities Coordinator, and the grants succeeded, and I fed on the public trough for about three years and it was important that I was paying myself enough, because one of the grants was running in what would be the planning year at Evergreen. I had to find somebody to take it over; and, thank fortune, there was enough money to make it worth his while to take it over.

I got to be doing that, which involved thinking. Thinking about big, new ideas. Thinking about abuses that ought to be corrected. Thinking about opportunities that haven't been used that could be used. Which sort of got me out of “you're an English teacher,” got me into big groupthink about academic policy and so forth. That was one thing that happened.

Another thing, there were two elected committees, elected by the faculty, at Oberlin. One of them—eight members—was this all-powerful Faculty Council that did the decisions on hiring, firing, tenure, promotion, pay. Their deliberations were secret.

But there was another one called Educational Plans and Policies, which was public, and which was the one who developed suggestions, which were then taken to the faculty for votes on new things, new wrinkles. I guess I was sounding off enough that I was elected as one of these eight people. I'm sorry, but it is a source of pride to me that the next two years, when I was in the Dean's office, my faculty colleagues kept electing me to this committee. [laughing] It was sort of interesting because the Dean would be at these meetings but in that committee, I was not representing the Dean's office, I was representing the faculty.

Fiksdal: I think they did a good job then (laughing).

Teske: I sat at the opposite end of the table from the Dean. But when I went with him to the faculty council, I sat next to him and spoke when spoken to.

Fiksdal: Interesting.

Teske: It was a completely different relationship. But we started getting things done. I must say, we got more stuff done to Oberlin in that two or three years—the three years that I was on it—than had happened for a whole bunch of years before, and so that got my educational policy chops going.

The year after, I also became the Humanities Coordinator. That's when the newly appointed Academic Dean came to me. He was a trumpet player.

He said, “Okay, I checked with the Provost”—a bass player, and we used to play sessions together—and he said, “Charlie, I want you to be my Associate Dean for at least a three-year hitch.”

I said, “Don, I’m- I’m a teacher. I’m not an administrator.”

He said, “Look, I feel comfortable working with”—he was a political scientist, but on the NSF data side—he said, “I feel comfortable working with natural scientists and social scientists, but I don’t really have the feeling for humanities and arts. You do, and also you have, as a musician, you have connections with the Conservatory of Music, the other wing of the larger Oberlin College.”

I said, “Oh, Don, I don’t know.”

That’s when he said, “Look, I remember the conversation we had several years ago where we figured that there are enough jazz musicians who want the chance to play, and there are enough listeners who want to hear jazz. What we need are better proprietors who know enough about jazz, enough about listeners, and enough about money that they can put this together and make jazz clubs. This is your chance to become a proprietor. I’m calling your bluff.”

Well, I had to do it. When I learned to divide and subtract, they made me a Dean.

Fiksdal: That’s when you were a dean (laughing). I believe it.

Teske: I was getting my stuff together about that. Then, see my situation with the Great Lakes Colleges was very interesting. Because when I would go to their faculty meetings to testify about how things were going in the humanities, I was offering them things that they wouldn’t have had otherwise. What were they going to do? Say no? Give the money back?

Fiksdal: You were a much moneybag. [laughing]

Teske: Yeah. [laughing] Exactly. But I also, since I was there, spoke up about some things, and how things were going. Then, one of the great things—it would have been the spring of 1969—the day after our faculty- the Great Lakes College’s faculty meeting, the Kellogg Foundation of Battle Creek, Michigan—the Kellogg cereals—laid some money on us so that we could have an additional day—I think there was a representative of each college and I—and it was supposed to be just a blue-sky think tank kind of thing.

Here was the deal: There were 12 Great Lakes Colleges. But one of the things, the colleges were all pretty much in exurbs and separate villages, like Oberlin and Wooster. A lot of people were interested in having some inner-city component. Here was a nunnery and religious school in Detroit that had gone bankrupt, and was being sold. What if the 12 schools would get together and buy that facility, and found a 13th Great Lakes College in downtown Detroit? What would you do, and what

wouldn't you do, if you had a chance to start fresh? The tape recorder was running and everything, and I—"Hey, I don't know. Why not?"

We spent the whole day with these ideas of what we would do and what we wouldn't do. We agreed, without too much pressure from me—we agreed, as a group, that we would not start with departments. We would find a way out of dealing with that. I think we started talking about some interdisciplinary stuff that should happen, because we figured that the standard, the canon of divisions, was not responsive to what was going on now, and we needed to have things more flexible.

But the important thing, Susan, I had no idea there in—what?—April or May of '69 that a year later, I'd be doing the same kind of thing, but the money would be on the table. It would be a real school, and not something hypothetical. But it was great to have that additional run-through.

One other very large thing that I recall when I was first interviewed by Dave Barry and he was trying to assess my experience. His eyes just lit up, and it was this. One of the things that we did in my first year on that Educational Plans and Policies Committee was to put in a January term. That was in the wind. There were a lot of places who were starting to do that. They would call it "winterim," or something like that.

The problem would be if you were running a semester school, during the early years, when I taught at Oberlin, the college would begin its classes in late September. Then would come the Christmas break, and you would still be going to your classes for three weeks in January

Fiksdal: Oh I see.

Teske: And then have a rigorous exam week period. Then, with maybe a few days off in February, you'd go through 'til the end of May. That would be rough Susan because think about it. As human beings, in the fall, you've got a Thanksgiving vacation, you're got a Christmas holiday vacation. But then, when you went in, and you would have only two or three days between the beginning of January and the third week in March—spring vacation. That's an awful long stretch. The feeling was, "Can't we do something?"

What we did was to start school earlier in September, finish the first semester at Christmastime; then, start the second semester in the second week of February, and go through to early June. January would be its own special term. The deal would be that if you were a four-year student at Oberlin, you would have to take three January terms.

I pushed very hard that these should be pass/fail. The only time I had run a pass/fail course before is when I was teaching playwriting, because I said, "This is ridiculous, this play's an A-minus, this is a B-plus play."

Fiksdal: Yeah, how would you determine?

Teske: If it's a play, and the person has written it, you get the credit. Now, let's see how good we can make it.

It was pass/fail. And well, what would be the organization? Why don't we use that time to let the teachers and students do things that would be outside their majors, but that would really be things they had always wanted to learn about. Let's give opportunities for individual work, and clusters of work, and maybe really intensive courses, something like a full-time course.

When I became Dean—"All right, you helped start this, right"—the main Dean put me in charge of the January term. I was it. You couldn't have an individual project or a group project. You needed my signature. I had to help plan everything. Well, what does that sound like, Susan? Full-time individual projects done with a—

Fiksdal: Sounds like the work I did a lot when I was a Dean—reading contracts.

Teske: Yeah. Full-time with a teacher in a really intensive program.

Fiksdal: Yeah, group contracts.

Teske: Group contract. Nobody knew anything about Evergreen. Nobody knew anything about coordinated studies. Two different groups came in and said, "We would like to have something where three or four different faculty members would be working together, and we would work with them on those projects." Coordinated studies—and I was in charge of watching that develop, and signing things.

There are a couple of things- four guys wanted to go, as their project, to climb Mount Washington in New Hampshire in January, where the winds at the top of the mountain can go up to 100 miles an hour. The college lawyer and I pretty much quashed that. Another student who was interested in bodybuilding wanted to go to York, Pennsylvania, where the barbells and so forth were made, and where they had the big lifting gymnasiums, and wanted to experiment with taking steroids.

But one group that I did give my blessing to, we had had a student who had been down in Louisiana trying to organize some of the people working on the big plantations into union groups, and he needed help in doing this. It would have been something that, boy, you talk about grassroots organizing and labor things. However, a lot of the bosses did not want unionization. The union reps would not be allowed onto the plantations to talk. The workers would have to come out and stand at the fence near the field. A couple of the people had been shot at, and still, these students made a proposal—and I talked to a college lawyer. We ended up having to get releases from all of their parents. But I think there were about 12 students who went down to Louisiana with a faculty member. I sweated

that until they all got home safely. But at any rate, just think of that. I had an opportunity, as a Dean at a regular undergraduate college, to be doing that kind of experience.

Fiksdal: When you talked to Dave Barry about this, was that—I mean and then later, in the planning, that was your idea, to do group contracts and to do individual contracts?

Teske: No. The group contract and individual contract—individual contracts, I was in charge of.

Fiksdal: Okay. Because you already had experience.

Teske: Group contracts were not planned for; they just sort of grew logically. Of course, coordinated with the change in culture.

Fiksdal: But some of them had the first for group contracts. I mean, we knew what they were.

Teske: It just seemed logical to fit in. Well, it's also true that part of my thinking here, I knew—I don't want to spend too much time on this, but it did have something to do with Evergreen. There was something that didn't work.

Kalamazoo had embarked, right at this time, on what they called the Kalamazoo Plan. The campus was landlocked; it could not grow anymore. It ran, as most campuses did, nine months a year, with maybe a little bit of work in the summer, ok? The idea was that it could not grow otherwise, but what about if we moved from semesters to quarters, and we make the year in four quarters?

Then, the pharmaceutical firm Upjohn was located in Kalamazoo, and had big connections with Kalamazoo College. Upjohn gave them a whole lot of money so they could open foreign centers that would operate not just in the summer, but year-round. Ok.

The Kalamazoo Plan was if you sign up with Kalamazoo, you start in September here, and you come out 15 quarters later, in June. Let's see . . . how did that work? One quarter would be vacation during that time. One quarter would be rustication; you'd be writing a big paper or something, but you weren't on campus. One quarter would be work-study, which took you down to 12 quarters on campus. One or two quarters would be at a foreign center.

Fiksdal: Wow, interesting, yeah.

Teske: This meant that your campus could be used year-round, because there'd be only three-fourths of the students on campus at any given time. It meant that you could increase your faculty by one-fourth. It also meant, Susan,—and this is not a small thing at all—if your faculty members do want to do research, normally the only time they can do it is in the summer. If they go to a university library during the summer, you've got closing hours. This way, if you chose to do your research winter quarter, when everything would be fully running, you could do this.

Kalamazoo is still working this way. The only people who didn't like it—the coaches and the music group people—because they would continually have students—

Fiksdal: Yes, they'd disappear.

Teske: Yeah.

Fiksdal: Well, languages, too.

Teske: And facilities got a little bit their noses out of joint because they used to use the summer to fix things.

Fiksdal: To clean everything up. Yeah.

Teske: This way, it was being used. But they were able to add—so that was going on. Then, I was also quite aware of the Colorado College Plan, which was moving into blocks, and having in it that full-time courses, single teacher, but, like a group contract.

Fiksdal: Yeah just move from one to another.

Teske: I was pretty much—I guess the point was that I sort of raised my head out of the day-to-day work in English Lit, and had been doing a whole lot of big thinking, and reading *Change* magazine, which was the harbinger of the new day to come and so forth. At any rate, all that was going on.

Fiksdal: Tell us how did you hear about Evergreen? What happened? Did you apply, or did someone recruit you?

Teske: No. I had gotten, as I mentioned, a couple nibbles to change, to move somewhere for teaching. But after I got in the Dean's office, I started getting some nibbles to come and be an administrator. As I told my Dean, I said, "Look, I've had these offers. I've turned them down until afterwards. You want three years, you get three years."

Then, this one day in late November 1969, here came this envelope- business envelope and in it was a brochure, and no buildings. A picture of what looked like evergreen trees in a fog, next to a big patch of water that I later recognized as our beach at Eld Inlet. No buildings. But there were a couple things that showed some obviously intelligent people hard at work discussing among themselves. There was just this blurb. Hmm.

Then there was a letter, written by David Barry, Academic Vice President and Provost. "You have been mentioned to us as someone who might want to have something to do with the development of a new state-supported college in Olympia, Washington. If you are interested in the process of planning and development of the new academic venture, we are assuming that we will not be just a carbon copy of what exists, but will be trying to do what makes sense now. If you are interested, please get in touch."

I looked at that, and I went over to my buddy's office and said, "Don, always before, when I got a memo about something, I turned it down and told you later. But there's something about this that's different (laughing)." "No buildings?"

He says, "Well . . . "

I said, "All you have to say is, 'Charlie, I want my three years—forget it.' And that's it. You'll never hear anything again." He said, "Look, you have to protect yourself. Why don't you write?"

I did, and then I got this package that had some of the early, hopeful statements, but nothing specific about what the academic program would be. Just "The Legislature has founded this, and it's in the capital, and we want to make use of being in the capital for having public administration work. But otherwise, we are not bound to the past."

I took it to the Dean, who took it home overnight. And he said, "Look, if I were you, I—follow this up. Remember all of the problems that you and I have had when we've tried to get programs started, and tried to get departments to work with us." If they're not- I think they did say something about "We're not going to have departments." He said, "You should go ahead. Go ahead." At that point, once I showed interest in that, he shifted from trying to talk me out of it to being my advisor, and sort of coaching me about how to handle it.

I got back to Barry, and set up—it would have been I guess the second week of December. He would be flying to Chicago, and getting a motel room near O'Hare Airport. Could I come over of an evening to meet with him at O'Hare, and then take a late flight back to Cleveland?

"Yeah." We set it up.

Now I add this next thing because it gives you a feeling for what was going on at the time. Ok. When I was driving toward Cleveland Airport, it started snowing, and it started snowing relatively hard. By the time I got to the airport, there was considerable snow. People were having difficult wheel spinning and so forth. I got into the terminal and found that my flight had been canceled. There were a couple flights. One had just come in, but that was going to be it. The airport was going to close down. Nobody was going to leave, and there were no more flights coming in that night.

So I called Barry, and got him at his motel, and said, "Sorry I can't make it."

He said, "Well, could you make it tomorrow? I'll be here all day tomorrow."

So apparently he was in Chicago to do recruiting. Again this is something I did not find out until later. The recruiting of the Academic Deans was one of his biggest jobs. It was supposed to have happened by September, so that the Deans could have come on for a year before the planning year. Things had not worked out, and so he was just getting to it in early December.

I called back to Oberlin and got my buddy, the Dean. I said, "Don, would it be okay if I was out of the office tomorrow?" And I explained to him, and he said, "Yeah."

I called Dave back and said, "Yeah. I'll see you soon and it's going to clear off. The weather forecast said it was going to be a bright, sunny day tomorrow, so I'll probably be able to leave here mid-morning, and I'll see you for lunch or something like that."

I came out to go to my car in the parking lot, and here outside were a couple Oberlin students. Now, we did not use "doctor." As at Yale and Harvard, we were "mister."

"Mr. Teske, could we ask you a great favor?"

"Sure. What's the problem?"

"Well, we have to go back to Oberlin, and our car won't start, and it will just be too much of a hassle. And we have to get back, because our speaker just came in on that last flight from Chicago."

"Well, yeah, sure. Sure, I think I'll be able to get us back there."

The speaker was Jerry Rubin, now I don't know if that rings a bell. Okay, in 1968, there had been this big foo-fa-rah at the Democratic Convention in Chicago.

Fiksdal: Oh, that Jerry Rubin, yeah.

Teske: "The whole world is watching." Out of that, the people who had fomented the riots and became the Chicago Seven: Jerry Rubin; a former student of Richard Jones, Abbie Hoffman; ah-there was Dave Dellinger; Bobby Seale. I forget the other three, but it was the Chicago Seven, and they were represented by this lawyer, William Kunstler.

Why do I remember these things? Judge Julius Hoffman was running the trial, which kept going on for months. At some point, the Chicago Seven asked for permission—they were on bail, but they could not leave the Chicago area—they asked for permission, in order to raise money for their defense, if they could be absent for evenings. But the judge said that you have to be in court a 9:00 in the morning, or you're going to be in contempt.

Rubin was slated to give a talk at Oberlin that night. He had come in on the plane. The car of the student activists, who were going to pick him up and take him, the car wouldn't run. I got to drive back [laughing] through a snowstorm, instead of seeing Barry about Evergreen,

Fiksdal: Saved the day!

Teske: And I found out only later. Jerry Rubin had been an Oberlin student. He had typed a poison pen anonymous letter to some legislator in Washington, D.C., and sent it from Cleveland or something like that. No, he sent it so it would have come from Lorain or Elyria, Ohio, something like that. You don't do that. You don't make a death threat to a Congressperson. The FBI had checked the letter, and tracked it

back through the postal system to Oberlin, and asked around. Rubin had typed it on a portable typewriter, where the typefaces left this- like a fingerprint, and they had identified him. Oberlin had suspended him, and Rubin said, "As long as you're suspending me, I'd rather be expelled," and he left. That was about three or four years before.

He had become one of the big rabble-rousers, right?. I got to take him back in the car. [laughing] and Susan, I wish I had a tape recording of that conversation. One of the guys in the car was, for his January term—now this was early December—for his January term wanted permission to go work for the Chicago Seven movement in their office.

I was holding forth. I said, "Look, the academic credit is for the learning you do, not for just running a Xerox machine or a mimeograph machine or something. Rubin didn't say anything. Finally, when I was done, he just exploded. "This is another example of this academic—messing up, and red tape." He was really getting mad. But he was worried. "Do you think I'll be able to get out of Oberlin?"

The guys figured, "Look, if nothing else, if you can't get back for a plane, after you're done talking, we can get somebody who has chains or studded tires, who will drive you back to Chicago. So don't worry about that."

At one point, I was getting a little fed up and I said, "Well, Jerry, I'm over 30. What should I do, because I'm useless?"

"Oh," he said, "you could think of committing suicide." No, I said, "Should I commit suicide?" He said, "Well, that wouldn't be a bad idea."

He was the one who had said, "Don't study history. Make history!"

As I mentioned to the students, "Beware of anybody who tells you, 'Don't study history, make history,' because he's going to try to sell you his own particular version of history."

We had a high old time. He and I are arguing through the snow [laughing] when I should have been talking to David about Evergreen.

Fiksdal: What a story. I didn't know that you knew Rubin.

Teske: Yeah.

Fiksdal: I'm going to have to say it's 4:00, we're going to have to stop.

Teske: Well, let's just finish with a note that I did, the next day, get to see Dave Barry. I don't know who the other people were that he talked to, but he invited me out to the campus. It was the last working day for the staff before Christmas break. I flew, for the first time, out to the State of Washington, and had my first- my day of interviews at Evergreen.

Fiksdal: Do you remember who you had the interviews with?

Teske: Oh, yeah. Everybody but Joe Shoban, and this caused a problem later. Shoban got his nose out of joint. Why had he not been told that I was going to be there to be interviewed?

All right I'll leave with a cliffhanger. The three-hour difference. I drove to Cleveland Hopkins for the plane. The plane sat on the ground at O'Hare, and then went on to Seattle. Rented a car. Here it was, at Oberlin, frozen, icicles dripping from gray.

When I asked Barry, "Am I going to need an overcoat?"

He said, "Bring a raincoat."

I rented a car at Sea-Tac and I thought, well, I'll wait to eat. There will be a whole lot of places along the road where I can eat. At that time, Susan, once you got on the big hill going up from Sea-Tac, you couldn't see anything on either side until you came to the Milton-Fife area, where I stopped at a McDonald's or something. Where are the people? I had the windows open because it was so nice and warm, and then I had this smell—and, of course, it was Tacoma.

And it was bizarre, because Barry picked me up from the old Tyee Inn at 7:30 this time—it was 10:30 my time—and took me to McCann's house, where McCann had arranged a cocktail party with people whom he thought I ought to meet. I walked out, walked into the living room, took one look at McCann and said, "I know you." And McCann looked at me and said, "I know you."

Fiksdal: Ok I like that. I like your ending.

End of Part 2 of 2 for Charlie Teske on 11-3-16