

Conference Presentation Report: Why Catalina de Lizana Matters

Who was Catalina de Lizana and why did she craft a probanza, or proof-of-merit petition? In October 2025, I answered these questions about Catalina's incredible life through a conference paper I presented at the American Society for Ethnohistory annual meeting. Taking place in San Antonio, Texas (also known as Yanaguana, or "Land of the Spirit Waters," to the Payaya, who are part of the Tāp Pīlam Coahuiltecan Nation), I joined dozens of scholars who gathered from around the world to present and discuss research on the history and lived experiences of Indigenous peoples in the Western Hemisphere and beyond. The purpose of my panel, titled "Landscapes of War, Knowledge, and Extermination in the Isthmo-Colombian Corridor," was to provide a space where myself, Dr. Samantha Billing (University of Louisiana at Lafayette), Dr. Robert Schwaller (University of Kansas), and audience members could discuss current research being done in this oft overlooked area of the Spanish Empire. In our papers, we highlighted the many ways that Indigenous, African, and mixed-race peoples influenced Spanish colonialism in this geographic corridor, with the hope that our papers will spark further research into its unique, historical evolution.



Featured Professor

Professor Katherine Godfrey joined the History Department in Fall 2025. She teaches courses on Latin American history and is committed to introducing students to Indigenous language texts and perspectives of Spain's invasion of the Americas.



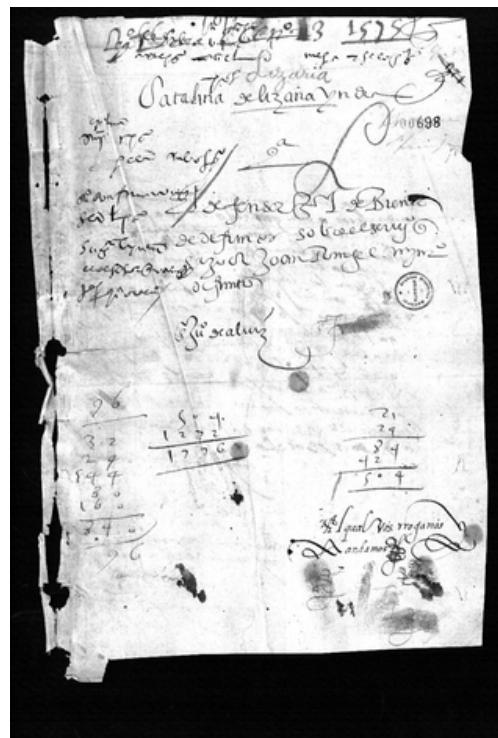
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[HTTPS://WWW.UFV.CA/HISTORY/](https://www.ufv.ca/history/)

Faculty Feature

Born sometime in the early 16th century, Catalina de Lizana, an Indigenous woman who hailed from present-day Colombia, composed a proof-of-merit petition to document the critical roles she played as a merchant, interpreter, and political ally during Spain's invasion of the Northern Andes. She expected recompense for her decades of labor in which she personally assisted two Spanish soldiers, the first with whom she mothered a child. Spanish magistrates acknowledged Catalina's efforts and followed through with partial payment that she requested, which reveals one of the many thousands of negotiations that Europeans made with Indigenous peoples in this region of South America. After all, Catalina, with her own two horses (which would have been very expensive to purchase and maintain in the early 16th century!), not only allowed Spanish soldiers to use and benefit from them, but she also served as a translator, invested money into businesses enterprises, and profited off of trading European imported clothing, wine, and livestock. In other words, she was the glue that held trading networks and peoples together in what was then called the New Kingdom of Granada.

As a historian, it is frustrating to see Catalina's knowledge and labor devalued in the manuscripts I read. However, what does give me hope when reading her case is that I can show specialists and students alike (as those who enrolled in my History 458 "History of Indigenous peoples in Latin America" course witnessed this semester—hey y'all!) that narratives of Spain's so-called "conquest" of the Americas, where Spanish men were purportedly the sole architects of a great and vast empire, are just false. In addition to their own communities and obligations, Catalina de Lizana and thousands of other Indigenous women like her kept the empire intact. To be able to bring Catalina's story to life again is both a gift and a personal duty, and to do so in spaces like the American Society for Ethnohistory annual meeting and in the classroom is something I plan to keep doing as I continue my career in UFV's History Department. Moreover, students that are interested in learning how to read Spanish paleography to uncover more stories like Catalina's are always welcome to contact me, as I am happy to assist in training you!



Above: An example of the paleography (or old writing) I work with as shown in the first folio in Catalina's case, which is housed in Colombia's national archives (Archivo General de la Nación).



Above: Running into my colleague Joshua Anthony (Rutgers University), a Nahuatl specialist and historian of early colonial Mexico.

Alumni Highlights

From Certainty to Courage: What Graduation Taught Me About Risk

By Clare Vike

After spending close to four years studying at UFV, graduating was both exciting and absolutely terrifying. After graduating from Robert Bateman Secondary in 2021, I went straight into my undergrad at UFV in September of the same year. Unlike most of my peers, I had no worry or concern once I graduated highschool, as I had already gotten into UFV and was completely secure in my decision to pursue a degree in History. The transition from highschool to university was a comfort to me more then anything.



My first year at UFV went as smoothly as I could imagine. I felt confident in my decisions and enjoyed the coursework. For a majority of the next three years, I would continue to take a busy course load during all three semesters. So you can imagine the fear I was experiencing at knowing that this would be coming to an end very shortly. I have always been someone who needs a concrete routine and a plan for the future. A back up for the back up. All of a sudden, the day that seemed so far away at first was now approaching faster then I could stomach. For probably the first time in my life, I had no plan, no anchor to hold me down. It was as exhilarating as it was frightening.



Alumni Highlights

I had a few ideas about what I wanted to do. I was sure I wanted to do a Masters, but I was undecided on what exactly I wanted to do it in. While I graduated with a BA in History and Geography, I was worried about what the workload would be like if I were to pursue a Masters in history. For a little while I thought I would do a Masters in Archival and Library Sciences, as that would be something that would set me on a safe path for a future career. During the long summer months after graduation, I started to fill out some of the applications. But I didn't feel as thrilled by the idea of archival sciences as I had been about my undergrad in history. I found myself questioning whether I would be happy taking the safe path, if a life in the archives was something I felt would exhilarate me the same way writing papers and doing presentations had. Deep down I knew the answer was no, but I was afraid to reach for what I truly wanted and fail.

I looked back on what I had achieved during my undergrad, which included studying abroad in Poland and taking part of a study tour in Europe by the Canadian Battlefield Foundation. Both of those things had also seemed difficult and barely achievable, but I had done it anyways. It was during the study tour this last summer that I started to realize that it wasn't just luck that had gotten me these opportunities, but hard work. I had worked through months of the visa application process for Poland and flew to a different country without even knowing exactly where I would live. While luck probably played a small part, I succeeded in these endeavors because I was capable of doing it. While a Masters in History is going to be much more challenging for me then something safer, I now know that I am capable of doing things that intimidate me.

Now, seven months since graduation, I have been working, but focused on my application for a master's in History. While I am still afraid about what the future may hold, I am much more confident in myself and my abilities since the beginning of my undergrad. Much of which I can attribute to the support and encouragement I have received from the UFV History Department and students. I will definitely miss the atmosphere here at UFV, but I am delighted at the idea of pursuing my passion in history, wherever that may take me.



Above: Clare on the Battlefield Study Tour, Summer 2025.

Student Highlights

By Hunter Gauthier & Sophie Jones

Archiving the Alarm: Student Journeys into Abbotsford's First Responder History

In May 2025, Sophie Jones and I (Hunter Gauthier) decided to do practicums. Initially we had each applied to other options, however, we were asked by our coordinator if we would be interested in a new project that just became available to history students. The overall project was a comprehensive document detailing the history of the Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service (AFRS). The intention was that it would be used as a training manual for future members to learn about the past. It was run by Adam Campbell from the AFRS and Kris Foulds from The Reach. Throughout this project Sophie and I were to work with archives to collect newspaper clippings, photos, names and dates from a variety of sources that would contribute to the document. We archived information dating back to 1910 until the present. Further into the project we expanded our scope to include the Abbotsford Police, Abbotsford Airport, Central Fraser Valley Search and Rescue, Matsqui Institution and BC Ambulance Services. When the project began it was only a 25 page document, as we complete our second semester practicum it is now closing in on 400 pages in book format.



Going into this project I did not know what to expect, the guidelines were vague and we did not have a lot of oversight. At the start there were a lot of bumps but I started to throw myself into the information I was archiving. Apart from the mass amount of archiving experience, I was able to work on communication, teamwork and professionalism, as well as leadership. Each of these were hard lessons with a project this big, especially being a main contributor meant that I couldn't sit back and let someone else take lead. At the beginning it was easier to separate the tasks, moving deeper into the project Sophie and I began to focus into our areas. I primarily worked on the Police, Search and Rescue and Ambulance services along with the newspaper archives from 2000-2025. As I crossed off topics and research areas I always seemed to find another, eventually realizing that there are so many small and unique aspects of the AFRS. My best experience was ability when working with employee records, Sophie and I utilized social media and city hall allowing us new avenues. I am extremely proud of myself and the team I worked with in creating this. I grew up in a family deeply involved as first responders and this was an amazing opportunity to look into them and the aspects of their jobs. ~ Hunter Gauthier

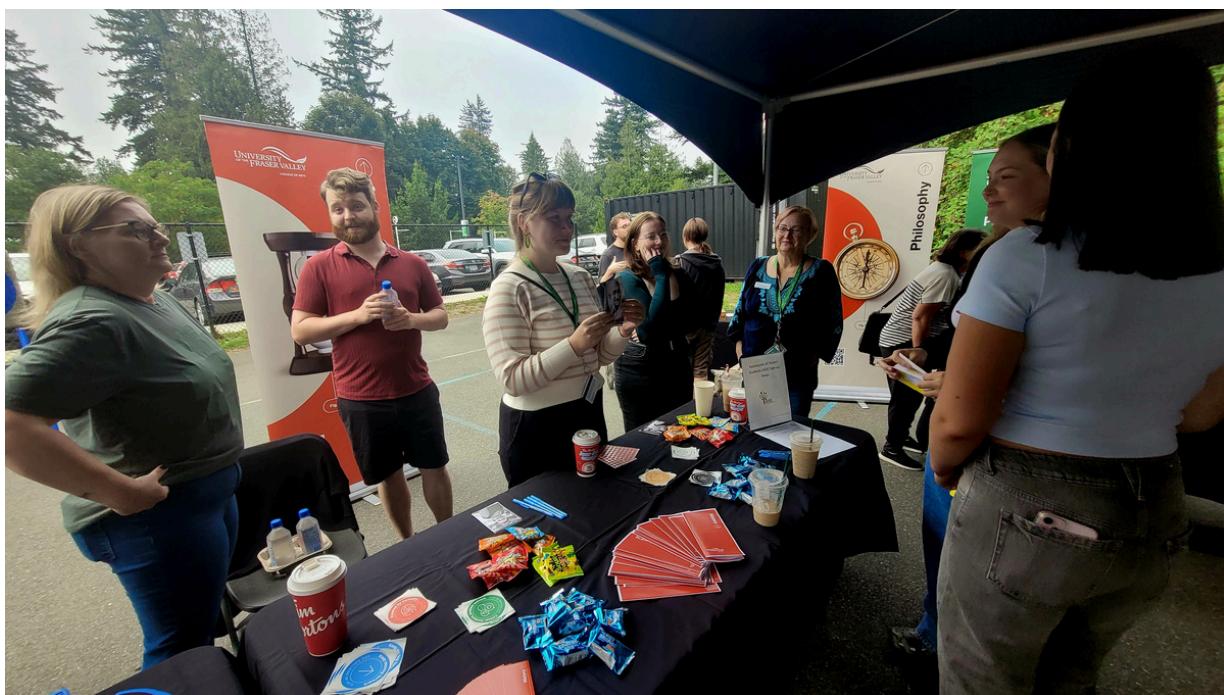
Student Highlights

Our practicum with The Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service (AFRS) was a wonderful experience where I was given the chance to grow as a history student and a member of the UFV community. When doing a project of this scale, the research tends to look a bit different than in the standard classroom environment. I started with broad research on any information I was able to obtain on the AFRS, and then I narrowed down to more specific topics, specifically the Abbotsford Airport Fire Department and the Matsqui Prison Riot of 1981. Unlike researching for a paper, I could not give up on the search for information when it was difficult since it was all critical to having a fully-fledged history of the AFRS. This practicum taught me a new level of academic resilience fueled by the need to follow through with my commitment to the project.

Although I do not live in Abbotsford, I felt the need to persevere as I made a promise to try my best to aid in the recovery of previously lost local history. I am incredibly proud of the work put in by Adam, Kris, Hunter, and myself. I am very thankful that I was granted this opportunity to work on a project bigger than myself for the community of Abbotsford!

~ Sophie Jones

Tl'etl'axel / Student Welcome Back September 2025



Retired Faculty Reflections

Prof. Emeritus Chris Leach



Q: When did you start teaching at UFV?

- So I started in 1993 with Robin Anderson, as I'm sure he's mentioned [see interview from the Winter 2025 term]. So yeah, a good number of years ago. And of course, strictly speaking, I'm still here as a sessional. It's come full circle.

Q: What drew you to the discipline in the first place?

- The answer to that is quite simple, at least at the front end. And it certainly was my father. My dad was really quite a remarkable fellow. I mean, super bright. Always had a passion for history. And he was also very conscious of the history around him. And I think he imparted that to the family and certainly to me. My parents were new Canadians and my mom in Germany and lived through the wars. They were old enough to be children during the war. And... awareness, obviously, that something very, very big was happening around them. And again, my father had been already sort of developing an interest that would carry him through literally to his dying day.

I love telling this story because I think it's quite remarkable. At 16... this was just after the war, he and a close friend of his who had scrapbooked through the war, still have the scrapbooks, news clippings and all that... They had found out that a very high-ranking German general was in prison in Britain. And they wrote a letter, which I have still. And my dad had wonderful handwriting, beautiful handwriting. And he drew a map with the arrows of the army groups and everything. Again, this is a 16 year-old kid. And he sent this letter to this German General. It was Von Manstein. And he replied to the questions that they asked. And... he annotated the map that my father had drawn.

I should point out that the British police actually knocked on the door wondering who this Barry Leach was who had written to this incarcerated German general. So, as I say, it's a lovely story and I think it had a really big impact on certainly my father's life. He became a soldier and had a career in the British Army. He retired from that early, of course, and then my parents came to Canada, and he was the first PhD at UBC.

That sort of legacy of interest in history, military history, is certainly profound. And as I say our family trips, everything was revolving around his research and his interest in history generally. We did a lot of traveling, and I think that actually encouraged an interest in history as well. From an early age, I picked up on the military aspects and collected toy soldiers

****This oral history interview transcript, completed with Prof. Ian Rocksborough-Smith in September 2023, is excerpted from a longer interview.***

Retired Faculty Reflections Cont'd

and played military games and watched movies. This has continued in my life, actually.... I still continue to collect my soldiers [laughter]. I actually write games, historical games.

All of those things, I think, really kind of dovetail to make me interested in history and pursue it... It was like the family business, basically...

Q: What brought you to UFV?

- I got my master's degree. Actually, first I got a degree in history, French, and political science at SFU with the intention actually not of teaching or pursuing scholarship, but in fact to become a diplomat. Life often happens. My girlfriend, who would become my wife, she got the time wrong for the foreign service exam. And my life literally changed from that moment.

So I decided, okay, well, I'll get a teacher's certificate. I was a Teacher on Call and realized, look, there's not many jobs, so I'm just going to go back and get my master's degree in history. That was probably the best educational experience I'd ever had. It really opened my eyes up to the possibilities of teaching post-secondary level.

At that time, with a master's degree, you could still actually get sessional work. So I just applied everywhere. I think I worked at every institution in the Lower Mainland for a while, but UFV [or UCFV as it was called] was the first institution that offered me work. So it's kind of like you gave me that first start, basically.

Yeah, the timing of my arrival and Robin's arrival was really fortuitous. The institution was small. The department was very small at that time. Even though we were sessional instructors, you really felt like you could make a difference in the department. Quite quickly there was the opportunity to influence the shape of the program, develop new courses. We were able to influence the shape of the department on some level. For myself, what was really exciting was, again, with my interest in military history particularly. Bob Smith had interest in the Second World War. And so he started preparing a Second World War course. I was all over the idea of military history being offered.

They gave me the opportunity to teach some general military history courses at the third year level. This was incredibly exciting. I developed a bunch of courses. Ultimately, there were like five military history courses that I developed, several of which came about while I was still just a sessional.

It's nice to see that military history is still present in the program. Seb [Prof. Sebastian Huebel] is obviously teaching a couple of my old courses. Scott Sheffield was hired, in part for his ability to teach Canadian military history as well. To see that developed and remain is really quite special.

It wasn't just the department that was very supportive. At that time, the administration was a lot smaller. It was very personal. There was tremendous support for faculty. As UCFV headed towards becoming a university I felt that I needed to get my doctorate. Once again, not only was the department but also the administration really supportive of that. I don't think I could have pursued those studies without that support. UFV really manifested the importance of collegiality.

If you do a series of these interviews, I'd be surprised if not everybody doesn't mention the fact that you only have to look at senior administration to realize what impact the history department has had. History department faculty have ended up in all the key administrative roles. Eric Davis comes to mind as vice president.

Going right back to the beginning of the institution, Jack Gaston was hired literally when Fraser Valley College was first started. He had a doctorate, which was unusual for the hires back in the 70s. He had a real ambition to provide a scholarly education. That ambition carried forward into the University College years.

The fact that we bridged those two realms served the students really well. Jack was instrumental in seeing us become a university. I think that leadership has come a great deal from the department, going right back to the 70s. We became one of the biggest departments for a time with 13 members in the heyday. It became too big, of course, when things settled. Now it's eight or nine. We still have some very valuable sessionals.

Retired Faculty Reflections Cont'd

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I think the way that we have supported our students has been really important. The creation of AHS [Association of History Students] and our relationship with that student association is valuable. Our relationship with the [UFV] teaching program was strengthened, particularly through Robin's work. The honours program was something I was very pleased we got in place.

I think the department was right there or ahead of the curve on Indigenization. The development of Stôlô and Indigenous history courses, hiring Gwen Point, getting Sonny McKelsey as an adjunct prof, Winona Victor—these were all valuable steps forward.

Robin also mentioned going out into the schools and engaging public educators. We went out and represented the department and UCFV in the school system. Gave presentations, guest lectures, and outreach... The Historica competition was another avenue.

An undergraduate degree from a university of our size provides opportunities that larger institutions can't provide. It comes back to small class sizes and communities of learning...

Q: What will you remember most about your career?

- I valued the people I interacted with. The support, enthusiasm, engagement from faculty, staff, administrators. Those relationships supported me when things got complicated in my personal life. Fellow faculty covering classes, supporting research leaves, helping me do my PhD while working full-time.

By and large, I think we've been a pretty happy family. That's something I will really hold near and dear. And of course, the students. University has to be a transformative experience. To see students take what we've done and use it to transform their lives is the most important thing.

I remember a student named Andrew. He wanted certainty. Over time he accepted that history doesn't give easy answers. He became a history student. He ended up teaching English overseas, traveling widely. To see that change was incredibly gratifying.

Taking students to the "Shifting Tides" conference was another highlight. Seeing students present admirable work was exciting. For me it all revolves around the connections—professional, personal... We are in the humanities. It's a human thing we're doing here.

Even now, every time I walk through the door, there is excitement. I miss it. The students always stay the same age. I see hard-working young people navigating an ever more complicated world. We learn a lot from our students.

There are lots of individual students. Some go into graduate programs or teaching. Others do very different things. One student, Tyler, said his history writing skills made a huge difference in his pipefitting work. That always stayed with me.

Events like what to do with a history degree matter because it's not always transparent what you can do with a history degree. But the broader skill set helps students navigate whatever they do.

At the end of the day, it's satisfaction that we've done something meaningful, and that students seem to respond to that.

Q: I need to congratulate you on a great career.

-Yeah, it's my pleasure. I think it's a wonderful idea to have a record of these past experiences. It will be interesting to see where the institution goes.

Grad and Honours May/June 2025



SIXTH ANNUAL HISTORY HONOURS STUDENT CONFERENCE

THURSDAY, MAY 22ND, 2025
2:00-4:00PM
UFV ABBOTSFORD CAMPUS
BUILDING K, ROOM K180

Student Panelists:

Brad Duncan
Grace Pope
Maggie Meyers

Space is limited, email historyinfo@ufv.ca to reserve your seat.

Light refreshments.



The UFV History Department hosted its annual majors, awards, and graduating students celebrations May 22, 2025 in K building. The honours presentations were fantastic and there was great discussion afterwards. MAGS represented many years of hard work and research by graduating students and presenters.

Visiting Scholar, Summer 2025



Prof. Christopher Hyland introduces Dr. Jonathan Anuik, whose Spring 2025 research talk examined how teaching residential school history intersects with social media, showing how classroom incivility can go viral, extend online, and reshape pedagogical responsibilities and responses for educators.



Visiting Scholar Talk

“Classroom Incivility Going Viral on Social Media: One Professor’s Encounters”

Dr. Jonathan Anuik, Associate Professor of Educational Policy Studies, University of Alberta

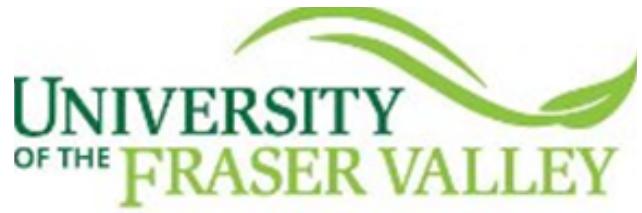
May 15, 2025
1:00-2:30pm
Abbotsford
Campus
Building K
Room K180

Contact historyinfo@ufv.ca
Light refreshments provided

Historians recognize the need to teach about the history and contemporary impacts of residential schools in Canada. Similarly, we know now that the opportunity to learn about the schools exists outside classrooms. In my talk, I draw from a special issue on social media and educational foundations to show how applications such as Instagram and X have an impact on teaching in the standard classroom. The concept of classroom civility, which was originally a pedagogical understanding in the conventional classroom, informs how one can understand how conflicts in class can continue in the digital realm. In this case, the conflict involved an assignment on residential schooling and reaction to it on X and Instagram. I share lessons in learning for how one can address incidents of classroom incivility related to instruction on residential schools that occur on social media.

The talk is based on the special issue of the Journal of Contemporary Issues in Education:
<https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/jcie/index.php/jcie>





Above right: scenes from UFV History's student bowling night, November 2025.

Bottom center and right: Prof. Emeritus Robin Anderson's 70th Birthday celebration in Vancouver, December 2025; UFV graduation, June 2025.

Bottom left: history faculty retreat August 2025 - an at times harrowing but still enjoyable paddle down the Harrison River.



If you are a current student or alumnus and are working on something you might like to have profiled in this newsletter, consider submitting ideas to *Now and Then*. We would love to hear from you! **Contact:** historyinfo@ufv.ca