Memories of the 1930s

George and the Student Court (1933)

It has been told that one day, in the spring of 1933, the student court was convened to hear the case of “George,” the Senior Stick, who had been accused of taking a girl for a walk along the riverbank during study period.

Given George’s character, this was a most unlikely event. Nevertheless, witnesses came forth who claimed to have seen the couple. George denied the charge vigorously. However, to George’s surprise and horror, his shoes were brought forth as evidence. The shoes, which George always kept shined and clean, were covered with mud.

After more evidence and more denials, George was found guilty. But instead of the sentence he had been expecting, the Judge presented him with a special award for his outstanding service to the student body as a Senior Stick.

Quotable Quotes (1934 - 1937)

“The problem respecting the transportation of students to and from Fort Garry is closely related to the operation of the Residence. The better the transportation system in the day-time becomes, the fewer students are attracted to the Residence. It is believed that an improved street car service at night to and from Fort Garry would increase the number of boarders in the Residence, for the students could then have the advantages of an ordered communal life and better opportunity to go to town in the evenings to visit friends, [and] to attend student functions, concerts, shows and parties.” Report of the President, 1934-1935.

“One gratifying fact is that those who went out of the Residence in search of greater freedom or proximity to friends in town, or better meals, were for the most part back again within a month, having apparently found things no better elsewhere.” Report of the Dean of Women, 1935-1936.
“During the year the Residence unfortunately received some adverse publicity in the matter of meals served in the dining room. Protests against the usual institutional sequence of meals and against several specific dishes were taken up by one of the local newspapers. . . . I wish to point out that this feature of the Residence is the one which has been responsible for most of the difficulties and complaints in residence life over the past few years.” Report of the Dean of Men’s Residence, 1936-1937.

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Brown and Gold Theme Song (1939)

We are proud to boast of Manitoba “U.”
To her teaching we shall never be untrue.
Stand up then and cheer her!
We hold nothing dearer.
To the world proclaim our faith in her now renew!
Years ago she struggled thru’ Adversity,
Now she lives in peace and liberty …
We are proud to honor and defend her all the while.
So on to victory…
On, Manitoba, Glory now unfold …
On, Manitoba, Shine forth, Brown and Gold …
Forward toward success, wisdom, happiness.
We line up behind her, ’tis a picture to behold.
Cheer for Manitoba “U,” …
I-ji-it-ti-ki ki-yi-yip rip rip rip

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Up a tree looking for the fellas! Come on guys, where are you?

The Manitoba Agricultural College campus, with the Residence seen in the distance.
Long Fishing Poles and Hooks (1939)

In September 1939, I returned to Manitoba after 10 years of schooling in England and entered first year in the Faculty of Agriculture. I had an English accent then and was quite an “odd ball” by Canadian standards. That first winter I used to run around the campus with just a suit jacket—no cap or mitts or other winter attire. “There’s the English kid with no warm winter clothes.”

Mr. Jack Hoogstraten was the Dean of Men in the west side of the Manitoba Union. The ladies were accommodated in the east side and the Dining Room in the centre with a Dean of Women in charge. I was first given a room on the Second Floor with a fellow from Portage la Prairie. Finding this too noisy, I was moved to the end of the downstairs of the west wing, where several single male profs were located. My roommate was [AG] from Morden.

Like other students, my roommate and I were occasionally subject to the frivolity of male students, like having an egg cup on the end of a long string knocking on our window from above. Other students left their rooms and returned to have bowls of water falling from the tops of their doors and soaking them. Female students frequently found their newly-laundered underclothes hanging out of their windows to dry being purloined by boisterous males with long fishing poles and hooks. We made our own beds and tidied our rooms. The furniture for each student consisted of a bed and mattress, a study table and chair, and a chest of drawers.

As new students, socials were regularly arranged to meet and mingle in the common room [West Lounge] next to the Dining Room. In my shyness, I sampled these events sparingly. Daily, male and female students were mixed in groups of eight at the dining tables. Senior students, Dean of Women, and Mr. Hoogstraten were seated at the head table, where grace was said and important announcements were made. What a contrast to my previous school where sexes were segregated and we were kept in line by the watchful eye of the matron. To my surprise I found fellow classmates serving at our tables to reduce the cost of their room and board.

If I recall correctly, male students came and went as they wished as long as they were back at 11 pm. Women were only allowed out on passes from the Dean of Women.

The Manitoba Union and the other University buildings were very much out in the country, south of the village of Fort Garry and of Winnipeg proper. It took about 45 minutes by streetcar to get into Winnipeg, and 30 minutes to walk to Jack’s Corner where the road off the highway to the US border came to the University.

With spring term completed, Professors Wood and Cavers from the Animal Science Department visited me and offered me a summer job in the Poultry Science Department with pay of $50 a month. Fortunately, I was able to stay at the Manitoba Union and get my meals there too. The demands of the job were not too arduous, and I entered into a life-long friendship with Len Shebeski, who later became Dean of Agriculture at the University of Manitoba. Before breakfast we enthusiastically engaged in games of tennis and had to be called into the Practice House because, in our enthusiasm, we were disturbing the sleeping students and the baby [Editor’s note: the “baby” was a small child who served as a live model for the Home Economics home care and child management course].

My year at the Manitoba Union adequately fulfilled my residence requirements at the University of Manitoba during 1939-1940. I would gladly have continued to live there, but Canada’s World War II effort required its use for the housing of military personnel by the 1940-41 terms.

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The road on the east side of the Administration Building facing south towards the Manitoba Union Building. The Science Building (Buller) is to the right.