

## Chapter 4. Northwestern University and Chicago: Higher and Wider Learning, Inside and Outside Classrooms, 1967–1970

In mid-September 1967, at age 18, I moved into a two-student, one-bedroom dormitory room, with toilets and showers down the hall, in unadorned, immediate post-World War II Bobb Hall. One of three on north campus across Sheridan Road from the iconic clay tennis courts and the old gymnasium, my first-year residence hall was clustered among the other men's dormitories and fraternities. Women's residences concentrated on south campus, to protect young women from their male peers. The 1960s arrived late in Evanston and Northwestern University.

Northwestern is a private university founded in the small, suburban Chicago city of Evanston just north of the city boundary. Its origins date from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century when John Evans led a group of business executives in establishing a coeducational college in the quiet Methodist-founded town. Evanston was the future home of Emma Willard and the national Women's Christian Temperance Union. Only private clubs sold alcoholic beverages in 1960s Evanston. Memberships, though, were cheap.

By the 1960s, NU was in a self-admitted time of transition. Well into the 1950s and early 1960s, with a number of other private universities, Northwestern had a rigid policy of limiting the admission of Jews, Catholics, Blacks, and other "minorities"—in other words, quotas. It actively recruited relatively moderate- to higher-scoring, middle- to upper-middle-class high school class presidents, star athletes, and homecoming queens and kings from Midwestern towns. It had a well-deserved reputation as a high-middle-ranking party school with academic aspirations and with non-winning sports teams other than tennis and golf.

In the early- to mid-1960s, following a well-publicized fraternity hazing death by drowning in Lake Michigan *and* a quest for higher rankings, Northwestern embarked on a period of rehabilitation and rankings-climbing. It actively recruited nationally a more diverse student (and faculty) population. It succeeded more rapidly with eastern and western Jewish, Catholic, and Asian American students than with members of other underrepresented groups. NU promoted itself as more open, liberal, and diversity-seeking (not yet *the* word of that day). My acceptance and admission were one small part of a time of change. The approximately 70 Black students who were enrolled that year were a university record and a source of official discomfort (for more on the experience of Black students at Northwestern during this era, see Northwestern University Libraries, n.d.).

The university I entered had a long road to travel. I confronted antisemitism during my brief encounter with fraternity rush. Racism, sexism, misogyny, homophobia, and xenophobia were rife, from casual speech to unwritten policies, although we lacked the words of the following generations. Fraternities and sororities were rigidly segregated along all visible lines plus social class as well as sited on opposite ends of the campus.

Discrimination was both blatant and subtle. The visibly small number of Black students, prompted by the civil rights movements and led by the first Black student council president—a future lawyer—held a strike and occupied the administration building in spring 1970. The official university history issued under the names of a retired professor of economics and the just retired provost in 1975 grossly misrepresents the Black students and student activism more generally (see Harold F. Williamson and Payson S. Wild, 1975; compare with Graff, Northwestern University Archives and Library, oral history interviewee on student activism in late 1960s, Sept. 18, 2023, and my “Lessons From the 1960s: Paths to Rediscovering Universities” 2023a).

I began my studies at Northwestern with a year’s credits from successful scores on Advanced Placement exams in American and European history, English, and calculus. At that time, colleges were less money-hungry than later, so I was awarded a full year’s credit and sophomore standing as well as exemption from introductory courses. Intellectually and financially, that was a great boon. In retrospect, my assessment is more nuanced.

On one hand, passing out of first-year requirements and most large lecture courses and moving directly into upper-division courses was a huge benefit. It led to important faculty-student and peer relationships. It hastened my path to graduate school and the professorate. It saved a year’s expenses. On the other hand, another year of personal maturing would have benefited me. I recognized that by the end of graduate school.

Mid-century mores that restricted the location, physical posture, and hours for male and female student interactions especially in dorm rooms were beginning to change. Formal parietal hour rules were eliminated the preceding year. This meant that during a dorm party, a fellow first-year female could visit my room. But I was not allowed to visit a room in a women’s dorm. The battle for gender equality was halting and slow.

For all the talk of the counterculture and the sexual revolution, in the late 1960s at Northwestern, male residents of north campus, mainly fraternity members and new chapter pledges, annually marched to south campus where they screamed for women students in dorms and sororities to “throw us your panties.” This sorry tradition was called a “panty raid.” By my second and third years, more and more women and some men students vocally opposed the tradition, protested to the university administration, and picketed it. But it was not canceled. Participation diminished. The women’s revolution came in bits and pieces, contradictorily, to Evanston, original home of the Women’s Christian Temperance

Union. My future partner and wife spent her first year at Northwestern in Frances Willard Hall on south campus.

My assigned first-year roommate and I had exchanged only one introductory postal letter in advance of arrival at our shared destination in the pre-email age. Without computer matching and email, Glenn and I were not a good fit. An intending philosophy major from the Chicago suburbs, he took his dirty laundry home to his mother to wash only twice a quarter. The room acquired a distinctive, uninviting odor. Over the span of three quarters, we had little to say to each other. I quickly abandoned my first instinct of taping cutouts of *Playboy Magazine* nude photographs around the doorway. My 18-year-old consciousness awakened step by step.

Fortunately, I quickly made new friends with David, a classmate from Akron, Ohio, in the room next door and Harris, from Long Island, New York, on the other side. Harris introduced me to *The New York Review of Books* to which I subscribed for decades. He and I shared our copies of *The Nation* and *The New Republic*. His roommate from Colorado introduced all of us to fresh spring water beers from Colorado, before Coors became associated with the political right and the object of criticism and boycotts.

David and I shared a room and then an apartment for the next two years before I graduated in three years. The son of a Firestone Tire executive, he was a pre-law political science major. Another friend for the next several years was Ed, a six-year combined B.S.-M.D. student from Lombard, Illinois. Ed's first-year roommate was quarterback on the NU Wildcats football team, the closest I came to any connection with the typically losing Wildcats teams. He was not very tall.

With the exception of a handful of private, preparatory school graduates, all of the several hundred 18-year-olds in Bobb Hall (and more in other first-year dorms) had to adapt to new comfort zones and new habits for their first extended period away from home. This was not easy. Self-discipline does not come easily at age 18.

For reasons that I cannot recall, I was elected president of Bobb Hall for the year. This was not an onerous task, but I took it seriously. One of my first actions was contracting with an affiliate of the Chicago mafia to rent a pool table for the basement recreation room. I also coordinated coed "mixers" with the student heads of women's dorms.

In another sign of the shifting times and my political awakening, with the cooperation of the Dean of Students, I led a successful effort to amalgamate the men's and women's residential organizations into a single, campus-wide association. That left us with an extra mimeograph machine and file cabinet. (Younger readers, note that a mimeograph was an ancestor to Xerox machines and then computer-driven printers for producing multiple copies.) I promptly donated them to the struggling campus Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) group. It was years before male and female residences were fully integrated across campus or within individual dormitories.

My activist leanings were emerging; so too were the breath of acquaintanceships across campus and beyond first-year students. Some friendships lasted throughout my years at Northwestern and well beyond.

Different interests and affinities competed for our time. Eighteen- to 20-year-olds adjusted unevenly to making individual course choices and schedules. For some students—especially in the Technological Institute (Tech) programs, largely engineering or pre-med—there were no choices other than, importantly, general education requirements that were then university-wide with a moderate amount of choice. For liberal arts and science students like me, choices were abundant, sometimes overwhelming. We usually had options among different courses to meet given requirements across a range of electives. We were encouraged to range widely, sample, and experiment.

Despite myths to the contrary, there was not even a veneer of required “great books” to read. My AP credits gave me great freedom. Northwestern was a good place to take advantage of curriculum choice. After my first year I had the steady, responsible, and interactive advising of Lacey Baldwin Smith, professor and distinguished scholar of British history as well as suggestions of other professors and fellow students. (See essays listed in the Appendix.)

Even before the beginning of orientation for first-year students and then classes, fraternity and sorority rush for new student pledges began. As mentioned in Chapter Three, I met with two fraternity brothers at home in the summer. Rush was high-pressure with the various houses segregated not only by race but also by religion broadly cast, social popularity, athletic prowess (“jocks” versus the rest of us), more or less controlled social activity, and less explicitly family income and social class. And it was indeed rushed at the beginning of our first year in college.

Prospective pledges were demeaned and intimidated. With other Jewish and underrepresented students, I was more or less ignored by all but the three Jewish-related frats. Despite having a legacy to one of them from my father’s membership more than 30 years earlier, they did not appeal to me in part because of their own class differentiation and their muddled views on religious separation and political awareness. In other words, both “sides” offended me.

Fortunately, late-1960s currents promoted the legitimacy of acting affirmatively by removing oneself from rush. We called it “de-rushing.” For several years, it was not uncommon. Along with some of my new dorm friends, I de-rushed and never regretted it. Others “de-pledged” after joining but not completing the often vile and inhumane rites of initiation. Among the campus legends was the account of how one nationally well-known fraternity’s pledging rituals led to the drowning of a pledge tied to a rock in Lake Michigan in the late 1950s or early 1960s—and how the university President J. Roscoe Miller blocked all efforts to investigate, prosecute, or suspend his own former fraternity.

A third course of adjustment was based in either or both the dorms or fraternities (to a lesser extent publicly at least in sororities on south campus): drinking alcohol excessively outside the bounds of parental homes. Then and later, it was often

said that one of the first year of college's central tasks was learning your limits. This was certainly my experience. Within a year, marijuana came to my rescue.

Because of its conservative religious roots, Evanston was a "dry" town with no open sales of alcohol. Booze, so to speak, was available for purchase across the counter only in Chicago, across Division Street, the town's southern boundary. Legal sales were limited to those aged 21 or older. Undergrads, especially first-year students who also lacked cars of our own, especially when not fraternity or sorority pledges, were "rescued" by friendly dorm "counsellors."

Most often graduate students supplementing their research or teaching assistantships—unlike older undergraduates working for only room and board several decades later—these counsellors comforted their younger charges, made us happy, and in the case of our second-floor grad student in English, also supervised and gently controlled our underage drinking. My immediate circle appreciated Phil's generosity and supportiveness.

Alcohol consumption was one form of experimental learning. Before the end of the first year, I was able to drink almost a fifth of whiskey and still walk. I began to transition from Canadian to Scotch spirits. I remember drinking far too much on Yom Kippur in October 1967, the last time I ritualistically fasted. My drunken stupor led to violent vomiting while trying to sleep off the effects. For our cohort, alcohol and before long marijuana were inseparable from relaxation, socializing, partying, dating—and maturing.

On quiet Thursday, Friday, or Saturday evenings, in not-too-chilly weather, if there were no organized dorm parties or campus events, the nonfraternity pledges would drink awhile and then stand on the side of Sheridan Road, aka US Route 42, which extended through campus between Chicago and Wilmette. High school junior and senior girls from suburban Evanston, Wilmette, Winnetka, Skokie, and other nearby towns would drive the family car up and down the road selecting Northwestern first-year men to pick up for brief "dates." The "townies" and the frosh "roadies" might just chat or make out a little. This was not "free love" but another transition from high school to college and a rickety bridge between the separated south and north campuses and on- and off-campus life.

~ ~ ~

Of course, there was formal education. Happily, I was exempt from many if not quite all requirements, a boon to advancing reading and writing or college literacy. I recall a few relatively useless required courses. Among them was Introduction to American Government, an 8:00 am lecture course in which I regularly dozed, my drooping hand leaving a crooked line trailing down pages of my notebook. This course helped me finalize my decision to continue with history and not follow the path to law school that my parents occasionally promoted.

A one-quarter course of French was taught by a graduate assistant. Two wasteful quarters of astronomy were taught by the semi-notorious J. Allen Hynek, who

widely supported beliefs in UFOs. I passed by intimidating my TA with fake answers to quizzes and exams based on inventing equations derived from high school calculus.

Returning home at end of the first quarter, I was fitted with my first pair of eyeglasses. Two and a half years later, I led my partner Vicki to her first ophthalmologist's examination and prescription for her first eyeglasses, for which I paid.

For my one-year physical education requirement, I took one quarter each of tennis in the fall, handball taught by an ex-football player who body-slammed us around the court in winter, and in the spring horseback riding (for an extra \$25). I was the only male and the tallest in the class. I was assigned the largest horses, although I was probably the least competent rider. Between the two factors, I often either fell off or was gently thrown.

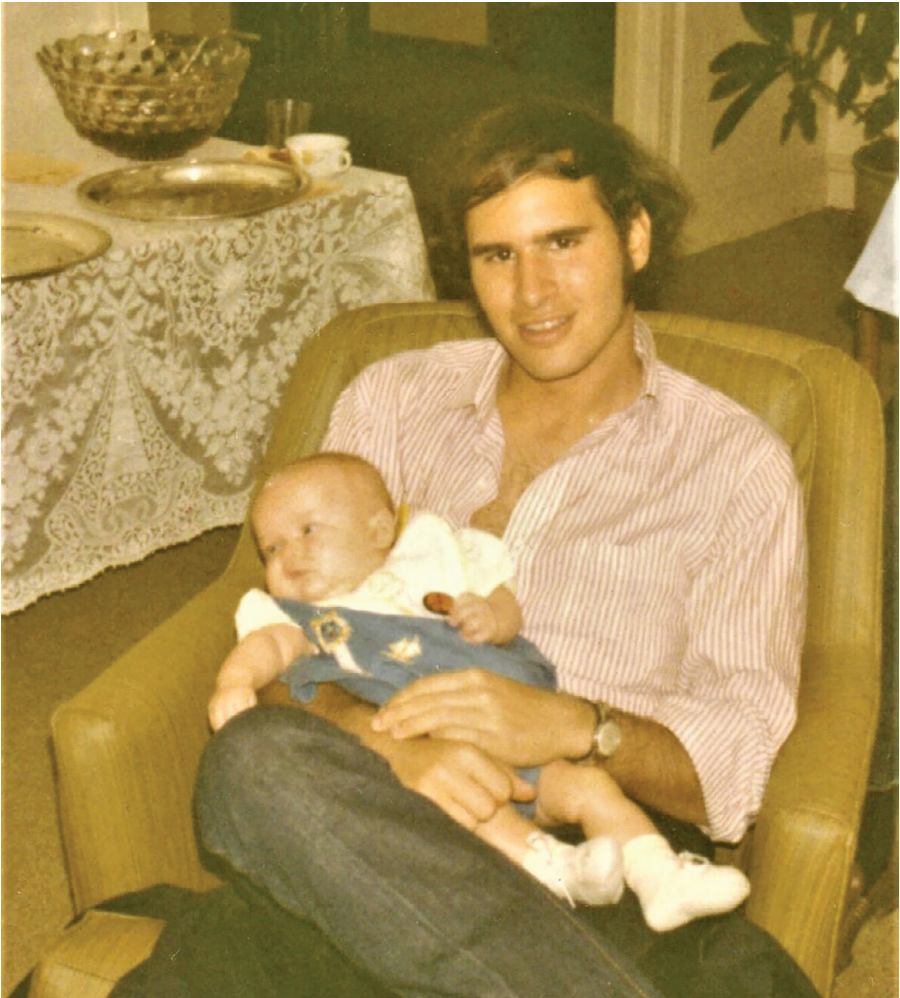
Other, fully or partly elective courses were far more appealing and stimulating. Quite literally, they were formative. Early among them was my future history advisor and second history model Lacey Baldwin Smith's two-quarter British history sequence and former TV quiz show host Bergan Evans' renowned two quarters on western literature. Not a scholar, Evans was an excellent lecturer, always filling the many-hundred-seat Tech Auditorium. This course was neither required for all nor filled with "canonical" works. Other first-year classes included sociology and anthropology courses that were neither memorably good nor bad.

Sometime during my first year, I discovered The Grill—the moderately disreputable food center in the basement of Scott Hall, the old student union in the traditional classroom area. Stopping there to study between classes, I would meet and chat with campus activists and dissidents who contributed to its bad reputation. I had coffee or lunch there rather than trekking back to the Elder Hall cafeteria on north campus. This added to my new rhythms and circles, expanding beyond the first-year dorm and classrooms, adding new readings through these connections. A small chapter in my expanding life with literacy.

From my Bobb Hall presidency from which I supplied SDS with its first mimeograph machine, my developing activism extended to personal associations with the not-well-organized group. Our causes stemmed from the national effort launched in 1962–1963 by Tom Hayden's Port Huron Statement and the Berkeley campus Free Speech Movement to enact university reform and student rights campaigns. These associations provided the grounds for the anti-Vietnam War and peace movements a few years later and led to my marching in Chicago and my service as a Midwest coordinator for MOBE (Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam).

Greater involvement with civil rights campaigns led to membership in Students for SCLC (Southern Christian Leadership Conference) that was spreading from its southern roots, volunteer work in the Black community, and marching in downtown Chicago with Jesse Jackson (both of us so much younger). I was welcomed among the genuinely racially mixed activists of the later 1960s.





*Figure 4.1. Harvey with a classmate's new baby, Northwestern University, 1969.*

Winter and spring 1968 brought more new friends and acquaintances. Some were fellow novice activists and campus radicals in preparation. They often overlapped with the most brilliant students. Two of our leading intellectual lights co-edited two books of essays by nationally recognized New Left scholars before their graduation. One of them, Rod Aya, became an internationally known historian; the other, Norman Miller, a lawyer. With equally engaging peers, we took the same classes including the landmark Vietnam Seminar and the Senior Honors Seminar in history in 1969–1970. A number completed Ph.D. or law degrees.

With other new friends, especially Bill and Marcia, contacts in the residence halls association led to long-lasting connections well into our respective post-graduate studies and sometimes beyond. For a time, I dated a classmate

from the Pittsburgh suburbs whom I had met in high school debate tournaments. After a busy fall and winter quarter, David, Scott (another resident of Bobb Hall's second floor), and I rendezvoused in Cincinnati where David drove us to explore Mammoth Cave in Kentucky. It was eye-opening if dark.

Spring quarter 1968 is forever etched in my mental and visual memory because of the assassinations in April of civil rights crusader Martin Luther King, Jr., and in June of Robert F. Kennedy, younger brother of JFK and candidate for U.S. president. I remember standing with Ed on Northwestern's human-made extension of its campus into Lake Michigan on the day of King's murder. Looking south past downtown, we scanned for signs of a city burning. We spied glimpses of flames miles away.

In the spring I was also engulfed in Eugene McCarthy's progressive, anti-war, Democratic presidential campaign. At that point, he competed against Robert F. Kennedy and Vice President Hubert Humphrey. McCarthy was the most liberal and most appealing to young people (including many activists, like me, still too young to vote).

We cut our unruly, semi-hippie hair and "got clean for Gene." I cleverly led McCarthy to victory in Northwestern's every-four-year mock presidential convention. Close friends and I bused to campaign door-to-door in the farmlands of Indiana and Wisconsin. We were sometimes met by farm owners with shotguns in their hands and sometimes by smiling residents who greeted us with photos of young campaigners like us in *Time* and *Newsweek*.

It was quite a learning trip. Alas, it ended with disappointment and disillusion with Richard Nixon's and Spiro Agnew's defeat of Humphrey and Ed Muskie in November. I sympathized with close friends including a female sociology classmate from the Boston area. My disillusionment and disaffection with formal party politics lasted for years. Ironically, when Vicki and I first voted in a presidential election in 1972 at the U.S. Consulate in Toronto, we cast our "hanging chad" ballots under a formal portrait of sitting President Richard M. Nixon, prior to the Watergate revelations.

~~~

Northwestern's rich campus culture was central to my education. My love of French and Italian films derives from campus film festivals and premieres. Concerts in the old Cahn Auditorium in Scott Hall included not only mediocre, pop boy bands but also Joan Baez, Joni Mitchell, and Laura Nyro. There were productions from the excellent theatre program and many fine lectures and seminars by scholars and political leaders. I remember a small group discussion meeting on gun control with Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana and a session with the then-current British Labor Party leader.

We were encouraged to visit Chicago and acquaint ourselves with its world-class resources and institutions—in addition to civil rights and anti-war marches. Not yet an object of fear and loathing to residents of quiet Evanston, it was a



short, inexpensive subway ride from campus to the downtown Loop. Frequent visits included the grand Art Institute of Chicago, the Field Museum of Natural History, the Shedd Aquarium, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the south side Museum of Science and Industry, as well as movie theaters and performance halls. So much was affordable even to undergraduates on scholarships and loans a half century ago.

We also browsed the outside windows and sometimes inside the grand department stores of the Loop and along Michigan Avenue. The holiday windows were their own attraction. So too were the downtown movie palaces and moderately priced restaurants. The Art Institute and the movie houses were compelling sites for dates in the late 1960s, often followed by walks along Michigan Avenue, Grant Park, and the Lake Michigan shore. Our haunts increasingly included the then-iconic Old Town and Lincoln Park with its petting zoo just north of downtown and Greek Town's appealing ethnic restaurants just west of the Loop. On rarer occasions when someone had a car, we would visit the substantial Brookfield Zoo on the outskirts of the city.

After Vicki and I became inseparable in 1969 and 1970, we visited museums, downtown, and Old Town. And we reveled in concerts in west side Chicago music halls where we heard Ten Years After with guitarist Alvin Lee and blues legends Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf. We also heard Tim Hardin at his prime, the Turtles, the Animals, and various jazz greats.

I returned home to Pittsburgh for the summer of 1968 to spend a second year working in steel production, this time in a different plant that concentrated on fabricating large construction pieces, including sections of bridges and structures. My job was scraping old paint and then repainting large segments with special paints. It was less wear and tear on my young body. It was also a less interactive workforce than the previous summer.

Summer socializing featured time with high school friends Ron, Gail, and David P., who died tragically young. Attending different universities in different cities and towns, during the "summer of love" we shared our experiences, our new discoveries, passions, and dislikes. Given the times, these often focused on current politics. We also reveled in comparing the similarities and differences in our education across history, political science, English education, and pre-med. That was itself a form of learning.

Summer 1968 was a crucial period in American cultural and political history. Wisely or not, my Northwestern friends and I decided that the Woodstock music festival was only a pipe dream. We met instead in Atlantic City for its reputedly "great international" music event. I would be surprised if any reader heard of that tepid festival at the local horserace track.

Wisely, in retrospect, I decided against returning to Chicago for the mass protests at the Democratic presidential nominating convention where Mayor Richard Daley did his best to undermine urban democracy and stoke violence between the Chicago police and the diverse protesters who messily combined political

partisans, anti-war and civil rights activists, hippies, and “Yippies.” I watched the convention, the protests, and the police violence, as well as the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, on national television in my parents’ living room.

Despite the presidential election, fall quarter was relatively quiet. Returning to Evanston in September 1968, David and I settled into a room with a bunk bed in Latham House, a university-owned, independent men’s residence on south campus across from the new administration building and a few doors from a dry cleaner and the iconic deli called The Hut. We made new friends including a future suitemate and engineering major named Jerry from central Illinois.

I also acquired my first pet who extralegally cohabited with us. Never permitted a cat or dog as a child at home, I longed for a small creature to love and to love me. I named the sweet, domestic, orange tabby cat “god” (dog spelled backward—I was 19). Although he loved to rise with the sunlight and greet either sleeping David or me first thing in the morning, he fit well into his limited, illegal state. He delighted in meeting female students and loved licking other people’s ice cream cones or their ice-cream-covered lips.

His veterinarian sent postcards that stated, “your god is due for his distemper shot.” At the end of the academic year, he retired to Ed’s Lombard, Illinois, home where the Catholic family renamed him Tiger. He lived a long, contented life with his new name before cancer took him.

As occupants of a university-owned and -managed student residence, we were required to pay for a university board contract and take our meals at the nearby cafeteria of Willard Hall, a dorm for female first-year students. I was not happy with the arrangement in principle, but I was extremely dissatisfied with the food.

Being an occasionally fearless young radical with grand visions and “ways with words”—to borrow from my future colleague and friend Shirley Brice Heath (1983), I launched with David a food strike in protest. Knowing that the 18-year-old female students were unlikely to acknowledge or support our effort, I created a media event. In advance of the strike, I sent letters to the student-run *Daily Northwestern* announcing the event and to the Dean of Students communicating our demands. The morning broke with a lead story in the paper.

As to participation, the strike was a total bust. Perhaps five male students joined David and me. As a media event, it made me briefly a campus celebrity. Most importantly, the dean immediately freed me from my board contract. Returning my payment, he requested that I never dine in a university residence hall again. I happily agreed. I had won.

~~~

Second-year classes were even more stimulating and satisfying than in my first year. Following Bergan Evans’ introduction to western literature was a compelling, large lecture course on modern European literature in translation taught by two senior German professors, Meno Spann and Erich Heller. The reading was exhilarating, the lectures gripping, the learning expansive and deepening.

At the same time, paralleling the courses in my history major were further courses in my developing sociology minor. In several second-year courses, I read the social science classics from Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels to Emile Durkheim and Max Weber, a smattering of works by members of the Frankfurt School, C. Wright Mills, and more contemporary works such as David Riesman and Christopher Jencks' *The Academic Revolution* (1968). Little did I know how well I was preparing to be a comparative, new social historian on the one hand and a pioneering interpreter of literacy on the other hand.

Among my classes was visiting professor of American history Jesse Lemisch's exciting, state-of-the-art course in new, revisionist, social and cultural U.S. history. Lemisch's research on Revolutionary-era sailors and urban workers was part of an emerging tradition then known as "history from the bottom up." This course introduced us to the then "new social history" that sought novel perspectives, questions, conceptualizations, sources, and methods to develop a much more inclusive history. Various "new histories" within a decade or so for some time substantially remade much of U.S. and in time world history (for more on this topic, see my *Undisciplining Knowledge*, 2015a, and literature cited there; see also Chapter Five and beyond).

In Lemisch's and others' classes, we read and analyzed the seminal works of the first half of the 1960s and earlier as well as their advisors' preparatory scholarship. These included Oscar Handlin's *Boston's Immigrants* (1941) and *The Uprooted* (1951); Bernard Bailyn's *Education in the Forming of American Society* (1960) and *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (1967); and on slavery, Kenneth M. Stampp's (1956) *The Peculiar Institution* and Stanley M. Elkins' (1959) *Slavery*.

The next generation of "new historians" led with Stephan Thernstrom's (1964) pioneering quantitative study of a Massachusetts working class community's social mobility, *Poverty and Progress*, Herbert G. Gutman's (1977a, 1977b) reconstruction of slavery and then labor history (1961, 1974), and Eugene D. Genovese's recreation of "the world the slaves made" (1969, 1974). Later Genovese, Thernstrom, and influential New Leftist historian Christopher Lasch (1965, 1969) turned rightward.

In early modern English history, I read Peter Laslett's (1965/1984) *The World We Have Lost: England Before the Industrial Age* (the third edition published in 1984 discussed my first book *The Literacy Myth*, 1979c, completing a circle). A second-year course on modern French history taught by Robert Bezucha presented important precedents to and influences on the United States' "new social history" in the historiography of France. This list of historiographers began with Marc Bloch, who wrote *The Historian's Craft* (1963). He was followed by Henri Lefebvre, who wrote *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (1971), and also in the 1960s the Annales School flourished under Fernand Braudel, who wrote the three volume *Civilization and Capitalism, 15<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century* (1992), and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, who wrote *Montaillou* (1978).

Concurrently in Lacey Smith's and the new modern English history professor William Heyck's courses, I read the keystones of the dynamic, often but not always Marxist-inflected, histories by Christopher Hill, *The Century of Revolution* (1961) and *The World Turned Upside Down* (1972); E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1964) and "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism" (1967); and Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution* (1962) and *Labouring Men* (1964).

A further mark of this historiographical revolution under way lies in the fact that I first read some of these seminal works in geographic and chronologically defined courses and then again in the two-quarter-long senior honors seminar (and some again in graduate seminars). In that honors seminar, we also read the kindred historical sociology, Barrington Moore's *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy* (1966) and Charles Tilly's early works, such as *The Vendée* (1964). Revealing in retrospect, I reread many of these seminal works under different rubrics in my first two years of graduate school. That is a fundamental lesson in the uses of literacy, to borrow a phrase from the English pioneer of what became cultural studies Richard Hoggart (1957). I encountered Hoggart along with Raymond Williams (1958) when I began to study literacy and its history in 1971–1975.

Equally significant, with a few key exceptions, I was taught by younger professors who were among the first generation of "new historians" and in most cases liberal to moderately left in their orientation. Their fields encompassed U.S., British, European, Latin American, and Asian history and sociology. The joint instructors of the senior honors seminar were an Asianist and a Latin Americanist who had been roommates at Harvard University, Jock McLane and Frank "Pancho" Safford. They focused on new scholarship from the northern and southern hemispheres, respectively.

If my undergraduate historical training had a major limitation, it was the absence of non-western studies. This is at least as much a result of my choices as the discipline's and for far too long the modern American university's shortcomings.

With my major interest in British history, I applied to Queen Mary College, University of London, to study early modern English history for a junior year abroad. I was accepted but was not allowed to use my state of Pennsylvania scholarship funds outside the United States. I then decided to graduate in three years. In retrospect, I have conflicting thoughts about that. On one hand, it was sensible not to spend an additional year taking undergraduate courses. But on the other hand, an additional year of maturity—growing up—would have been a wise choice for my future. So much for historians' hindsight.

~~~

Looking forward, perhaps the most significant moment in my second year at Northwestern takes me back to the Willard Hall cafeteria. Unknown to me, before my food strike, a first-year student from Portland named Esther developed a crush on me. We had barely spoken. After the strike, when I was no longer

present in the dining hall, she worried that I was not eating enough and decided to bring food “care packages” a few times a week to my residence about two blocks from her dorm.

Given the tricky social circumstances, Esther enlisted her close friend Vicki to accompany her. The complication was that I wasn’t attracted to Esther, but Vicki and I had a partial or beginning connection. This led to several casual double dates with my roommate David paired without his consent with Esther. Kitten god liked both of them, indiscriminately licking their ice cream cones or ice cream-covered lips.

By spring Vicki and I were dating casually but not exclusively. I recall some ventures into Chicago and a trip to the then-innovative Brookfield Zoo in a car borrowed from a senior friend. By the end of spring quarter, the relationship was hanging in the air without a clear direction.

For spring break 1969, David and I traveled to the Bahamas for a holiday with the collegiate masses. It wasn’t particularly enjoyable. My major memory involves hitchhiking back to our hotel after dark from another party and discovering the driver’s hand moving up my knee. I asked him to stop the car, and I exited.

Spring quarter marked another pre-professional step. All of my advisor Lacey Baldwin Smith’s doctoral students were abroad doing doctoral dissertation research. This left him without a teaching assistant for his British history survey. He asked me to conduct two discussion sections in exchange for independent study credit. I prepared under his supervision. The sections went well; I enjoyed it. It was my first experience teaching history in a university. It was transformative.

I returned home for the final summer from mid-June to early September 1969. For this season of the first flight to land astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon, I left the steel mills to work in cultivated nature in the Pittsburgh public parks as an assistant supervisor for high school-age, “junior gardeners.” This job was a political appointment via a friend of the family.

Less taxing, more relaxing, healthier, and safer than the mills, it paid a little less. Some of the older workers were friendlier than the teens, who resented their slightly older supervisor at least on some days. My most lasting impression was the respect I felt for the deep wisdom and humanity of an older, not formally educated, Italian American, lifelong park worker named Angie. Through a summer of lunch and work break conversations, he introduced me to what I would later interpret as the limits of formal literacy education and the powers of intelligence. The academy remains resistant to those concepts despite several generations of pioneering scholarship into the strength and depth of oral cultures—and the limits of literacy by itself (see, for example, Nathalie Zemon Davis, 1975, among many others.)

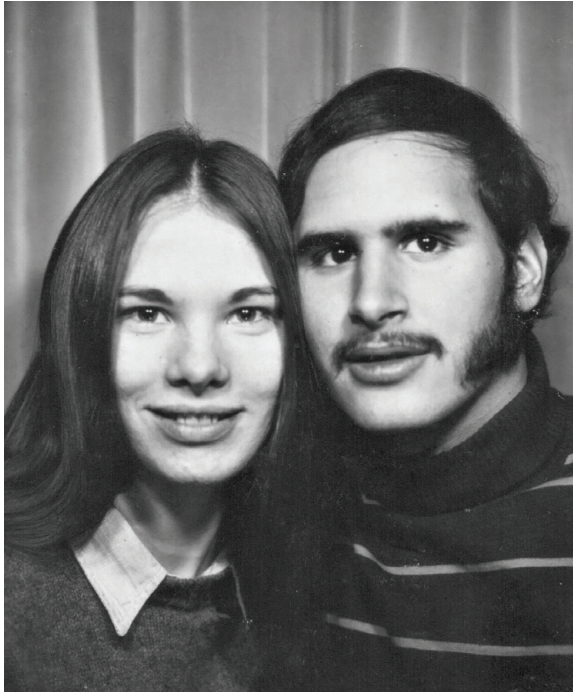
~~~

Vicki went home to work in accounting for Des Moines, Iowa-based Pioneer Hybrid Corn Company for the first half of the summer between her first and second years at Northwestern. Drawing on my social consultant mother’s connections, I

sent flowers for her July 14 Bastille Day birthday through a local florist. She later told me that the flowers immediately led her to question her impression that I was a highly intelligent but overly cynical young man. She now suspected a streak of romanticism.

In late July, I made a preplanned, weeklong trip to Chicago to see Northwestern friends in Evanston. Among other liaisons, I arranged a date with Vicki. She returned to campus for the second half of the summer to continue her work-study job in the psychology department while living at the Evanston YWCA (and learning from her roommates to shoplift without getting caught). We had a fun evening in downtown Chicago. That date and my “romantic streak” created a path that she followed when we returned for the fall 1969 term.

As soon as I returned to Evanston, Vicki met me at my four-person suite in the former married student apartments that were minimally converted into upper-division student housing on south campus with men and women living on alternating floors. She carried a large, stuffed leopard and claimed that I had promised to pay one-half its price. I had no recollection of any such commitment. But it matched my leopard bedspread and pillow. She also had a leopard print jumpsuit, scarf, coat, and hat. I never paid that share. We later bequeathed the leopard to the toddler daughter of one of my University of Texas at San Antonio graduate students.



*Figure 4.2. Harvey and Vicki L. Wells, first photo, Evanston, 1969.*



Vicki was there to stay—for the next 55 years and counting. As we agreed to intercourse, I asked if she had a prescription for oral birth control. She did not. Together we decided that was a mandatory next step, another sign of the changing times. Prescriptions were available through the student health service, a recent innovation.

Vicki joined our suite of four registered, fee-paying male residents including David and Jerry from Latham House, an illegal cat named Penelope (from one of Vicki's summer YWCA roommates), an illegally unboarded kitchenette, and an illegal extension phone in the back bedroom. Although she officially shared a room with another student in a different women's residence, she became an extralegal fifth roommate who shared my single bed and the bathroom. There were occasional tense moments and noisy times, especially with the somewhat troubled fourth legal roommate Winston, but we coped more or less amicably.

Four of the five of us, plus Penelope, often hosted small gatherings and parties. Spread across the beds, desk, table chairs, and the floor, some of the group drank beer, whiskey, or Scotch, others smoked marijuana, and one good friend meditated, all to the latest or classic rock, blues, or folk music. He went on to complete a Ph.D. at Maharishi University. These were intense but not rowdy or loud affairs.



*Figure 4.3. Harvey, Vicki, and kitten Penelope, with Northwestern friends Laurie, David, and Dean, 1969-1970.*

Penelope loved the parties. Not only was she quite sociable, but also she loved to stick her head deeply into glasses of whiskey and lick up the tailings. She even appreciated having pot smoke blown in her face. Alone with Vicki and me studying, she alternately entertained us by doing acrobatic tricks on the rungs of ladder-back chairs or annoyed us by repeatedly retrieving wads of paper we tossed into the wastebasket in that age of pens, pencil, and paper.

On rare occasions, Vicki and I escaped to sleep on the sofa in her work-study boss' office suite. At other times when we needed a respite, we slept in her half-empty dorm room. But the janitorial staff in the women's residence were much more hostile to my presence than the personnel in my building were to Vicki's. Of course, in the late 1960s, university cleaning employees made the men's residence hall beds but not the women's. The sympathetic staff in my building also provided extra clean sheets at the appropriate time of the month. It was quite an adventure, one that neither of us would contemplate repeating.

~~~

Third and final year was intense. I convinced Vicki to major in anthropology, which she loved, as she occasionally contemplated a future career. Her political and cultural radicalization progressed, under my influence and tutelage. She continued to work part-time for the self-promoting psychology professor who imagined himself a one-person educational transformer, leading with widely advertised all-A classes, another sign of the times.

My courses were demanding but stimulating. That fall I participated in the Vietnam Seminar, taught by a young, liberal historian of Japan, John "Jock" McLane. The self-selected seminar members comprised an exceptional and lively intellectual circle. I was not the only future professor. I also recall a first-rate course in German history by Professor James Sheehan, who was soon recruited by Stanford University, and an independent study in social theory with a sociology professor.

The most important activity of that quarter was selecting potential graduate programs in history and making applications. With my intention to concentrate in modern British history, Lacey Smith and I spent hours in his bookshelf-lined, historic Harris Hall office pouring over the printed *American Historical Association Guide to Departments of History*. I was a high- but not the highest-ranking student with strong recommendations.

Together we developed a list of aspirational, selective but possible, and safe programs. They ranged from Harvard, Columbia, and Penn on one end, to SUNY at Stony Brook and UC-Santa Barbara on the other. In the competitive middle were UC-Berkeley, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the University of Toronto.

I also searched for fellowships. Lacey Smith nominated me for a highly unlikely Rhodes Scholarship, which were then all male and all but required athletic distinction. I also applied for a Woodrow Wilson fellowship. Completing applications, drafting self-promoting and aspirational essays, and requesting letters of recommendation occupied much of that quarter.

Several months of waiting, more and less patiently, followed that whirlwind of activity. During winter quarter as a finalist for the Woodrow Wilson fellowship, I traveled to Indianapolis for a personal, grueling interview with a panel of professors, some of them trying to impress each other more than question me. That was another learning experience.

Vicki and I each returned to our families for winter break, having agreed to tell our parents about our attachment and commitment to stay together. My parents were surprised. My father asked if we had to “get married quickly”—in other words, was Vicki pregnant? He was also hesitant because she is not Jewish. My mother asked, “Is it Laurie?”—mistaking a close female friend for my inseparable girlfriend and roommate.

Vicki’s parents were far less open to our connection and contemplation of our future together. Immediately after her brother’s elaborate wedding to his college girlfriend in a small Iowa town, Vicki asked her father if he was ready for another wedding, perhaps the next summer. He responded strongly: definitely not!

Her reactionary, antisemitic father informed her that “Jewish boys only want one thing from Christian girls.” (He had said the same thing when she was in high school about what Black boys want from White girls.) Her parents beseeched her to either break off the relationship or at least temporarily withdraw. Their illogic was that “separation would prove the strength of your love.”

Rendezvousing at O’Hare Airport to spend New Year’s Eve at a still-vacationing friend’s apartment, we compared notes. We quickly dismissed these reactions and further confirmed our commitment by making passionate if uncomfortable love on the living room floor.

During the 1969–1970 school year, Vicki and I began another long-lasting friendship with a women’s independent hall resident and fellow student named Laurie. The friend of Ava Kirschenbaum (now Doppelt), another student from Taylor Allderdice in Pittsburgh, Laurie and I first connected over politics and music. It was a social relationship. As Vicki also established a friendship with Laurie, the three of us often cooked dinner together in the dormitory’s student kitchen. We also often ate out together. We remain in contact with Ava and her husband Art Doppelt, fellow Northwestern history graduate, who live in Florida.

On more than one occasion, another resident stole our uncooked food from its containers. We responded by purchasing a lockbox, but first baked brownies laced with chocolate Ex-Lax in each portion. The culprit stole those brownies but took nothing after that.

Laurie, Vicki, and I formed a close, collegial, and generational relationship. One year my junior and Vicki’s age, Laurie grew up on Long Island in a family of furriers. Among her unique possessions was a rabbit fur coat resplendently dyed to resemble a watercolor painting. Often joined by her high school friend Dean, a student at a Wisconsin liberal arts college, we smoked pot while listening to contemporary music. We also drafted “the great American novel.” Laurie came across the manuscript five years later and entrusted it to us. It was buried for years in my

Northwestern files. I found it recently when cleaning out that file cabinet. Let's just say it was far from "great"! Laurie became a public defense attorney practicing in Peoria, Illinois; we later learned that she died tragically young.

Much like fall 1969, winter quarter 1970 was consuming. It included my bout of mononucleosis. The two-quarter-long, senior honors seminar in history dominated my schedule while I waited to hear from graduate programs. Its first half focused on reading 20<sup>th</sup>-century historiographical classics (like those listed previously) and, in consultation with our subject area advisors, defining our honors thesis topics, questions, sources, and approaches.

For me, this meant instructive, encouraging sessions with new modern English historian Bill Heyck. My interests and his guidance settled on "the anti-socialist response to the first Labour Party government in Britain, 1924" as the subject of my thesis. That led to seemingly endless hours in the lower level of the old, about-to-be-vacated Deering Library reading both microfilms and decaying print copies of *The Times* of London, parliamentary papers, and especially political cartoons in the weekly magazine *Punch*, one of the innovations of my approach. Unknown to me, I was learning to use my literacy to read and interpret graphic expressions long before that became a scholarly fad and then an established subject across disciplines.

For spring break, Vicki accompanied me to Pittsburgh to meet my family for the first time. We followed this with a brief trip to New York City (using a free pass on a Greyhound bus). This was her first venture east of Chicago, first sight of the formation of the Ohio River at Pittsburgh's Point, and first views of the Atlantic Ocean and the Big Apple.

Despite their reservations about Vicki being Presbyterian, for my parents, it was all but love at first sight. One of them remarked, perhaps in jest or not, that she was a much nicer person than their eldest son! Young Gary jumped at the chance to have a big sister. Grandmother and Uncle Sonny and his young family joined in. Vicki immediately fell in love with Pittsburgh's defining hills and older neighborhoods, although never with driving across them.

In New York, we stayed in the apartment of our good friends from Northwestern Bill and Marcia. Slightly older, Bill was in Columbia Law School while Marcia pursued graduate work in African studies. We gleefully roamed about the city. Surprisingly, Bill and Marcia's small apartment on the Upper West Side contained an old rocking chair which barely fit the space. They offered it to us because a mutual friend was driving back to Chicago from NYC and had room to transport it. That chair accompanied us from Evanston to Toronto, Dallas, San Antonio, and Columbus. Today it sits happily in a corner of our master bedroom holding clean pants and shorts (see Illustration 13).

We returned to Evanston for our final quarter at NU before my graduation and Vicki's completion of one-half of her bachelor's degree. During the early spring, Vicki's parents visited Chicago and met me. As we anticipated, it did not go well. Vicki's more accepting mother said little. But her father's hostility, even

fear, was transparent. Jewish, intellectual, left-leaning politically, with longish hair, a mustache, and bell-bottom trousers, I represented all that was wrong with America (pronounced Amurika).

Those sentiments receded only slightly over the decades. Her father Keith's antisemitism made no rational sense; he was among the first U.S. troops to enter German concentration and extermination camps including Dachau. Such is the power of origins, religious culture, ignorance, and fears of difference.

More generally, it was a great time of anticipation and life-phase-defining plans. On one hand, I labored successfully with my honors thesis, renting a state-of-the-art IBM Selectric typewriter on which we took turns typing the final draft. In those years, I drafted long-hand on yellow legal pads and revised on the typewriter. By my second year in graduate school, I transitioned to drafting on our portable electric typewriter. Personal computers were almost two decades in the future.

The honors thesis draft was accepted without reservations or much revision. That was quite satisfying. On the other hand, future-shaping news came in bits and pieces. I was awarded a Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship that paid most expenses for the first year of graduate school. I was elected to Phi Beta Kappa, the national academic honorary society, and I received word that I would graduate with high honors in history.

The final decision was most crucial: graduate school and financial support. The acceptances came in as expected; the significant differences were the offers of support. A few of the middle- and lower-ranking programs offered teaching assistantships in lieu of fellowships. My advisors and my own instincts deemed this a treacherous course for beginning graduate work.

I faced another large decision. The year was 1970; I was about to turn 21. The Vietnam War was far from over. The military draft for young men actively continued. My draft lottery number was 103, not a safe space.

The sum total of factors led Vicki and me to select the graduate program in history at the University of Toronto in Canada as the best option. It had a first-rate history department with well-known, modern British scholars of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and deep strengths in European history. I was not yet a draft dodger or deserter, but we decided, with my family's concurrence, to take preemptive action. Vicki would complete her bachelor's degree, working part-time as she had at Northwestern, and we would then decide on her next steps in Toronto.

Those factors came to a crescendo in May and June of 1970. Following the May 4 National Guard killing of four student protesters and wounding of nine others at Kent State University in Ohio, like a great many other campuses, Northwestern exploded. U.S. aerial bombings in Cambodia were revealed a few days earlier. We were active along with many other NU students in blocking Sheridan Road, ripping up the pavement to isolate the campus temporarily from the outside world.

Despite the objection of Republican-leaning business students and some fraternity members, the student body supported a strike against the university and

a cessation of classes for more than a week. During that time, all but a tiny number of professors avoided their offices in support of the students. I was active on the history department faculty-student reforms committee that developed. When classes resumed, the university gave all students the option of taking a “T” for the quarter instead of a letter grade.

~ ~ ~

Family resistance led us to postpone marriage for another year and to continue, as was becoming increasingly common, cohabitation. I attended my graduation in Northwestern’s basketball arena in part because my parents, 7-year-old brother, and grandmother drove to Evanston to attend and to take us out to celebrate. Many graduates, including me, taped peace symbols to the tops of our caps. It was a happy, satisfying weekend. Everyone was proud of and happy for their son, brother, grandson, and partner.

The final two months in Evanston encapsulated the past and the future. We moved from our campus residences to the third story of a lovely old house in the middle of an older section of town. The rental apartment was furnished. On the first floor lived a slightly older couple—a lawyer with Northwestern University Law School, his artist wife, and the first of their two children. We immediately became friends. We remain in touch with John and Dianne Shullenberger more than 50 years later and have several of Dianne’s art works on the walls of our house.

Vicki continued to work as a research assistant in the psychology department. I embarked on another new summer career. With no other option for summer-long paid work, I applied for a commercial driver’s license and drove an Evanston Red Top taxi from mid-June through mid-August.

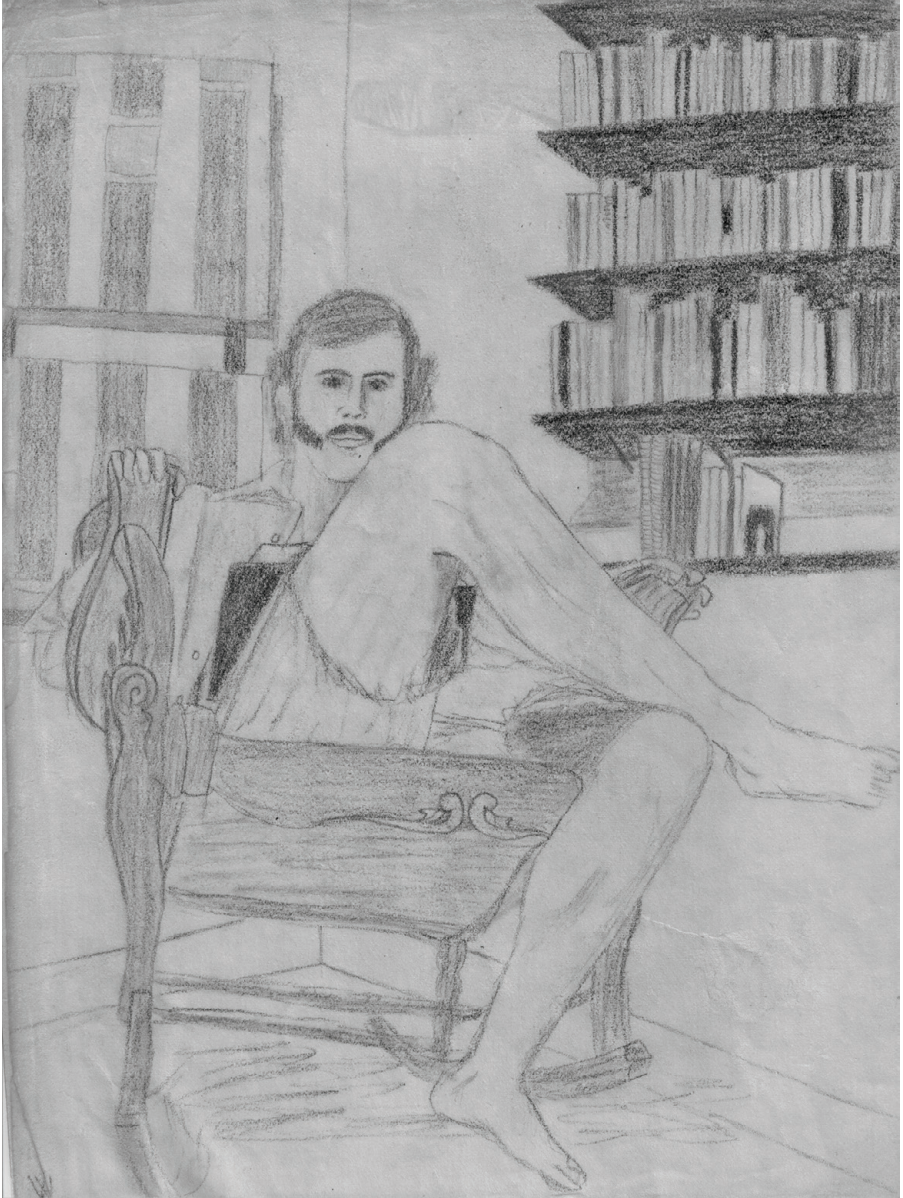
Less physically taxing than steel mills or parks, it was a miserable job. Drivers had to pay far too much of our receipts to the company for overpriced gasoline in exchange for the use of the vehicle. To my surprise, many passengers either did not tip or tipped poorly, worsening the problem of low take-home pay. I began to remind passengers that tipping was customary and expected.

I learned experientially that a taxi could intimidate most other vehicles with the major exception of Chicago city buses and that there were more crazy drivers on the roads than I imagined. A final learning experience: I wrote a short exposé article titled, “To drive a cab.” I sent it to *The New Republic* and quickly received my first of many formal rejection letters.

In July we flew to Toronto for a few days to begin searching for prospective places to live near the university. Staying with friends of friends, we delighted in the haunts of our impending home. We spent a few memorable hours attending a University of Toronto Varsity Blues football game. Not only was the quarterback not much taller than I was, but the game bore minimal resemblance to games played in major American college football conferences like the Big Ten, where Northwestern occupied the lower rungs except in tennis and golf.



We excitedly returned for our final weeks in Evanston. Renting a U-Haul van to carry our few belongings, we drove to Toronto in the latter part of August, completing a formative phase of our lives and beginning the next with great expectations.



*Figure 4.4. Harvey in rocking chair in Evanston apartment, July 1970, sketched by Vicki.*