Interviewee: ANGELICA BODKY LEE
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS
Location: Watertown MA
Date: November 1997
Media: Videocassette/8mm 1 / Audiocassette 1
Interview no.: 11
Transcription: Ellen Dissanayake, October 16-17, 2003; corrected by Mary Emma Harris, June 2004
Notes: Converted from Word Perfect by Mary Emma Harris, September 2013

[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1]

MEH: [GIVES IDENTIFICATION]. So, you were just saying that you really didn't fit into any category at Black Mountain?

ABL: No, I audited some courses, of Albers especially. When he did once like a piece of sculpture I never acknowledged that it was mine. One sculpture he did like.

MEH: How did you come to be at Black Mountain?

ABL: Because my father was asked to give a summer school.

MEH: Do you remember which summer that was?

ABL: Yeah, '45.

MEH: '45. Was that when—

ABL: The War ended?

MEH: Hugo Kauder came—

ABL: Yeah, Kauder came.

MEH: That summer, right.

ABL: I'm not sure it was exactly that summer, but there was—because there were so many summers that he was there.

MEH: Were your families—Was your family a refugee family or—

ABL: Refugees? Definitely.

MEH: Or did you come over earlier? You definitely were refugees. Where you were in '33.

ABL: We were in Berlin, and my fa-—

MEH: How old were you?

ABL: I was four. My father left for Holland, and three or four or five months later my mother and myself came, after he—

MEH: To Holland?

ABL: To Holland. We found an apartment in Amsterdam. Then five years later, in 1938—In April my father went to America to look for a job. Couldn't find any. Everybody was sort of afraid of him a little bit. He had too high a reputation. But on the strength of half a job at Longy School, which was paid for by a refugee committee, he came over, in September.

MEH: Which committee was it? Do you remember?

ABL: I don't remember the name of the committee. They helped refugees financially. Then the job grew to be a permanent job.

MEH: Was this the one at—

ABL: At Longy School. Yeah. He taught harpsichord and counterpoint and, oh, how to do the thorough bass, and started Early Music here in Cambridge, with concerts at the Germanic Museum, at first, with the Longy School Orchestra, then with the Cambridge Collegium Musicum, which was Wolfensohn, D'Archambault [PH], and himself, a trio. This was enlarged by symphony players when he needed more players to fill out an orchestral work.

MEH: Was there much happening in the way of Early Music in Boston at the time?

ABL: Not too much. Harpsichord was rather a rarity. Then later the—D'Archambault was a Belgian refugee, and he went back to Belgium after the War. Wolfensohn moved on to other things. It became The Society for Early Music—changed the name—and more people from the symphony were involved. Then singers also, of course. My flute teacher, Frances Drinker. I think I played with her in one

concert myself, too, as the second flute, and that was fun. The first concerts were at the Germanic, then we moved to—

MEH: Germanic—?

ABL: Museum, which became the Busch-Reisinger after the War. Then we moved—looking for a larger hall. Rindge Tech, now Rindge, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, had a lovely auditorium and we used that for three concerts and then subsequently moved to Memorial Hall, Sanders Theatre for our concerts. These were endorsed by Mrs. Coolidge, who was a great patron of the arts at that time. No concert could start before Mrs. Coolidge was sitting in the front seat. She was slightly deaf.

MEH: This was Virginia Sprague Coolidge? What was her first name.

ABL: Elizabeth Sprague. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, a beautiful lady who supported a lot of wonderful things around here. We really miss her now.

MEH: Do you know what her background was?

ABL: Not really. There's a huge Coolidge clan, on Coolidge Hill in Cambridge where Shady Hill is at the bottom of the hill. There's also a big Coolidge estate in Manchester, a whole peninsula that goes out to sea with Coolidge houses. It's all the same family. There are some now living on Belmont Hill. They were all musical. There was—John Coolidge was head of the Fogg Museum. It was a family deep in the arts, and I went to school with some of them. Then Dad went—After Brandeis University was started, and my father became the first music teacher there. Bernstein was—Leonard Bernstein was the official head—

MEH: What year was that? Do you know?

ABL: '48, '49, somewhere in there.

MEH: That's after he left Black Mountain, right after he left Black Mountain.

ABL: No, it must have been '50. He stayed a whole year at Black Mountain in '49, so it must have been about 1950.

MEH: And so you—Going back, when you came over as a child, you went to school here in Cambridge, in Watertown?

ABL: I went first to Cambridge—Agassiz School. Then my father played at Shady Hill School, just a concert at the assembly, and the Director, Katherine Taylor, asked if he had any children and he said "Yes, I have a little girl," and "Where is she?" I was kind of unhappy at Agassiz School because I was put back a year because my English wasn't all that great. But I was beginning to learn street English, from my friends on the street, and subsequently I went to Shady Hill and back into the grade I was supposed to be, and I stayed there until I graduated.

MEH: And so when you came to Black Mountain that first summer, how old were you? The summer of '45?

ABL: About sixteen.

MEH: So you were not yet college age?

ABL: No, I was not.

MEH: You were still going to Shady Hill.

ABL: No, I was going then to the Cambridge School in Weston where I got a scholarship from, and I was doing a lot of artwork there, and playing in the orchestra—flute.

MEH: What are your first memories of the college, that first summer?

ABL: Ray Johnson. [LAUGHS]

MEH: How was that? What do you remember about Ray?

ABL: I think he met us at the train, and we didn't—had no idea where we were going, you know. We had a dog too. Ray showed us around, and was the sweetest, nicest person. I was sorry to read in *Art News* that he had died. His sweet spirit was incredible.

MEH: Can you elaborate more, in terms of his sweet spirit, what . .

ABL: He was always there to show us where we were supposed to be and what to do.

MEH: Did he meet you with the college truck, or a car?

ABL: No, I don't think he drove. I think someone else did, but he came along. In those days there were still the army barracks on the hill, and we lived in those. They were very comfortable, and it was quite nice. You know, two bedrooms and a bath. What more did one need? Then there were hikes in the Smoky Mountains. I can't offhand remember the name of the lady who—Eleanor Somebody, a special student. There were some special students at Black Mountain and we organized—about five of us went hiking in the Smokies and I just loved that. We saw bears and we saw the American Indians who lived there, who were extremely red-skinned and wore long robes and things.

MEH: Within walking distance of the college?

ABL: No, you had to take—You had to go up to the mountains.

MEH: Probably to a reservation, I would assume.

ABL: Yes, I think someone drove us or else we drove the car and left it there and then hiked, about four or five days at a time. Stayed in huts overnight, hung out the food so the bears wouldn't swipe it.

MEH: Did you do this with other students?

ABL: Yeah. Right, about five other students. They were all older. It all worked out very nicely. Adolph Dehn was then mathematics teacher and he did a lot of hiking around the college and showed me all the plants that were there. This was a revelation. I was very fond of him—we all were. Mrs. Dehn, later when she came. Eddie Lowinsky was actually the one who hired my father to come.

MEH: Right. Had they known one another before that time?

ABL: Yeah.

MEH: In Germany? In—

ABL: No, I think in Holland.

MEH: In Holland. That's right, they were both in Holland.

ABL: Yeah.

MEH: Do you remember anything about Hugo Kauder and that group of musicians?

ABL: Yes. He came here very often. My father played some of his music and—which he hadn't heard really, you know. He had an extremely difficult time talking. He had a speech impediment, and so he couldn't lecture. But people played his music there, and people still have his music. There's some, Luise Vosgerchian has some of it now here. She was head of Harvard Music Department and a student of my father's and was always interested in other composers. Yeah he was, Kauder was well-liked. A very humble man, you know. Then Josef Marx, an oboist came from the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra.

MEH: Do you know how your—Did you know whether Lowinsky asked him, or whether your father knew him and asked him?

ABL: Oh, between the two of them, probably. Yeah. Lowinsky knew a lot of people in New York. Then that violinist. You should have warned me, I would have gotten them all out.

MEH: I could have brought the list myself. I might send you the list and have you just make notations.

ABL: Oh, good. Because—Eva Heinitz, viola da gambist and cellist, was there. I can still in my mind hear her practicing. She had a very strong tone. Carol Brice came and gave wonderful Brahms' songs—unbelievable. At that time, in '45 and '46, we were warned "Do not go into Asheville with black students together. Go separately." But some Asheville people did come to the concerts at Black Mountain. They were open to the public. They didn't seem to mind having black people like Roland Hayes, who came several times.

MEH: No, he actually only came once.

ABL: Only once? Well then maybe it was here.

MEH: [OVERTALK] That first summer. I'm sure you heard him more here.

ABL: Yeah, I think he did some singing here with my father, yeah.

MEH: Everybody remembers his concert at Black Mountain.

ABL: Yeah. Roland Hayes—He was on a small hike with my parents, and my mother saw him throw a rock and she was surprised. They looked where he had thrown it, and there was a rattlesnake, dead. He had heard a rustling in the grass and knew what it was. It was unbelievable. My father had it for dinner. [LAUGHS]

MEH: The rattlesnake?

ABL: Yes. It's good meat. He said it tastes like chicken. [LAUGHS] The cook cleaned it and skinned it.

MEH: That was a lot smarter than most people who didn't eat their snakes. They just killed them.

ABL: Yeah, this way it got recycled. [LAUGHS] Oh, god, we had many wonderful experiences.

MEH: Are there particular anecdotes that you remember such as that? Things that happened?

ABL: Midnight walks, with Judith Davidoff, another viola da gambist and cellist, and about five other students. All around there's a long circular route from farm to farm and back again, and we even went skinny-dipping under the waterfall. At full moon night. That was a priceless experience. Singing, of course, and all the dogs in the neighborhood started barking. Poor farmers! Yeah. Another one—weeding in the garden. The earth is very red. I wrote about this story where Andy Oates appeared, and I was weeding, and I see a pair of white sneakers in the red earth. I knew that they weren't going to stay white very long. [LAUGHS] He helped me weed in the garden there. We've been friends ever since, and

we still exchange cards and letters. He has a spot in Nantucket. I suppose you know, huh? In Florida, in the Keys. Yeah, we're in touch usually once or twice a year.

MEH: Did you ever officially register as a student?

ABL: No.

MEH: So the year that your father was there for the full year, you—

ABL: I went to the Museum School.

MEH: That year, you weren't there, the winter term?

ABL: No. I came visiting during vacations—Christmas vacation and Easter and so forth, yeah. No, I was going into a very classical education at the Boston Museum School, and this freedom with abstract and this and that, I was too young for that. I needed a very solid—Now I could do it of course, but not then.

MEH: Did you sit in on Albers' classes at all?

ABL: Oh yeah. On Color and Design. Oh, it was wonderful. Unbelievable. I think all of us—Ati Gropius is teaching it now at the De Cordova Museum, and we all still live from that. It was a very—

MEH: What do you remember about Albers as a teacher? What were your impressions?

ABL: He made you really look. The things around you, that you could make a collage of, let's say, a certain area that you just happened to be looking. Now when I go to the beach—Albers' favorite word was *matière*. So you picked up all the things and made a design. How to make something out of what's there. Then there were color compositions, colors that vibrate, colors that go well together. Very serious studies. Then Design. The design course I couldn't quite fathom then. I was too young. But I listened in anyway. Mary Callery came and did wonderful sculpture and had a sculpture class going, and so did Lippold.

MEH: Did you take her sculpture class?

ABL: I think I did a few, but again it was more—I really wanted a classical education of learning the figure and learning the portrait head before I went into this nebulous field of whatever. I wasn't ready for it.

MEH: Do you remember what your father thought about the college? His reactions, his [INAUDIBLE] about it?

ABL: Well, he loved it basically. I think the form of government he sometimes questioned, and whether they were really—whether that was the way to really run it, because he sometimes questioned it. Being a German, I think he was more used to a dictatorship rather than sort of freedom, which didn't always work. People didn't always get on and didn't always do what they were supposed to. It was he who decided to have a fire drill. This was after I left in the fall. Because they never had had one. He brought up the subject in a student-faculty thing. So they did. They had a fire drill. That night the chemistry lab burned down, and nobody paid any attention—"Oh, that's Bodky's fire drill!?" He must have had a premonition of some sort, you know. It was probably someone's cigarette left, who knows. Because we had black students, the fire department was very slow in getting there. This was known. So it burned to the ground. Somehow. It was a wooden building and I think they managed to use something, another building for whatever they needed to do.

MEH: Had you been in this sort of community before?

ABL: Cambridge School was very close in spirit. It had student government. Nathaniel French was the son of John R.P. French, who was head of the Cambridge School, and he was part of also Black Mountain College. There was a very close relationship. Molly Gregory, who taught the shop, had been the art teacher at Cambridge School. I think the Dreiers were acquainted with its idealistic spirit. You could choose your own courses.

MEH: Are you talking about the Cambridge School or Black Mountain or both?

ABL: Both. You could basically choose what you wanted to do, pretty much, as long as you had enough science and math to graduate. English—

MEH: What grades did the Cambridge School cover? Was it first—

ABL: Eighth through twelfth. Their course was at that time very famous for the biology course which put you almost into the second year at Radcliffe.

MEH: This was Cambridge School?

ABL: Yeah. Terrific biology course. The art courses—well, I just loved it. I could do what I wanted pretty much, actually.

MEH: You had a pretty, a rather liberal education.

ABL: Yeah.

MEH: Structure. Did your parents, coming from Germany, have any problem with this? You weren't really at that level getting a traditional classical education.

ABL: Well, I did all the science and math that I was supposed to. Three years of Latin. Four years of French. I mean, you know, you couldn't ask for more. Played in the orchestra. Shady Hill put a lot of people ahead because they were preparing boys for Exeter, and so when I arrived at the Cambridge School I was way ahead of other people. But it didn't bother me. So I could do Latin 3 and French 4 and all that sort of stuff, and not have a hard time.

MEH: Do you remember any concerts at Black Mountain as being particularly standing out in your mind?

ABL: Geez, almost every one of them. They were all really outstanding, pretty much. It was wonderful. Then in the Music Building there were lectures with demonstrations.

MEH: That was in the—

ABL: The little Roundhouse.

MEH: Right. Beside the Dining Hall.

ABL: Yeah. My mother and I—we did the whole library once, which was left by Thomas Whitney Surette. It had never been really catalogued or ordered, and that was a lot of fun, actually. Hard work, but it was worth it.

MEH: What was your mother's background?

ABL: Interior design, actually.

MEH: Did she practice it in Germany?

ABL: She did. German women were not allowed to work after they got married. It wasn't done, unless you were poor. But in the intellectual circles of the day, you didn't work once you—Nowadays that wouldn't—

MEH: Many women would envy that today.

ABL: Yeah. But she was very artistic. She did beautiful drawing.

MEH: Is that where your artistic talent came from?

ABL: It must come from her.

MEH: Did Black Mountain—I'm trying to remember—she did something there. I don't think it was bookbinding, or maybe it was.

ABL: For a while.

MEH: With Johanna Jalowetz.

ABL: Yeah. She also taught German, sort of behind the scenes, to anybody who needed tutoring. She loved doing that.

MEH: There was a wealth of German teachers at Black Mountain.

ABL: Well everybody was—[LAUGHS] But she managed to establish a nice rapport with some of the young men there whom I think missed their family and loved to come over and have tea and cookies and learn a little bit of German to help them along. So it was sort of that relationship more than anything else. She helped the nurse occasionally and things like that. And another strong force was Hazel Larsen.

MEH: In what respect?

ABL: [OVERTALK] In photography.

MEH: What do you remember—How do you remember Hazel?

ABL: Hazel sort of held court in her room in one of the dorms and was the best listener. And, you know, if there was any problem, you could tell her about it and she'd help you find a solution. This was an institution. It was a very important one. I mean you couldn't always go to your parents. Heavens. It might get noised around, you know. [LAUGHS] But Hazel was really something, and then she was always traveling around with her camera around her neck, and her—

MEH: Was she on crutches then, or [OVERTALK]

ABL: Oh yeah, she was on crutches, yeah. Ruth Asawa was another powerful person.

MEH: What made a student at Black Mountain a powerful force?

ABL: Motivation. Energy. Somehow always doing something and uhhh! That she did. You know, if a frost was sudden she'd cover all the flowers and everything and make—Things like that. That somebody wouldn't think of [INAUDIBLE]. Then of course the farmers. Ray Trayer and his wife and the farm.

MEH: Did you work on the farm?

ABL: Yeah. I weeded the garden and took stuff to feed the pigs and things like that. It was nice.

MEH: Had you been on a farm before? Had you done this sort of thing?

ABL: Just a little bit. Here and there when we stayed on a farm now and then. Nothing much, you know. But I enjoyed animals.

MEH: You lived in a city, in Germany.

ABL: Yeah.

MEH: You lived in—before you went to Holland—

ABL: In Berlin. I think it was Charlottenburg, they called it, at that time. But all I remember is pavements and rugs and—[IRRELEVANT REMARKS] and streets sort of, but not—

MEH: Like oriental carpets, or—?

ABL: No, there was a gray carpet in our house. I think I remember from crawling over it.

MEH: Oh, if you left when you were four you would not remember that much.

ABL: No. No.

MEH: A lot of refugees who came to Black Mountain and who moved to situations where they really were isolated as refugees. They were in an American community, for them Black Mountain, it was just wonderful to be among other people who spoke German and who had shared—But you really had, were in the midst of a strong refugee community here.

ABL: Here in Cambridge, yeah. Of course.

MEH: So that would not have been of real importance at Black Mountain to you.

ABL: No, but it was important to my parents, because they supported the concerts. They came and listened to music.

MEH: Here in Cambridge.

ABL: Yeah. They needed it. It was a very strong community that way. A very interesting thing was we came and we lived—I think we arrived by train after the hurricane of ’38, and it was midnight and I think we fell into the Lenox Hotel, which was then disreputable, near South Station. Then the next day we went to Cambridge, and I don’t know what my father did, he probably went to Longy and I don’t know where I was parked. But mother happened to see Widener Library and saw all those steps, and somebody came up to her and he said, “Are you looking for somebody?” and she said “Yes, I’m looking for Rudolf Kallman, the name was given to us.” He said, “I am he.” On the steps of

Widener Library. I mean all of Harvard. This was a family that sort of took us in, and it turned out an apartment next door was vacant, and so we moved next door to them.

MEH: Spell the last name?

ABL: Kalmer was K-A-L-L-M-A-N. He was a lawyer in New York, formerly in New York and then here.

MEH: Was he a refugee, or was he an American or—

ABL: I think he was originally a refugee but he'd come over much earlier, had taken the difficult exam and was practicing again, and had an older daughter who also later went to Cambridge School. So my mother had someone to talk to, and we were very close that way. Dad taught privately at home and went to Longy. Raphael Hillyer, who became a member of the Juilliard Quartet, was one of the first violinists to play with him. Later Jose—what's his last name, the one who, with Jack Paar, on the Jack Paar Show, the pianist—Jose Melis. Famous pianist. Came from Cuba. Because dad, in order to emigrate, had to first go to Cuba in order to come back in with the right papers.

MEH: It was the same path the Lowinskys took, I think.

ABL: Yes.

MEH: From Holland, that apparently was the route.

ABL: That was the way you had to go. My father heard fantastic piano playing. Jazz, but—in Havana. Marched up the stairs, didn't know any Spanish, and saw this young man hammering away, and somehow with hand signals they understood each other and Jose Melis was supposed to come and study with him at Longy School, which he did. He lived with a reverend from the Swedenborg Church, who supported a lot of refugees. A wonderful man.

MEH: You may have been so young that your parents did not make you that aware, but during the War were you really aware, as refugees, of what was happening in Germany in terms of the concentration camps and—

ABL: Yeah, I think my mother smelled a rat. She had a very good nose for these things. Oh yeah. We lost my grandfather. He wouldn't come. He said Germany can do no wrong. You know, he visited us in Holland several times. He could have come with us, so it's a very sad situation. And mother lost a sister. Nobody knows whatever became of her.

MEH: Were you at Black Mountain the summer of '48 when Cage and Cunningham were there?

ABL: There was one year we weren't.

MEH: I know your parents were there that summer.

ABL: Oh, then I must have been too.

MEH: You don't remember then particularly.

ABL: Cunningham?

MEH: [AFFIRMATIVE] The summer of the Satie Festival.

ABL: Oh yes, of course. Yeah. The Satie Festival I remember. Cunningham, what did he . .?

MEH: He danced. Merce Cunningham.

ABL: Oh, Merce Cunningham. Oh yes. Geez, we admired him. God!

MEH: You admired him?

ABL: Oh yes! The fluid movement was incredible. Yeah.

MEH: And what about Cage?

ABL: Page?

MEH: Cage, John Cage.

ABL: Oh, John Cage. Yeah, he and Dad didn't get on too well. I don't know. I think they kind of, you know, like two dogs skirting each other and kept a distance.

[LAUGHS] But it didn't—There wasn't any, no antagonistic feelings at all. You know, they were just different, and so they stayed away from each other and everything worked out fine. Yeah, they weren't planning to have any—That's right, John Cage. Handsome man.

MEH: Are there other students that you remember in particular?

ABL: The one who weaves and just had an exhibition at—in Asheville.

MEH: Lore Kadden Lindenfeld.

ABL: Yeah. Very much so. Trude Jalowetz. She had a friend. I'd have to look at the names and I could tell you right away.

MEH: Is this the Dutch woman? Her friend?

ABL: No, it was a tall young man.

MEH: Oh, maybe Nick Cernovich?

ABL: Yeah, Nick was one of the first people I enjoyed. We had to clean out a cellar once and we were [UNINTEL WORD] together. There was another young man I've forgot. He came a lot for German lessons, and I can't remember his name. If I saw a name, I would, yeah—The first year, there was a student from McGill University, a Canadian blond, and we saw each other once or twice afterwards. Then a girl from Nyack, New York. Very tall. We went hiking, and it was wonderful. I didn't stay in the dorm so I didn't get that close to people as I might have.

MEH: Where did your family stay?

ABL: At first in those barracks, and then when—was it Hansgirg?—when he left the college, my parents stayed in the Stone House. Gave us a little more room, for the instruments and things.

MEH: Do you play an instrument? I'm sure you do.

ABL: I play flute, yeah. I've done some research on old flutes, Baroque flutes, [UNINTEL WORD] flutes and so forth, and [INAUDIBLE]

MEH: Did you ever play in a concert at Black Mountain?

ABL: Yeah, I did. We did the fourth Brandenburg, and another friend, Denise Heilbronn, with her father—[CHANGE OF AUDIO TAPE] The fourth Brandenburg Concerto we did together. Her father, Hans Martinau [George Martin] was a musicologist from New York. He came to visit, and his daughter and I became great friends. We still are. Flute players stay together.

MEH: Did you know at the time that you wanted to be an artist?

ABL: Yes. I always did, yeah. I didn't like playing in public too much.

MEH: After you left the Cambridge School you went to the Boston Museum School did you say?

ABL: Yeah.

MEH: They don't offer a degree. They offer—

ABL: Yeah, that's only a diploma. But you could go to Tufts University for a year and three summers and get a degree then, but somehow there wasn't time or the energy to do that. Yet also stay after eight hours of sculpture and then do another course was just too much. So I didn't do that. I haven't really missed it. Now, of course, you need a degree and everybody has one. It's a different story.

MEH: But you still have no problem now teaching without a degree.

ABL: No. In private places you can teach without—Luckily.

MEH: And where do you teach?

ABL: The De Cordova Museum School. It's a museum for contemporary art in Lincoln.

MEH: And how long have you been teaching there?

ABL: '72—Twenty-five years. I also taught at the Adult Center in Cambridge for about twenty-five years.

MEH: Sculpture?

ABL: Yeah, mainly figure and portraiture.

MEH: And your husband?

ABL: He's an engineer, mechanical engineer, in optics sort of, and a harpsichord builder and restorer on the side. I'll have to show you the instrument. We met through—I was given a scholarship at the Museum School for study abroad, but it wasn't quite enough so I worked first in a movie theater and then met Frank Hubbard and worked for the Hubbard and Dowd Harpsichord Works, making hinges and planing wood and this and that. That's where I met my husband, because after hours in the [Navy Yard] he came. My father being a harpsichordist, this was all sort of in the family.

MEH: Are there any other memories in particular that you have of Black Mountain? Observations?

ABL: [PAUSE] It was really a very full life. You know. There was the lake, there was that triangular mountain in the distance, which I painted, and my teacher, Frances Snow Drinker, has the painting. She's since deceased, but I think her children have it. The Studies Building, of course, and visiting around. Ronald Jackson put a calf in somebody's study [LAUGHS]. When they opened the door, this big "mooooo" came out. Plus the mess. I think he had one enemy.

MEH: That must have been something he did to an enemy. Do you remember whose study it was?

ABL: No I don't. [LAUGHTER]

MEH: Does Ronald Jackson live somewhere in the area?

ABL: I wonder. I've lost track.

MEH: Yeah, I'm not sure.

ABL: We used to be in touch all the time. He'd come for Christmas or something.

MEH: Where was he living then?

ABL: Sometimes New York. Gustav Falk was a painter and came visiting once. With Judith Davidoff, I've stayed in touch. She lives in New York. She's just now at the late age of seventy and has gotten her PhD or something. Written her dissertation. But she's been playing in New York a lot. I don't think there's—It's so hard to say, because the days were very full. The snake slithering down the metal steps of the Studies Building. That was something. Richard Lippold arriving with his family in a hearse. I think there were about three children, and they'd camp in it. It was a good camping vehicle, actually, but we were all quite surprised.

MEH: Did you say you took his class?

ABL: No, that was the other—Lip-, another teacher came who subsequently also taught at Brandeis. Can't think of his name right now, but it also has a name like that.

MEH: Teaching sculpture?

ABL: Yeah.

MEH: I'm not sure.

ABL: Another great man was Feininger, Lyonel Feininger. He was a man of such peace and such quiet, and a wonderful smile. He said he draws all the time. When someone else is driving, he's sketching. A wonderful person, and I've always admired his work. There were a lot of characters. That's for sure. You have to take everything—Most things happened in the dining room.

MEH: Like for example—

ABL: Buckminster Fuller. He'd start a lecture at nine in the morning and it would go on. I listened to quite a few of them.

MEH: In the dining room?

ABL: No. In a, one of the, somewhere. Probably in the Studies Building, but a bigger room. He would talk until 12, and then everybody, that was time to have dinner.

The gong would sound, and we'd march down the hill, and at his table he'd continue until about 2 o'clock. He said he lived life—He didn't sleep any particular hours. When he was tired, he'd sleep an hour or two, and then carry on with his work. A remarkable man. Someone asked, "Where did you get your white hair?"—because he seemed too young to have white hair—and he told that student that he lost a daughter through some accident or something, so his hair turned white. But so full of ideas. Like putting a plastic dome over New York, so you would never get wet when it rained. The three-wheel cart—car, which has since actually been created. By Isetta [PH] and so forth [INAUDIBLE]. He was full of ideas.

MEH: Do you remember the dome that he built that summer?

ABL: Yes. He brought seven or eight students, they were New Zealanders, oddly enough, and spoke a strange English. Yeah, a group of students studied with him, he brought them down from New York, and they tried to put it up together but something went wrong. The parts didn't fit, which was too bad because we were all just hoping and praying it would work. You know. But it didn't faze him. He lectured just the same. Whereas Gropius' lectures were sort of dull. I don't know, I didn't particularly care too much.

MEH: What was the food like?

ABL: Oh, everybody complained, but because it was war and there wasn't much meat. But oddly enough, if you went on a hike they gave you some steaks along to cook. The cook was a very tall man, and his wife, and then there was another lady helping, and then all the students took turns with the dishwasher and cleaning tables, helping—Everybody did their turn, and it worked out beautifully. There was a great flood one time. The creek overflowed. There had been a lot of rain. The house of the cook and his wife were quite low and the creek invaded their house. Everybody chipped in and helped them wade out

and get their belongings out. The lower part of the college was beginning to flood and I could see my mother carrying my father's manuscript out and wondering what to do about the harpsichord or something, but luckily it didn't reach that stage.

MEH: He brought his harpsichord down with him.

ABL: Yeah. Yeah. It came down in a box by train. The truck had to go get it. I think.

MEH: Would you ever shovel coal?

ABL: Yes. [LAUGHS] The furnaces were all run by coal, for the hot water, and some of the boys came every morning and did that, and sometimes I did it. I did in this house. When I got married they switched to oil. [LAUGHS] But that was all right. It was good exercise. The only sad part was when the chickens got beheaded. I usually. I remember seeing my boyfriend's sad face, and I beat it. But they served chicken that night. Yeah. If it were these days, I think the college would be vegetarian, with the type of people around, you know, but in those days people were very meat-oriented. As Europeans maybe, I don't know. When did you visit first?

MEH: The college? Long after it had closed. Many years after it had closed.

ABL: Pity. You would have enjoyed the flavor.

MEH: I'm sure.

ABL: And the Dreiers were, you know, a very important family. They lost a son, and the Quiet House was built. But they were both such vital forces. Ted would have been I think a weak director, but he had a strong wife and a lot of help from Molly Gregory in how to run things. It worked. Things plodded along. So—But it wasn't always easy. He was not a very vocal person, either. I think it would have helped if he had been able to stand up and give—say what's what. But it all worked. It didn't matter, because of the student involved in the government. Then the Rondthalers, the treasury business, and their daughter

was a very cheerful personality. They were a very warm, wonderful couple, and also they sort of helped run the place behind the scenes, doing the financial things, which was extremely difficult, because I don't think there were much. But they were wonderful.

MEH: Do you have any materials from Black Mountain, any photographs or—? Where are your father's papers? Are they in a—Do you have them or are they in an archive?

ABL: No, they're probably here, yeah. Yeah, there are some pictures around, I think. It would take me awhile to find them.

MEH: Do you have any work that you did at Black Mountain—painting, drawing?

ABL: No, just that one painting that—The sketches are sort of lost. I did most of my work then at the Museum School. Now I'm doing mostly carving—wood and stuff. You look tired. Can I give you a cup of tea? [IRRELEVANT REMARKS]

MEH: You were saying that your father, when he was at Black Mountain, came back here.

ABL: To give those three concerts during the year. It was good to see them. They stayed with friends in Cambridge and then he had his rehearsals and—Richard Burgin, the concertmaster, was usually—or Ruth Posselt his wife, was a terrific violinist, and Sammy Mayes, the first cellist, between the three of them, and then Eugene Lehno who recently died, a viola player, very staunch friends to play with. It was wonderful.

MEH: Did he ever have any wish to go back to Europe? After the War?

ABL: He went back every summer—after Black Mountain. The way to finance it was to play at radio stations and in museums. He played in Vienna in the museum there because the man who was head of it had been here during the War. Otto Benesch. Then I think it was Hilversum in Holland, he played on the radio, and several German radio stations. He had to just play on any harpsichord that they

happened to have, and some were pretty lousy but he managed to do it and had a lot of fun visiting friends. It was sort of a holiday, seeing old friends again. It gave them both a lift, and at the time also I was studying in Italy and so I met up with them in Salzburg where he played—in Salzburg in a museum there. That was really great in the mountains there and everything. [INAUDIBLE]. So I think the pull was still very strong. He didn't want to live in Europe anymore.

MEH: Unlike some people who never went back, he felt a real affinity with cultural things there.

ABL: Yeah.

MEH: I'm putting words in your mouth, but I just—

ABL: Yeah, he kept up the ties with old friends, musicians.

MEH: When you were at Black Mountain, did you ever go into the community? Into the village of Black Mountain, or Asheville?

ABL: Well, yes, for shopping. What we did as a group of us students was to visit the black churches on a Sunday and hear them singing. It was a long walk to some valley, and there was a little church and there was—we were so moved by the feeling in the singing that happened in the church. We did that several times.

MEH: Do you remember who went with you?

ABL: No, I don't really. It was a group of us.

MEH: Was Rauschenberg a student when you were there?

ABL: Yes.

MEH: Do you remember him in any particular way?

ABL: Yeah, he was fighting with his wife. This was wife number one, I think. They never got on. I don't know what was going on. I was quite disgusted with him, because she was a little bit of a thing and, I don't know. But eventually—Almost every artistic person at Black Mountain became great later, in New York or somewhere. It was fascinating to watch. Robert Motherwell came. These were

at that time people who were unknown, except among artistic circles. Albers certainly knew them. But later they became famous. Very interesting. It was wonderful to know them before, you know. That was great. Even Ray Johnson later became not as famous as he should have been because he was such a sweet gentle soul. It was fascinating to watch this happening. You pick up a book and somebody was there, you know. Extraordinary.

MEH: Do you have any other memories of Carol Brice? She was there with her mother and her child, was that—?

ABL: Her husband, definitely, whom we didn't particularly like, and her child, a little girl. Yeah. I'm not sure about her mother, but maybe. It could be. We were very fond of her and her singing. She was tremendous. Yeah. Powerful, especially the Brahms's Serious Songs. Umh! But she could sing anything, almost. Roland Hayes had everybody spellbound. He could almost whisper something and you'd hear it. He could go from very loud to very soft, the extremes and—the feeling. He had a daughter, Afrika. I tried hard to get her to Cambridge School, which was where she wanted to go but then in the end she changed her mind. She would have been the first black student there.

MEH: Were you about the same age?

ABL: She was a little younger. Full of life. Full of hell. Yeah. The Gordon Quartet was there and they played a lot among themselves or with—

MEH: They were there. They played the Kauder music. They were there that summer, weren't they?

ABL: Yeah. Which was a good thing, very brave.

MEH: What was your mother like? Was she—

ABL: A powerful personality. Very strong. Because we often felt Dad would have sat in a garret maybe and composed, but Mother got him out to play music, to teach. She was the one who said, "It's time to leave Germany." "You go, get a

job." [LAUGHS]. She was very strong and always in the right way. She knew what was—She had a good psychic feeling for what was happening, and Dad trusted her in that respect very strongly. Yeah. I think that strength went to some of the students who needed a little extra push to get up their courage and do the things they felt they, but didn't quite dare, you know. It was really wonderful. I'm sure she helped me in that way too, you know, make up my mind here and there. The interesting anecdote about leaving Germany was you had to go to a high office in the government to get papers or whatever, so we had a German shepherd and the dog went with her. Most public buildings had a place for leaving children and dogs, so the dog was tied downstairs and she went up in the elevator to the tenth floor or whatever it was. While she was explaining the situation to this man whom she didn't particularly like, in wiggles the German shepherd. How did she know where my mother was! Elevator. Tenth floor. How did she get free? Of course, she got a dressing down from the man. This was not done. This never happened. So he gave her her papers anyway.

MEH: Before I pack this up, any other particular anecdotes or memories you have?

ABL: Speaking of dogs, we had an Airedale at Black Mountain, who came much against Eddie Lowinsky's—"You have to bring the dog?" "Of course!" [LAUGHS] So we brought the dog, and he kept his children away from our Airedale but anyway—I took the Airedale for a walk. I mean always he was very good.

MEH: How did you get down? Did you have a car? Or did you . .

ABL: No, we went by train, and because of the dog we had to get a compartment, which was a bit expensive, and Eddie Lowinsky frowned again, but—[LAUGHS]

MEH: How do you remember Eddie Lowinsky? The man with the frown?

ABL: Never approving of anything I did or said! [LAUGHS] But he and Dad got along famously. They always worked things out together, and they understood each

other, and my father was easy to get along with, so it all worked out very well. Gretel, especially, we were fond of. Then there was a mother, I think it was Eddie's mother, a wonderful woman. Quite extraordinary, and I think she kept the family on an even keel and everything. A wonderful woman, yeah. Yeah, it was fascinating. The dog once came—I was walking him, and suddenly I see him pull back and give me a funny look. What I thought was a stick in the road was a snake. I would have stepped on it, if I hadn't, if he hadn't—So he saved my life, I think.

MEH: Had you been exposed to snakes anywhere before?

ABL: Never. No. Dr. Dehn warned us, of course. But a kid, you know, dreaming, falling in love.

MEH: What about the dress style? Was this something—Had you dressed at the Cambridge School informally, or was this just—

ABL: Yes, but we did wear skirts though at the Cambridge School, except in the afternoon you could wear blue jeans of course. Yeah. At the Museum School I wore blue jeans, so basically that didn't affect me in any way. It was wonderful. Thank God! That we could live, you know, the way you wanted to. Yeah. There was a lot of sleeping around then, and that's—

MEH: At the college.

ABL: Yeah. Especially, the Studies Building I think was conducive—You couldn't do it in the dorms, but—Usually either there was some tragedy or somebody's breakup. It wasn't always a happy thing. Not usually a good idea, I thought at the time. It didn't always work out. Very seldom, it seemed to me. Break-ups and—I also went, because I didn't take courses I went to work in the shop and made a table under Molly Gregory, out of cherry wood that she found on the farm that had been beautifully seasoned, and I learned a lot from Molly. She was wonderful at woodworking and could make anything fit. She helped build

the farmhouse, remodeling it basically, so that two families could live there. I forget who the other family was, but Trayer was one. He was one of the farmers.

MEH: Moles? Trayer and Moles, I think.

ABL: Yeah. Right. After you leave, I'll remember everything.

MEH: You'll have to write a letter.

ABL: Okay. [LAUGHS] It's too bad I'm not so good with names.

[END OF TRANSCRIPT. END OF INTERVIEW.]