

Interviewee: SYBIL YAMINS GOLDBERG  
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS  
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**[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1 ]**

**MEH:** [GIVES IDENTIFICATION]. How did you come, Sybil, to be at Black Mountain College?

**SYG:** My sister was there ahead of me, and I went down to visit her, and I guess the first thing – liked it very much. They handed me a cello and asked me to play in the orchestra. That's – Of course, Bela was in the orchestra too. Then I went down as a student.

**MEH:** Where were you from?

**SYG:** Fall River.

**MEH:** Oh, so this is your home?

**SYG:** Yes, this is back home, yes.

**MEH:** How had your sister heard about the college?

**SYG:** Interestingly, she had read about it from the article that was condensed in the Reader's Digest of Louis Adamic, and found it fascinating and started to follow up on it.

**MEH:** And your parents were willing to send two daughters to Black Mountain?

**SYG:** Yes.

**MEH:** What did your parents do? What did your father do?

**SYG:** Oh, my father had a wholesale dry goods store here in Fall River.

**MEH:** Were your parents at all interested in Progressive Education? Is that anything they knew anything about?

**SYG:** They were interested in education, not necessarily progressive, but they were very broad minded and when we chose Black Mountain, that was perfectly agreeable to them – except that it was so far away.

**MEH:** How did you get there?

**SYG:** When I went down to visit, I went by train, and after that, either by train or bus, until we started driving. Jim Jamieson had a station wagon. He was from Newton, and we drove back and forth with him all the time. It was great.

**MEH:** Can you remember your first impression of the college?

**SYG:** Beautiful place. Because this was Lee Hall. Do you know what I'm talking –

**MEH:** What year were you were there? What year did you go?

**SYG:** I went in 1938. We're talking a long time – it's a long time ago.

**MEH:** So that was the Lee Hall years.

**SYG:** Yes. Yes. Actually I was there for two years, and the summer of my second year, before I transferred, I stayed down and worked as a waitress over at Lake Eden. You may have heard we were building, you know, the college over there, and I stayed down for that summer and I don't know whom you've met from that time. Cynthia Carr – Cynthia Bovington.

**MEH:** I haven't talked to her. I'm going to talk to her later this summer.

**SYG:** She was down there. Lorraine Creesy. I don't know what her married name is. Oh Lisa Jalowetz, I'm sure you've –

**MEH:** Right.

**SYG:** Yes, she was down there.

**MEH:** Describe Lee Hall.

**SYG:** Lee Hall was – You know, we're talking a long time ago. I remember it as a great huge white building up on the mountains, with a beautiful entrance and just gorgeous scenery.

**MEH:** Did you have a study in Lee Hall?

**SYG:** We each had a study. We roomed two in a room, but everybody had their private study which they fixed up as they wanted. You haven't run across John Evarts?

**MEH:** He's no longer living, but I did meet him before he died.

**SYG:** He died, I'm sorry.

**MEH:** Yes, he died. He's no longer living. Did you have any idea what you wanted to study?

**SYG:** Well, I really wanted to be a business major, but I didn't want to go to Simmons straight from high school. So, I had these two wonderful years at Black Mountain. I did a lot with music. I played in the orchestra. The cello's still here under the grand piano!

**MEH:** Who was teaching music then?

**SYG:** Well, I took cello lessons out in Asheville at one time, and I just practiced myself. Of course, I took all the music appreciation courses. That's where I met John Evarts.

**MEH:** He was teaching that?

**SYG:** Yes. We played Mozart Clarinet Quintet – Bela played the clarinet. I played the cello. But it was wonderful. I loved all the music. Of course, when I came back to Boston afterwards, I went to the Boston Symphony all the time. Symphony Hall was in my back yard, and I got a great deal out of it. But I knew it was nothing that I could do as a profession.

**MEH:** Did you take any courses with John Rice? Was he still there?

**SYG:** He was there one year, I believe. I don't remember taking anything with him. I remember taking psychology with Straus. And a lot of German. The Moellenhoffs were down there at that time. I don't know if you've heard about them.

**MEH:** Right.

**SYG:** And, of course, I took German and Music. English courses.

**MEH:** With whom did you take English?

**SYG:** I don't remember. You're talking about a long time ago!

**MEH:** Was it Fred Mangold maybe? Or Bob Wunsch?

**SYG:** Could have been. Yes, either one. Yes, Fred Mangold was there. Bob Wunsch was there. Yes. I can't remember who else in English.

**MEH:** Did you take any art courses with Albers?

**SYG:** I didn't take any art courses. I wasn't – Of course, his wife was there, too, and everybody was interested in the work that she did.

**MEh:** What did you do for entertainment at the college?

**SYG:** Danced! (LAUGHS) I went down to Roy's.

**MEH:** Describe Roy's.

**SYG:** Oh, I don't even remember. I just remember it as a place we all went to. I guess we danced there. Go to an occasional movie. Used to go to occasional concerts in Asheville or in Spartanburg or someplace, but mostly it was self-contained and we provided our own. Of course, we worked, too. They had a work program, and we all worked. And had tea in Lee Hall every afternoon.

**MEH:** That's rather interesting, to think that you would break your work, stop your work for tea.

**SYG:** Yes. Well, they didn't have classes, I believe, between lunchtime and four o'clock, and then classes would resume like from four to dinner time.

**MEH:** Are there any students that you remember in particular from the college?

**SYG:** Oh, Jimmie Jamieson, of course.

**MEH:** What was he like?

**SYG:** He was a very interesting person. He had a lot of life. He was a music major, I believe, and I also took German with him. One of my good friends. And Jim Raymond. I don't know – Have you been up to Maine? Harold Raymond.

**MEH:** I want to meet him this summer.

**SYG:** Oh he's a very good – I hear from him every Christmas. He's my really only contact that, you know, I hear from regularly. He was one – There were six of us that drove back and forth together. There was Derek Bovingdon. He was killed in the War. And Jim Raymond, Jim Jamieson, my sister, and Lorraine Creesy, and myself. We were all from Massachusetts, and we drove back and forth together.

**MEH:** It was a crowded car.

**SYG:** A station wagon.

**MEH:** Do you remember anything about the work program?

**SYG:** Well, we were trying to fix up Lake Eden, and I can remember, you know, doing work in the cottages. Somebody showed me how to put in glass windows— put in panes of glass and things like that. Also, but we worked out – because I can remember picking apples and doing work like that.

**MEH:** On the farm?

**SYG:** Yes.

**MEH:** Did you ever go into Asheville or anyplace like that?

**SYG:** Oh, we used to go into Asheville all the time, yes. Asheville was the, you know, cultural city. We used to go into movies. We used to go to concerts. But you stayed at the college. You didn't go running around away weekends or anything. People just stayed, stayed there.

**MEH:** Did you find that – Did you really work hard, with no grades or anything like that as a requirement?

**SYG:** No, grades, no. But you worked hard just the same. No, we didn't have any grades.

**MEH:** How did you dress?

**SYG:** Very casually. We got dressed for dinner at night. We must have gone around in pants long before people were wearing pants, because when I got back up – I transferred to Simmons, which, of course, is the opposite, and there we dressed like ladies. You had to wear a hat when you went into town and all that. So, at Black Mountain it was really casual, but we did dress for dinner at night and almost formally Saturday nights. Saturday nights were dancing and special

dinners and parties, and you really dressed. I remember we had long dresses and everything. But you kind of dressed for dinner every night.

**MEH:** Did you make your dresses? Did you bring them down with you?

**SYG:** Oh ,no, we just brought clothes with us like everything else. No. We didn't make anything. I'm not good with – in that department.

**MEH:** Did you take any courses with Jalowetz? Was he there when you were there?

**SYG:** Jalowetz was there, yes, but I don't remember particularly taking courses with him. Was he music? I remember John Evarts. Maybe Jalowetz – I do remember taking Music Appreciation courses? But I thought they were mostly with John Evarts. Or maybe I remember him well because – We each had an advisor, and John was my advisor so maybe that's why I seem to remember him.

**MEH:** You stayed for the summer of 1940, when they were starting to build the Studies Building?

**SYG:** Yes. That was the summer that Frank Nacke was drowned. It was terrible.

**MEH:** What do you remember about that?

**SYG:** Oh, it must have been terrible rains, and they went out to open the floodgates or close the – Something. He went out, I guess, with Mort Steinau, and I don't know – he drowned. I don't know what happened. It was just terrible.

**MEH:** How did the community handle something like that?

**SYG:** Well, they had some kind of memorial service for him, and I don't remember the details at all. That's a long time ago, and it just – We lost so many of our good people in the War.

**MEH:** Were you really aware of the plight of the refugees like Moellenhoff and Jalowetz?

**SYG:** Yes. Yes, we were. Also, Claude Monteux. Do you know his father was Pierre Monteux, one of the renowned conductors of the Boston Symphony. Claude was down there when I was there, and I think this was just about the time that France was falling, and they were – So, we were very much aware of conditions in Europe at that time. Yes. Also the, oh, the Albers, of course. I seem to know a lot about Gropius, too, because I don't know whether he designed the building or he drew up plans for it, anyway. Breuer and other people. Yes.

**MEH:** Do you remember the library? Did they have a library at Black Mountain?

**SYG:** I don't have any recollection. I suppose they did, but I just don't, I don't recall.

**MEH:** Did you ever go into the mountains hiking?

**SYG:** Yes, we did. We used to go up to the Blue Ridge – Mount Mitchell. It was the highest point, I believe, east of the Rockies. We used to have an overnight and climb up there. Oh, the terrain, the mountains were gorgeous. Beautiful country.

**MEH:** Had you ever been in the South before?

**SYG:** No. No, I'd never been any place, really, before. I was a New Englander, and I don't think I'd really done any travelling at all until I went there. As I said, we went by train or by bus or by car. We didn't fly in those days either, as some people did. But I don't even know where the airport would have been. There was a little train station in Black Mountain and somebody would come down and meet you.

**MEH:** Do you remember the Dreiers?

**SYG:** Oh, yes. Yes. I knew them. Yes. Are they – ?



**MEH:** They're still living. What sort of people were they?

**SYG:** Was he the treasurer? I think he taught. I don't remember him as a teacher. I don't remember her as a teacher. I think they were more administration. They, of course, were the original people that came from Rollins.

**MEH:** Did you take a course with John Rice? Did you take his course?

**SYG:** I can't remember taking a course with him. I might have, but I don't – I remember him as a person.

**MEH:** How do you remember him as a person?

**SYG:** Very dynamic, full-of-spunk person, yes. I don't even know if he was there for the two years that I was there or if he was just one year, and then Bob Wunsch became the rector. You know I haven't – It's a long time ago, and I haven't had any contact really with people from Black Mountain, except for a Christmas card from Jim Raymond every year. Nancy Ross died a few years ago, I guess. She used to come every once in a while, or else I saw her when I was in Boston maybe. But – And Hopie, Hope Stevens – when I was in Boston she was there. But this too was a long time ago. I graduated from Simmons in '43.

**MEH:** Did you go directly from Black Mountain to Simmons?

**SYG:** Yes.

**MEH:** Did Simmons accept your Black Mountain credits?

**SYG:** Accepted some of them. I did lose a year when I transferred. I would have had to go to two summer sessions, because many of my – I couldn't fulfill my business requirements for Simmons in two years, so I lost a year when I transferred.

**MEH:** So, why did you leave Black Mountain?

**SYG:** I wanted to be a business major. I really felt that this was what I was going to do, and no way could I do that at Black Mountain.

**MEH:** For sure. In that period, were there that many women who were studying business? Was that an unusual thing to do?

**SYG:** Well, no. Simmons was the place to do it because at Simmons you could get your degree –

**MEH:** Was Simmons a co-ed school?

**SYG:** No, it was all girls.

**MEH:** Was it a good business course?

**SYG:** Very good business courses, and also it meant getting your degree at the same time that you were getting all your business courses.

**MEH:** And so have you worked in business?

**SYG:** Oh, yes.

**MEH:** As a – What did you do?

**SYG:** Well, I started off as a secretary, would become an office manager, went into fundraising work. In much later years I went into real estate, all kinds of things. When I graduated from Simmons, it was during the War, and a few of us went down to work at the administrative office of the American Red Cross in New York. I stayed there for three years, 'til I got fed up with New York. For the War years, it was very good. This was like '43 to '46.

**MEH:** And then what did you do then? In '46, after the War?

**SYG:** Then I worked for professional hospital fund raisers – Will, Folsom, and Smith [PH] – and travelled around quite a bit doing fundraising campaigns for hospitals.

I was up in Lake Placid; I was in White Plains; down in Jersey. Then after that I got married.

**MEH:** You have two, three children?

**SYG:** I have four. Four children, three grandchildren.

**MEH:** And you moved back to Fall River?

**SYG:** And came back, yes. I traveled around quite a bit during the years that I was doing hospital fund raising, and then after that I got married and settled down here.

**MEH:** Do you feel like Black Mountain had any real influence on you?

**SYG:** Oh, yes!

**MEH:** How do you –

**SYG:** Oh ,I think it – it gave me my whole music background.

**MEH:** Have you continued to perform?

**SYG:** No, no, no, no.

**MEH:** But for pleasure.

**SYG:** But, yes, it had a great deal of – Otherwise, I would have just been isolated like – to go to college in Boston after living in Fall River. This way at least I got out, and I saw the country and had a liberal education, you know, very good.

**MEH:** Do you have any other memories, particularly, of Black Mountain? Any anecdotes or particular things that you might remember?

**SYG:** Too long ago, really. Of course, it changed so much, and I didn't keep in touch with all that. But, oh, I suppose you've read Martin Duberman's book, yes. He takes you through all those different crises and years.

**MEH:** Were you really aware of the crises?

**SYG:** They were not in my time. I was only there from '38 to '40, and this wasn't in my time.

**MEH:** Were you aware of the conflicts concerning John Rice, and his leaving?

**SYG:** No, not really. No.

**MEH:** Did you work at all in the business office, or anything like that?

**SYG:** No, I didn't do anything in the business office. Nancy Ross was the secretary at that time, I'm sure. But no. No, I took music courses, psychology courses, sociology courses.

**MEH:** Who was the psychology with?

**SYG:** There was a Dr. Straus, also from Germany, who was psychology. There were a couple of brothers down there. One was a historian, and one was sociology.

**MEH:** The Barnes brothers?

**SYG:** Yes. I was interested in sociology, but I really felt as if I did want to do something after I got out of college. This is 1938, 1940. Women were nurses or they were teachers or they went into business. There were a few people who became professionals – lawyers, doctors – but –

**MEH:** Did you save any materials from Black Mountain, like photographs or bulletins or anything like that?

**SYG:** I don't think I have – a couple of photographs, maybe, of us waiting on table, but that's all, when we were at Lake Eden that summer. But other than that, I don't have anything, no.

**MEH:** What was the food like?

**SYG:** Wonderful.

**MEH:** Do you remember anything about mealtimes?

**SYG:** Yes, I can almost see us going through the cafeteria line, and waiting on – A couple of people would get up and serve the table. But, you know, it's like long, long ago and good memories.

**MEH:** Let's turn it off for a second now and – [INTERRUPTION]

**SYG:** – from Winnetka, Illinois, was Katie Sieck and Barbara Sieck. Have you run into them at all?

**MEH:** I haven't found them. I don't know where they are.

**SYG:** No, all right. Barbara was married to Derek Bovingdon – he was killed in the War. I don't know what happened to Katie. But, you know, you think of people that you knew then. I haven't been back at all. I know they had a reunion, but – I haven't seen anybody now for many years.

**MEH:** Did I ask you if Allan Sly was teaching music when you were there?

**SYG:** Allan Sly was, and his wife Betty. Of course, yes. The first summer that I came home – Not the summer. The first Christmas vacation, I drove up with them. Is she still living?

**MEH:** So far as I know. I'm not sure.

**SYG:** I know he died. Oh, they were the music of – Yes. I remember driving up with them. We stopped – In those days we stopped over a couple of nights. You know, we didn't drive right through. Later with Jimmy and the station wagon, we'd take turns driving, and we'd go right through and not bother to –

**MEH:** It's a long drive through.

**SYG:** Yes, it is. It's a long drive. Once we had car trouble, and we had to stop along the way while we got the car fixed up, and then decided it was too late to stop for the night. We might as well keep going. Then figured we might as well, you know, drive right through and not stop. I remember driving down after Christmas vacation the first year with John Evarts, and – I can't even remember who was on that trip. Roman – but he was killed in the service too.

**MEH:** Do you remember – What was Roman like?

**SYG:** Very interesting. He must have been very bright. John Evarts was responsible for him coming to Black Mountain.

**MEH:** How was that?

**SYG:** I don't know. All I know is that he was very smart, and – I don't know what happened. He was killed in the service. Jim Jamieson wasn't. He had a heart attack. I remember when he died. Much too young. Can I ask – Is this –  
[INTERRUPTION] It was before his time.

**MEH:** yes, but he might still be curious.

**SYG:** Yes. (LAUGHS).

**MALE VOICE [OFFMIKE]:** (UNINTELL)

**MEH:** What did Hyalie do? Did she marry?

**SYG:** She married and had four children, yes.

**MEH:** What is her name, married name?

**SYG:** Green. Yes.

**MEH:** And did she work professionally?

**SYG:** No.

**MEH:** She was a homemaker, too? That's a profession. Definitely.

**SYG:** Yes. Yes. She was an English major. She graduated.

**MEH:** When she graduated, did she do any advanced work anywhere else?

**SYG:** No.

**MEH:** I'm always curious to know whether places accepted Black Mountain credits.

**SYG:** They did, because people like – well I'll use Jim Raymond as an example. He went on to Harvard for his Master's and his Ph.D., and they had an outside examiner come down at that time to do their orals and so forth. They were accepted, you know, for advanced degrees. He's the only one I can think of at the moment, but he was a professor. He's just recently retired as a professor at Colby.

**MEH:** Do you remember any visitors to the college?

**SYG:** We had many visitors, but I don't, I don't recall them. But people did come and visit. Yes. They'd think they're going to stay for a day and stay for a week or a month.

**MEH:** What about the – What was I going to ask you? I lost my train of thought.

**SYG:** I guess we thought we were pretty well rounded. We put on plays all the time.

**MEH:** Were you in any of the plays?

**SYG:** Yes, I was in a play one time.

**MEH:** What were you in?

**SYG:** Waiting for Lefty.

**MEH:** Do you remember what role you had?

**SYG:** (LAUGHS) No, I don't remember the role. All I remember is they felt that everybody should participate, and we did.

**MEH:** Who directed it?

**SYG:** I guess Bob Wunsch did. He must have.

**MEH:** Do you remember going to Chapel Hill with any plays, taking any plays to other places?

**SYG:** I don't remember going to Chapel Hill. It was quite a distance, isn't it?

**MEH:** Yes.

**SYG:** Because I understand now the University of North Carolina, which the main campus is in Chapel Hill, has a satellite campus or something in Asheville.

**MEH:** Well, not really a satellite campus. There is a branch of the university in Asheville. Right.

**SYG:** We always thought of Asheville as much more of a cultural center – the place to go for symphony, for plays, maybe. We used to – It was too – It was about fifteen miles, maybe. What did Bela – what does Bela do?

**MEH:** He was a pilot. He trained as a pilot in the War and then he continued to fly.

**SYG:** Oh, really!

**MEH:** He's retired now.

**SYG:** That's interesting. He more or less – He was very responsible for the work program down there. He may have told you. [CHANGE OF FILM]

**MEH:** He was responsible for the work program?

**SYG:** It seems to me he was like the foreman, and that he drove – You know we all piled into a truck, and he probably drove the truck, and we would go over to Lake



Eden and work over there. I haven't seen him, you know, in all these years, but I remember him as a very – a terrific driver, besides which he played the clarinet. We played the Mozart Clarinet Quintet. He was a pilot during the War, and then he stayed – He must be retired now.

**MEH:** He's retired now.

**SYG:** Because he's got to be pushing eighty, isn't he?

**MEH:** I don't know. How old are you?

**SYG:** I'm seventy-six.

**MEH:** He's probably about the same age.

**SYG:** I think he was there before I was. I went right from high school. I don't know how long he – I just remember him being there, when you mentioned him.

**MEH:** Going there straight from high school, did you have any difficulty adjusting to the sort of freedom that you had there?

**SYG:** No, I adjusted easily. That wasn't a problem. They thought I would have a problem when I came back to Simmons, that that would be a problem because I was used to freedom. I wasn't used to signing in and out every time I wanted to do anything, and so forth.

[INTERRUPTION AND IRRELEVANT CONVERSATION]

[TEXT DELETED FROM TRANSCRIPT AT REQUEST OF GOLDBERG.]

[OFFMIKE COMMENTS BY OTHER PEOPLE, IRRELEVANT]

**MEH:** Do you remember any concerts in particular that you took part in?

**SYG:** No. We put on our own. We had a quintet. People must have – Claude must have played the piano. He was a pianist. So, the people, different people must have performed.

**MEH:** Was Dante Fiorello there when you were there? Dante Fiorillo?

**SYG:** No. No, I don't recall.

**MEH:** Do you recall the faculty meetings?

**SYG:** Yes. We had –

**MEH:** Community meetings.

**SYG:** Community meetings we used to have. But I don't remember a lot of friction or anything, like you read about afterwards when they were having all the –

[OFFMIKE INTERRUPTION ABOUT CAR KEYS]

Any of the people you run into that are in my period of time, which is only two years, I'd be much interested in hearing about.

**MEH:** Well, you would have to give me some names.

**SYG:** I've floated up quite a few of them.

**MEH:** yes, right.

**SYG:** Lorraine Creesy, I guess it's Miller. I don't know what her maiden –

**MEH:** I haven't talked to her and I haven't located her. Do you where she is?

**SYG:** No, I don't have any idea, but she was a very good friend of mine. And, you know, the people that you keep in touch with for a little while afterwards and then you lose along the way. She's one that I was very close to. We came back up together, after working at Lake Eden that summer. I went to Simmons and she went to the Ocatheil (PH) Institute at Yale. I don't know what she – Well, then she

got married and maybe that's the problem. We got married and we went our own way and we didn't keep in touch after that. As I say, I mentioned the Siecks, Katie Sieck and Barbara Sieck.

**MEH:** Did you feel being at Black Mountain made you in any way special then?

**SYG:** It was just a wonderful experience. A very enjoyable two years. I said I broadened my horizons. No way was I going to go to Simmons straight from Durfee High School in Fall River. That just wouldn't – I just –

**MEH:** When you went to Simmons, did you have any trouble then adjusting to wearing dresses and wearing a hat into town?

**SYG:** No, I managed.

**MEH:** Follow the rules.

**SYG:** I think the Dean thought I might have some problems. You know, we talked a lot at Black Mountain about emotional maturity, and we felt – You know, I had had my fling, and I was more mature. This is what I wanted. I had a good time at – I made other friends, and I met people and I was in Boston. Boston's a wonderful place to go to college. It really is, even if I wouldn't, didn't want to go right out of high school. It's really a great place to be.

**MEH:** Do you remember whether the integration issue was discussed at all at the college when you were there?

**SYG:** No, I don't think it – It wasn't a problem then. We were all terribly fond of – I think his name was Jack, the chef. But it was before we even – I guess we didn't think about it that much. I don't believe we had any black students. Eventually they

must have, but – You know this is 1938, 1940. We used to lie out in the sun. It's a beautiful climate.

**MEH:** It is.

**SYG:** I don't remember how many students there were there at the time, but – Of course, you knew everybody.

**MEH:** Did Black Mountain make any difference in the way you reared your own children?

**SYG:** That's a good question. I don't know. No, I really – Two of them went to Northeastern and two of them went to Clark, in Worcester.

**MEH:** Did you have three boys and two –

**SYG:** No, two boys and two girls. No, I don't – I don't suppose it did really. We joke a little bit about Black Mountain, but no, I don't think it had any real –

**MEH:** What did your husband do?

**SYG:** He and my sister's husband – Well, my sister's husband first. She was married before I was. I was having a great career (LAUGHS) before – I worked for quite a while before I got married. I wanted a career. I traveled around a lot and so forth. They took over my father's business. It's a wholesale dry goods business. Soon after we were married – My brother-in-law was already in the business and soon after we married, my father took sick, and my husband came in and they had it together. So, we were all settled in Fall River.

**MEH:** Do you still have it?

**SYG:** No, we just sold it a few years ago. My son came in after my brother-in-law died, and just a few years ago they sold it. Yes.

**[END OF RECORDING ON SIDE 1, TAPE 1; SIDE 2 UNRECORDED]**

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**