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Interviewer:	MARY EMMA HARRIS
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[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1]

MEH: [GIVES NAME, DATE, AND PLACE OF INTERVIEW]. [PAUSE; SET-UP REMARKS NOT TRANSCRIBED]. [DATE LATER GIVEN AS FEBRUARY 7]. Addison, how did you come to be at Black Mountain?

AB: How did I come to be at Black Mountain? I was in a summer theater in my hometown in Gloucester, Massachusetts, and the set designer had been a student there.

MEH: Who was that?

AB: His name was Hendrickson. I think he had been at the Yale Drama School and may have done Broadway work by then or not. I don't know. There was a man named Hal Shaw, who also did the sets. Somehow or other during the course of the summer, it came up. I was already in college. I was at Bates, and found it easier than high school. I don't know whether my high school was unusually strict or high standards or not. It was one of those used by Conant, it turns out. In later life, I discovered one of his study high schools when he was doing his work on high school — the American high school. He found it one of the ideal size and components and stuff like that. Anyway, I guess I was looking around for something different. One year in a — I guess Bates is a second-tier Ivy League, along with Colby and Bowdoin.

MEH: Where is Bates?

AB: They played Amherst and played Dartmouth. Anyway, I found that, I guess, quite enough. I remember being one of the campus eccentrics, in fact. Of course, — if you're one of them, you fall in with the other seven and hang out together for the rest of the year. I remember going so far even as to wear a bathrobe to class. In the '30s, actually, you could be more eccentric and it was more acceptable than it is now, I think. The American individualist was still somehow or other a figure. I mean people like, oh, who was the — let’s see. Anyway, you had people like

Whiteside — You know, Whiteside was the name he had in the play they made about him. The famous theater critic. Oh, anyway, in Sheridan Whiteside he was pilloried and made great fun of by the end of the play — *The Man Who Came to Dinner*. That's the kind of person who was actually in the news and kinds of beloved, I think, in the 1930s, and you could get away with it in an Ivy League School. Probably not in a state university. Anyway, he talked about Black Mountain. I guess it must have come up where he'd been, and he'd been there. I don't know whether he was working in theatre or not. So anyway — I think it was just about that time that *Time* magazine ran an article about it, showing a picture of the under-construction Study Building, designed by, who was it, Mies van der Rohe or no, that other fellow.

MEH: Lawrence Kocher, actually.

AB: So, I ended up there. I sent the money and got some kind of arrangement and they said okay, come on. Because this was already, this was the beginning of World War II and they needed men, I guess, for one thing, everywhere.

MEH: Where'd you gone to high school? Just the public high school in Gloucester?

AB: Yeah, that's right. Gloucester public high school.

MEH: Where was Bates?

AB: Bates is in Lewiston, Maine. There's a kind of cluster there, a trio of Bowdoin and Colby and Bates, and they're all within almost walking distance. That's not true — about twenty, thirty miles apart, kind of a triangle.

MEH: And so how did you get to Black Mountain? Did you take the train?

AB: Yes. Southern Railroad. One of those unusual-looking green steam locomotives, it would have been in those days. I think I saw no one from Black Mountain until I guess you get to, oh, there's a place — Salisbury maybe, where you have to change trains and go up the mountain on that — The railroad there is still spectacular, but of course there are no passenger trains on it, but it's such a mountainous road that you can at times look out to the left and see the tail-end of the train going around a sharp loop.

MEH: Had you ever been in the South before?

AB: Good question. I don't think so. I think this was the first time I saw the, you know, “colored” and “white” signs. In fact the train even was segregated at that time. I found myself in a car where I wasn't supposed to be, I think.

MEH: Was it segregated just in the South, or all the way?

AB: Oh, only after Washington. I don't think there was ever any time in American history where a segregated much of anything was formalized, at least, in the North. I don't think so.

MEH: Did you have any idea what you wanted to study at Black Mountain?

AB: I don't think so. I just wanted to possibly get out of New England, or get out of somewhere, or get somewhere. I think it was just an expression of either wanderlust or curiosity or all of it put together.

MEH: What was your first impression of the college?

AB: Comfortable. Informal. And I guess it by rights was. It had been a summer resort of some sort, and it still had that — if you come into the place, you say, "Ah, this'll be a pleasant two or three weeks.

MEH: Could you have worn your bathrobe to class at Black Mountain and gotten away with it?

AB: Oh, sure. Oh sure. People wore much less than that and got away with it.

MEH: You were there one year, right? '43 through '44, in the summer.

AB: Gee, could be. This is reminiscent of all the troubles I'm getting into. I went to the Bard — they have an annual Christmas party. I went a couple of years ago already, and I hadn't been there before. As you go in they want to give you your badge and all and they say, "Well, what class were you in? What year?" I said "I really don't know. The only way I can fix it was that Eleanor Roosevelt gave the graduation speech." They said, "Oh, that's impressive. We didn't know that."

MEH: So, what courses did you take at Black Mountain?

AB: Hmmm, that almost sounds irrelevant, doesn't it, at a place like that. I think I ranged all the way from statistics to weaving with Anni Albers. Statistics was taught by Paul Radin, an elderly, then essentially retired, but one of the grand old men of American anthropology. I think he was right in there with some of the major names pretty much. He was best known and I guess made his name as someone who for the first time took the Indian and Inuit cultures as producing high art, and took it seriously. Let's see, I remember — I guess I took Eric Bentley's whatever that was called, I don't recall, but it was roughly Cultural History. I remember taking a French course. In fact, I guess I stuck with French. It's my only foreign language, all the way from early high school on through many, many, oh gee, many many many many semesters at Hunter in more recent times. That was taught by Fran de Graaff, who was a Dutch lady and I guess one of the relatively open and frank Communists in the place. Maybe the most so, now that I think of it. Maybe the only, really. Let's see. I think I took a poetry course with somebody, and of course took — I was in all the theatre stuff. We did plays. We did at least one major production a term. Yeah. I did that. Then, of course, the… let's see, now I don't remember another damn thing, as a matter of fact….

MEH: Who were the faculty you remember, either as teachers or just as personalities?

AB: Well, Paul Radin, Eric Bentley, Fran de Graaff. Josef Albers I remember well, although I never went to, you know, got any further than the looms that his wife worked with in the art area. But I was not a, you know, an avid participant in weaving either. I went into it almost as kind of amusement. I did amuse Anni Albers by using Kleenex and things like that in my fabrics. Of course, she said, "These are absolutely useless and impractical and they will all fall apart in a couple of weeks, but it's an interesting concept." Something in that effect, but I think probably — I don't know as I remember anyone else very vividly. Well, Wunsch, the fellow who did the drama, and — let's see.

MEH: What do you remember about Bentley?

AB: Bentley. His hands, I remember, were often active and interwoven and unweaving and weaving themselves together, and he used them a great deal, and one remembers they were rather slim and delicate. He himself was a big man, I would say. Maybe, I remember him as something over six, and solid. But with the physical presence of a large person who has never really developed this physical aspect. There was a certain awkwardness physically. His face was round, as I remember it, too, and glasses were prominent, and – He was interesting. His class was almost entirely lecture. He really didn't – I'm not sure interested in what anyone else had to — I don't remember much discussion at all in his class, as a matter of fact. But he was interesting.

MEH: And what about — What was he like outside of class?

AB: Geez. He rarely — I didn't see much of him outside of class. He didn't participate in any of the work programs or, I don't know — One remembers him from the dining hall. His voice often rose above everybody else's. It was a definite — he was an attention-getting talker, I think he liked to talk a little louder and make his presence extant. I don't remember much else. Yeah, he was around. Everyone was around. But — I remember him principally in the classroom. Mmm. Don't remember — I don't remember whether he had much to say during the meetings or not. I think — Of course, that was the year when the whole place split apart, and at that time I'm not even sure he had much to say even in those meetings. He was, of course, in and out of class very critical of I guess you would say the artist faction, the faction that had been there that was entrenched, as he saw it.

MEH: Who would the artist faction have been?

AB: Well, it would have been the Albers, and, I guess, Fritz Cohen and his wife Elsa. This is another aspect, now that we're talking, I do remember them very avidly and I remember Elsa Kahl. She had been a ballerina, and I remember I took her classes. I may have been the only male who did, but I'm not certain about that.

MEH: I was under the impression that he and Kahl and Cohen were very good friends.

AB: They were. I would say so. Yeah, the artist faction was — I guess maybe you're right. The musicians really were — They tended to be kind of above it all, I think, really. But I'm not — My memory of the whole political fracas there is pretty shaky, because I don't think I took much interest in —

MEH: What about Wunsch? What do you remember about him?

AB: Ah well, let's see. I think he was a good director.

MEH: You think he was a good director?

AB: I do think he was. I think his direction of — We put on *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and there's a mystery there, of course, that one of the two, three men, I remember, in the play were

Jack and his pal (?) and I played the Parson. And Jack Gifford went on to become Jack Gilford (PH), I believe, has been a Hollywood stand-by ever since. But there's a mystery involving a student named Egbert Swackhamer, and I have heard somewhere, somehow it's in my head that he became Mel Tormé.

MEH: He became a director, a Hollywood director. He actually died about two years ago.

AB: Is that right? Hey, you've cleared that up for me.

MEH: Right. But he did become — He directed *The Flying Nun* on TV, and did some very respectable things too.

AB: Well, he and Jack must have known each other all the time now.

MEH: He and Jack..?

AB: Gilford. But maybe Jack Gilford is not really Jack Gifford that I knew, although the fellow who wrote the book a few years ago, a Princeton fellow, told me that yes, Jack Gilford was Jack Gifford.

MEH: I'm not sure.

AB: Dear old days at Black Mountain. No, I wasn't sure either, because I completely lost track of them, but I know Jack came to New York and got a part in — His first part was in *Dark of the Moon*, I believe, and went on from there, I guess.

MEH: Did you take part in any — *The Importance of Being Earnest*, how did the production go? Do you have any particular recollections of it?

AB: It went very well. Everybody loved it. Then the second play that was done was a play called *Outward Bound*, and the political atmosphere had gotten to be so bad that the faction that wanted to, you know, split away from the Old Guard, which Wunsch of course was perhaps the I guess maybe, oh, one of two or three of the absolute original founders of the place — I think. No. You know much more about this than I'll ever know.

MEH: He came a couple of years later.

AB: Anyway, the second play that was done, *Outward Bound*, everybody fell into dislike of it and made fun of it, and the production of it kind of turned into a free-for-all, to which people added bits of dialogue and so on, and I believe I myself did.

MEH: As a member of the cast, or in the audience?

AB: As a member of the cast, yeah. I was in it, and I don't remember the plot of it. It's one of those we're all dead and we're on our way. It's one of those between life and death plays, with that theme. I guess there were a number of them done in those days, the thirties. There was a period of that kind of fantasy. End of my recollection of Wunsch and the plays. I remember he was — stayed by himself a great deal. He lived in the Study Building, had the nice apartment, that kind of may have been designed for someone, a faculty member, to look over or oversee or whatever the goings-on in the Study Building, which, of course, were many and varied.

MEH: Did Wunsch — Bentley. What was wrong with the Old Guard besides the fact they had just been there for a long time, or for a while? Did they have particular failings?

AB: You've got me. I don't know. I guess — I guess they were considered artsy-craftsy, maybe. Not sufficiently academic. Not sufficiently intellectual. Not sufficiently interested in — I think they were seen as, as people in a — people who had withdrawn from society maybe a little too much. The people who were against them were politically active in one way or another, or at least politically aware, and they regarded the others as being a little unaware — even though they were German refugees in considerable part, they were either willingly political refugees or, in the case of the chemistry professor, you know, he was a man named Hansgirg. He and his wife were there as war prisoners, actually. They were in the country when the War started. You probably know all this. And so they were there, and I believe he had to telephone the FBI regularly, just so they could check up and make sure he hadn't fled the coop. Anyway, he expressed absolutely no political opinions that I can remember, at all. There was a man named Clark Foreman who was I would say a New Deal Roosevelt Administration supporter or even, I believe, he participated at some point in one of the Roosevelt administrations. I'm not sure. And Bentley was definitely a leftist — British labor union kind of point of view, and Fran de Graaff was Dutch and I would say if not communist extremely sympathetic. She had been I guess — She had lived in Russia, I believe, and lived with a poet, rather well-known Russian communist poet, probably knew Akhmatova and that circle. No, I think she poet she lived with was much more favorable to the communist regime than Akhmatova's circle. Gee, what was all this in relation to?

MEH: What sort of person was Clark Foreman?

AB: Clark Foreman. Quiet talking. Oh, friendly but — Sort of reserved, but friendly, and I would say had the manners of a Southern gentleman, but a liberal Southern gentleman. He had somehow the presence, I guess, of a bureaucrat. There was something of that, that kind of precision, kind of organizational ability. You felt he had everything under control in his personal life, and his social life and so on was well-ordered. I don't seem to remember much more about Foreman except that the girlfriend I had at the time — the one I was thrown out with later — early in the summer spent a week or so at his country place up at Highlands or something like that.

MEH: Did you ever go there? Were you ever there?

AB: Yes. We were there together, Barbara Anderson and I, and Eric Bentley turned up. This was a sex triangle, I suppose we were involved in there, and the ins and outs of that were carried around, but yeah, we were –

MEH: And he was involved with her too?

AB: Oh, yeah, yeah. We were there, and Foreman was there, and some of the time he wasn't, but the servants were there. It was a well-staffed, well-organized summer retreat. The whole place was kind of a summer retreat, and he had a very nice house there.

MEH: What do you remember about Else Kahl's eukinetics class, besides being the only boy?

AB: I'm not sure I was, but that's my recollection. Maybe Jack Gifford was in it too. Oh, let's see. That's a funny story — eukinetics, because when I transferred to Bard College one of the other people who had been at — there were several of us that went there — was working on the switchboard at the time when the accrediting office rang up the librarian to try to find out what it was. I was put down, I think, with three credits of eukinetics, and the man in the library was German, ran the Bard College library, and he said well, it's probably a specialized kind of physics class. So, I ended up with my three science credits taken care of just like that! Never went near a physical science class afterwards. Anyway, the class was a lot of — I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it. Of course, Elsa was magnificently enjoyable. She was totally warm, outgoing, fun, informal, casual, bright, sharp. You know, she was a physical presence you could not avoid looking at and appreciating, even I guess in her fifties. And she said, "You have the right kind of body to be a dancer, but you I don't think really want to be" — something to that effect. There was a kind of awkwardness, but I enjoyed it nevertheless. In fact, I think later on — I think when I was at Bard I also took dance. I don't know why. Never did anything with it.

[END OF SIDE 1, BEGINNING OF SIDE 2]

AB: I think it goes back to the time I spent in summer theater before I went to Black Mountain. There was somebody who taught something for those who were interested called "Menzendiek" (PH), which is a Norwegian system of mental concentration on the muscles. And this is a useful thing, and I use it even to this day. If I have a lower back pain, I can inside of five minutes or ten minutes usually make it vanish by concentrating on those muscular areas. It was supposed to be something which helped you move efficiently around the stage, like somehow having a memuous mental contact with parts of your body that were moving around. But again this is something which just was a passing amusement.

MEH: What about Fritz Cohen? Did you take any music classes with him or with Jalowetz?

AB: No, the furthest I got was — I did apply for and join the chorus, we had a chorus. And poor Dr. Jalowetz, after two or three weeks, with great hesitation and trepidation and everything else, came to me and said "You know," — he was stumbling all over the place, but the gist of it was I could not sing. (LAUGHTER) But clear it now and we won't have any further trouble, and, you know, you simply cannot carry a tune. And I've never played any musical instrument or — Of course**,** very used to hearing it, because my father had been in brass bands all of his early twenty or thirty years in the late nineteenth century. My father, incidentally, was ancient even when I was born. He was about seventy when I was born, and had been born in the Civil War and went through that period when brass bands were really very popular, and so every night he played two or three of his brass band instruments in the living room and they could be heard all over town, and he didn't give a damn. But music, yeah, although he did play these various things, I seemed to take very little interest in it. I think I took piano lessons for a while and gave that up. No further contact with Fritz Cohen or Jalowetz or whomever else. I guess there was — well, let's see, I don't know, the Kolisch Quartet was there at some point.

MEH: Moving to the summer, do you remember during the '40, the school year, the regular school year before the summer, obviously there was a lot of conflict**.**

AB: Oh yes, there were great –

MEH: What do you think were the issues?

AB: Well this is, this is — firstly, let's say I don't think I was that interested in it. I was, you know, I guess adjunct to the whole movement because of Barbara Anderson. She was closer to it and felt more strongly about it than I did, and so I dittoed her to some degree. I don't think I really cared that much. In fact, I think maybe I was probably maybe temperamentally more with the people who wanted to go off into the hillside and be agrarian recidivists than to be politically active. I don't know. The issues, as far as I know — The principal issue was very basic: it was that the Establishment somehow or other felt that the ideal political world would be one in which everybody agreed on something before it was done, so no one would be unhappy. Well, logically this struck me as absurd, and so I could on this very fundamental ground agree with those people who were saying, "Look. I mean democracy doesn't work that way. If one more out of ten million wants it, that's the way we ought to go, I mean if we're really honest about it. It's — the plurality decides." And so I would agree with that on fundamental grounds, and I don't remember really whether there was any other issue or not, except these vague things I'm trying to express, like they felt they were not socially aware enough and not politically aware enough and not intellectually alert enough. They just weren't quite — They were a little too withdrawn from society, I guess. You shouldn't have a school that's going off, you know, withdrawing like this. That it should be Out There, that it should be — Probably they wanted it to get bigger, be something, be a force of some sort in American education, I think. I think Clark Foreman definitely was of this, had this feeling, that it should become a real vibrant, vital kind of Southern liberal school. And I think the German refugees wanted anything but. They were, in a sense — shunned politics, and, oh yeah, that reminds me – The philosophy professor, Straus, one of the great German philosophers of the time, was there. And he was pilloried, I would say, almost by the group that wanted more vitality and then criticized for having been during the early period of Hitler's rise blind to it all and above it all and wanting nothing to do with it and considered them vulgar and that's that. And criticized for not having actively fought, joined, or been against or something — taken sides. I guess they then perhaps saw the Alberses somewhat this way and the whole Bauhaus as somewhat this way too.

MEH: So what about integration? Do you remember that being a major issue that year?

AB: Gee, I don't remember it was discussed in any way except to be aware of it when you go off campus. In other words, the society here is – It’s segregated and you can easily cause yourself trouble and even worse cause the school trouble if you don't abide by the — Don't insist on going where you're not supposed to be. I don't remember much of anything else. Possibly, but I don't think so, I don't think the activist faction was outwardly in favor of bringing black students in or anything like that. This may have been talked about, and it may have been something that the Old Guard was afraid they might get to. Maybe it was somewhere in the back of their heads as "My God, what next?" You know. The Germans, of course, wanted to avoid anything like this. They had enough of it. I suppose they had a point. I don't know. But I guess — Of course, Fritz Cohen and his wife were active leftists in Germany, I think, and — I don't know. I guess I really wasn't that close to those people. In fact, I'm not sure I was close to either faction. I think I was one of those people who was, or I guess — The issue of unanimity is all I can fully agree with you on. I just didn't really care that much about activism and so on.

MEH: Did you ever go off campus and into Black Mountain or Asheville?

AB: Very little. I think I remember going to Asheville to the dentist a couple of times. The only other times we went off campus were we took hikes. We took, in fact, I remember, one magnificent long weekend hike in which we climbed Mount Mitchell. I spent the next three days recuperating, I guess. We must all have walked a hundred miles or something in three days. But that was one of the highlights I remember as having a good time at Black Mountain, you know. But I don't remember being off campus hardly at all. I didn't give a damn. I doubt I was interested — Again, I suppose, this was a nice little world and it was good enough for me.

MEH: What type of entertainment did you have at the College? I mean how did you — did you have parties, concerts? Obviously, you had plays.

AB: Well, the concerts were famous. They were unique, as far as I know. I don't know of any — Well, I suppose they're not, but for a small college consisting of maybe 150 students and faculty up in the mountains of North Carolina at a place where you have to ford a stream two of three times to get to it, having every single Saturday night a chamber music concert at which everybody dressed to the hilt as though they were going to Carnegie Hall. In those days — Of course, now you can go to Carnegie Hall in blue jeans, but not in the late 1930s. Everybody dressed, and somehow this city world was kept and brought back to full life every Saturday night for about four hours. You might as well have been in midtown Manhattan, if you could see close-ups of people and what was going on. And everybody I think enjoyed these things. There were record-playing performances of operas, which were done with puppets. And the lady who — "lady," she was then a girl — she was Jalowetz's daughter, Lisa Jalowetz, and I believe went on to become a significant Broadway set designer. She did these puppet productions. One I remember was Don Giovanni, but I think she did others. I think they stuck to Mozart, being absolutely, you know, how can you get any better? That was their mood about Mozart. And otherwise formal entertainment, there wasn't much. People went on picnics, you know, there were a number of those. Gee, I don't know as there were — I don't believe I can put my finger on a single thing, single incident, that could be called "a party." People fell together here and there, and, of course, groups were formed who saw more of each other than they saw of the others. But even those were very shifting and very, very vague. Group activities were almost nonexistent.

MEH: Did you take part in Bentley's theatrical readings of Brecht's work? Do you remember?

AB: Ohh! I don't — I don't believe I took part in the actual reading, but I may have, but I'm not sure. I don't remember performing it or reading in that, no. I remember the production. I remember the reading, and — But I don't remember who participated in it besides Eric. I don't remember which part or parts he read, but — It was very energetic. His style of the theater was very energetic, and I guess would be said to fit Brecht right well.

MEH: What do you remember about the conflict in the summer of '44?

AB: When was that?

MEH: That was the summer session.

AB: Well, I had been thrown out. Andy and I – Barbara Anderson and I – had been thrown out at the beginning of that.

MEH: You mean when it started.

AB: Yeah, we weren't there.

MEH: What happened before? Why were you thrown out?

AB: She and her friend, a girl – a Mormon I guess from Utah – named Wacker — same as Wacker Drive in Chicago — had hitchhiked to a very leftist school, I think, called Highlander Folk School, or something like that, and had been arrested and jailed and so on. I believe in the South at that time they grabbed people who were in any way foreigners or radicals or anything and then threw the book at them, and so they routinely said, "Well, you tested for syphilis and gonorrhea and have all these things. Of course, you're whores." Any radical would be automatically — any female radical would be assumed, you know, in that culture, to be very very loose sexually. So, they came back after Clark Foreman, I guess, got them out of jail.

MEH: Ted Dreier got them out.

AB: Ted Dreier, that's another remember – remembered name from the past. I supposed Foreman would probably have avoided the publicity or trying — You know, he wouldn't have wanted to get involved in that. Dreier I guess did. And so, well, of course, Andy was asked "Well have you been going to bed with anybody else? What is this?" you know. This sexual triangle was exposed.

MEH: Andy and you and Bentley.

AB: Bentley, yeah, right, right. It was exposed. And the administration, which was still that of the conservatives, the Old Guard, decreed that we had to leave. And so we did.

MEH: Wasn't Bentley at that point married to Maya?

AB: Yeah. Oh, yeah. What went on there I don't know. Nobody else does either, but — Whether she knew. I would assume she did. Maybe they were completely open and frank about it, I don't know.

MEH: Actually, Andy and Jeanne had gone to visit Bentley, who was teaching that summer — I think they were arrested in Chattanooga, but he was teaching in the western part of Tennessee.

AB: Well maybe that was where they went or why they went there. Okay. Was that — That wasn't the Highlander Folk School, where he was, was it?

MEH: No, he wasn't at Highlander. They may have stopped at Highlander.

AB: Yeah, that's, that somehow, that was what I think got them in trouble. They had been there, or the cop said, "Where are you going?" and they mentioned that. Well that was like waving a red flag. Yeah. (OVERTALK)

MEH: So you were ousted. You were sent to Clark Foreman's for –

AB: I didn't have —

MEH: You said you and Barbara Anderson left as soon as everything started happening.

AB: Yeah. I believe we, as part of our departure, then possibly that was en route to leaving. Maybe we went there for a week, were invited down to calm down and, you know, let the whole thing kind of settle out, so you won't just be going off into the wilderness. Maybe there was even some attempt to mollify us or — I guess it was just a nice social gesture. I really can't say what was going on in Clark Foreman's head, but I think — He was gracious, he liked things to be calm and smooth and well-behaved, I think. So, you know, just throw these kids out and say "Go get on the next bus," he took us up there on kind of a week's vacation.

MEH: So you were only there like a week.

AB: Uh-huh (AFFIRMATIVE).

MEH: Did the college generally supervise the personal lives of students? Or was it just when this became an issue — the hitchhiking thing occurred that so many people thought it was their business?

AB: I am not aware of being supervised by anybody at any time at Black Mountain. There were I believe — There was talk about "standards" of behavior which should be observed, but these were never in the manner of a typical Eastern college at that period, a Blue Book was not published, you know, “you must this,” “you must not that,” and “the hours for this.” Nothing of the sort existed. I don't think – I think there was a great respect for the individual rights and privileges and prerogatives and decisions and lack of decisions and lack of standards or standards — whatever. And it was only, I guess you'd say, yes, reactive — when something had happened, "Well, you shouldn't have done that."

MEH: What about Jeannie Wacker? Did she stay at the school or did she go with you?

AB: I believe she stayed for the rest of that summer. She – I've lost track of completely, but only hear occasionally. She, I guess, became a philosophy professor or something of the sort. She became a devotee of the NYU philosopher — You undoubtedly know who I'm talking about. Sidney Hook. I remember that, later on, having heard about her once or twice, but that's all.

MEH: What about Barbara Anderson? Did you remain friends?

AB: Ah, well, we were together all the time at Bard, and then she married one of the professors at Bard, and I went to visit them a couple of times. Several times. Yeah, we were friendly up until a period I guess when we didn't see each other anymore. What's become of her? I asked somebody who had still some contacts with people at Bard if they knew, and I was given a phone number in Connecticut and rang it, and a very cultured male voice answered and said, "There's nobody by that name here."

MEH: What did you do when you left the college? You went immediately to the Foremans.

AB: Mmh?

MEH: You left the college. You went to Clark Foreman's for a week.

AB: Yeah.

MEH: Did you go to Bard that fall?

AB: Yeah. Mm-hm (AFFIRMATIVE). She and I got admitted, I think. No, wait a minute. I got admitted first. Then I guess No, she and Jeanne Wacker took an apartment a little off Sheridan Square that fall, and I visited them there. And I guess they were both going to NYU or maybe the New School which is easy to go to off the cuff, you know. You just pay your money and go pretty much. I guess Barbara Anderson, for what reason I'm not sure, decided to go to Bard. I don't think it was just because I was there. But maybe it was, or maybe it was — I guess maybe she didn't like the New School. I don't know. I don't know. But I guess Wacker stayed in New York, and I guess she's been in New York all this time, for all I know.

MEH: What did you study at Bard?

AB: Bard. Went on with the French, which I guess has been kind of a hobby. I don't know. Let's see. Took the dance class. I guess I took some history courses with the man who was the librarian. Took a course with, I guess, with the man whose academic description would be extremely difficult — a man named Werner Wolf (PH), whose name I have encountered in subsequent years. He was either a psychologist or a sociologist or an archaeologist or — and the list, I think, could go on. He's been — what I've encountered of him wherever he's been mentioned subsequently in any kind of intellectual context is he's a laughing stock. He had pretended to have deciphered the Maya writing system, for example, and in later years I've become interested. In fact I've spent, until my eyesight failed, I would go summers on archaeological projects. I've been doing that for quite a while, and of course have to disqualify myself for some years now, but I remember encountering some brief dismissal of Werner Wolf as being an absolutely insane fantasy by people who had, in fact, made real progress in deciphering the Mayan — I think I took his course, but I don't remember what it was called or what it was about! It may have been — I think he was interested in deciding what kind of personality a person had by the way they walked. It was just a step away from phrenology, I think. By their facial structure, this was going to reveal whether they're an introvert or an extravert, the way they walk, the way they move, the way they sat, and so on. Maybe some connection with Ernest Houton (PH), of that time, I think did a lot of stuff like this. I think I took a course with, well with Fred Dupee, and I took Mary McCarthy’s — these are both literature course. Dupee's was terrific. We all read Proust and Thomas Mann and — anyway, with Mary McCarthy we read all the Russian — great nineteenth-century Russians. Her classes were like a séance. She would kind of gather up her energies, gather them all in, and then start to talk and — For an hour or two, she would talk, and she would sort *in medias res*, jump into the middle of War and Peace, you know, and then gradually structure the whole thing, I suspect almost as a novelist, you know. She was recreating in some way the way maybe it was put together in the author's mind. She was incred – it was very interesting. She did discuss the characters and the plot and all of this, but it was, it was — the whole experience was like going to a séance. Nobody said a word, just sat (INAUDIBLE). She would wring her hands and agonize physically to some degree. That was fun. I ended up, in fact, being a conduit for hers and Wilson's son. They had separated at that point, and this was, I guess, her first year of not living with Edmund Wilson. She got this job at Bard. There was the son, who — He, Wilson, had visiting rights with him, so she didn't want to take this kid down there, so I got the job of transporting, on the train, this eight year old back and forth several times when this was done. So, I met Edmund Wilson by doing this.

MEH: So, when you graduated from Bard, what have you done professionally since?

AB: What have I done professionally? Almost nothing. I have been a dilettante of rather trivial magnitude for most of my life. I've become a high school teacher and I did that for twenty years.

MEH: What did you teach?

AB: Gee, just about anything. My feeling about high school teaching, I guess got to be very quickly — You don't really have to know much of anything except possibly in foreign language, a little bit in physical science, but my feeling was anybody could teach ordinary level high school given a summer to get up on whatever the subject is. So, I got bored teaching the same thing more than twice. The kind of high school teacher that just makes me cringe is the guy who’s got his notes, you know, and they're dog-eared and dirty in the corners and he's told the same joke, you know, every term on this particular day for the last thirty years. And there were guys like that around. But I flipped around. Gee whiz, I taught biology one time, I taught French for a year. Well, I guess I ought to tell you about the kind of school it was. It was the absolute bottom. It was the school with the worst academic standing and the worst attendance record of all New York City high schools.

MEH: Where was this?

AB: It was the, it is still standing but it's been changed. It was in Harlem, it was on East 116th Street, the only high school, physically, in geologically Harlem. So, yeah, it was a school that was about 60, 65 percent Hispanic and the rest black, and was considered a problem school. Very much so. So, particularly, given that kind of situation, teaching is not known at all. Teaching is being able somehow to get some way or other something out of these kids. Get them interested a little bit in something. So, I went from teaching English a couple of years, French for a year, biology for a while, and then I got myself into a special thing which I loved. For several years the city had quite a lot of money and they gave, they set up — Every high school had to have four teachers or so who were unassigned, and I was immediately picked as one of them, having been observed as someone who likes to flip around. These unassigned teachers always showed up every day. They worked on a regular salary and regular — everything normal. But they were there to be the first fill-ins when teachers were absent. So I enjoyed this very much, and very often — It got so that the regular fill-ins, being, you know, experienced at handling these kids, were given situations where (a) someone had disappeared for a month or two — jury duty, or died, or whatever — so often I was in the situation of having a class for several weeks or a month or two or so. During that period I taught typing and bookkeeping and — you name it, I did it. Horticulture. The school had a greenhouse — one of the few high schools that did do a, you know, really taught kids, you know, so they were able to get jobs in the Park Department and it was a very good part of the school. But I ended up there. First — I ended up teaching reading, and discovered that this was — If you could get these kids, most of the average, probably the average reading level of the kids in that school may have been fifth grade reading level. The most ghastly experience I had, really, was when I discovered that I had in my reading class a senior who was three months away from graduating who could not read anything, who was totally illiterate. I found out because I did something that other reading teachers, I guess, didn't do. The norm was to have these diagnostic tests which you would give, by which you would determine their reading level and their reading strengths. The first thing I did was to sit down next to each student with a paragraph and say, "Well just — I want to just get a rough idea. Will you read this for me?" On two, three different occasions I uncovered, discovered I had a student who had gotten through all these years of school and never learned to read. Not a sentence. Were utterly illiterate. And I just — I mean I spent time ever since, and marveling at it, that — What kind of systems did they invent?

MEH: They'd have to be pretty smart students.

AB: Yeah, they were bright kids. They knew how to make out. Talk about street smarts. They had school smarts. They could see it coming and they never got caught. They probably got caught.

[END OF SIDE 2]

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]