

Interviewee: NAN OLDENBURG STOLLER BLACK
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS
Location: Mill Valley, CA
Date: February 24, 1998
Media: Audiocassette 1, Videocassette 2
Interview no.: #196
Transcription: Ellen Dissanayake, March 10, 2001; corrected by Mary Emma Harris, March 2001

[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, AUDIOCASSETTE 1]

MEH: [SETTING-UP REMARKS NOT TRANSCRIBED] So, you arrived at Black Mountain. Did you visit before you went, or did you just go?

NOS: No.

MEH: Do you recall how you physically got there the first time?

NOS: I think my father drove me. He had a little car, and I'm pretty sure he must have driven me. Yes. I do remember he did. This was at Lake Eden.

MEH: You said earlier that you went to England before you came to this country?

NOS: Yes. I went to England actually twice. I went to England once in 1938 to be house-daughter and learn English with the Black family, and then went back. My mother had meanwhile moved from Hamburg to Berlin. I went to the American School in Berlin. After that I again was – well, this time really invited by the Blacks to spend the summer on the Isle of Wight, and that was '39. That was when war broke out, but nobody seemed to think it was going to either in England or in Germany. So I was in England, actually, when World War was declared, and my mother was in Berlin.

MEH: When you arrived at Black Mountain, that was I think the fall of 1940 –

NOS: Yes.

MEH: They were still living at Lee Hall?

NOS: Yes.

MEH: Do you recall your first impressions of the college?

NOS: Yes. I remember it very well physically, the big building and the halls and the former students being super-friendly. I have to close the kitchen door.

[INTERRUPTION] I remember specific people. I remember Janie Robinson, very pretty, smiling, and probably thinking, "Oh, I'll never be like that!"

[LAUGHS] I was overwhelmed, but then that was probably because English still was a new language for me.

MEH: Had you ever been in this type of educational situation before?

NOS: Yes. I had gone a private school when I was much younger, before I went to the Lyceum. There are similarities, I think, in all these smaller places. But still, it seemed very strange.

MEH: Did you have an advisor? How did you go about deciding what you would study?

NOS: We all had an advisor. I think my advisor was Jack French, for both years. I really had no idea what I wanted to do. I somehow took an English class and a writing class that first year and was very interested in writing. This was with Bob Wunsch, who was really, I think, very good. I joined the chorus and am not quite sure when we all started this great Work Program, which became so important.

MEH: I think it was the first year you were there that you built the Studies Building?

NOS: That's right. Yes. So, I probably overdid my participation in the Work Program, neglecting the academic program. I know now. But then I was very enthusiastic to be doing something and learning something that I felt I could be good at.

MEH: You really felt you were good at –

NOS: Oh, I became an expert mason.

MEH: Somebody else told me that.

NOS: Yes. I built the Jalowetz – not the whole cottage, but the terrace and the outside of the foundation with rock that had to be cleaned and chipped and so forth.

That was rough rock. It didn't come from any dealer who had already made it smooth and perfect.

MEH: How did you learn to do the masonry? Who taught you?

NOS: They had professional – Well, yes, professional technicians. They had masons and carpenters and so forth, and I think all of us were there partly to learn from them. I know that Claude probably learned a lot from the carpenter, head carpenter. I learned a lot from a man called Pearson Mundy (PH), who was the mason, though a lot of it was just hard labor, carrying a trough filled with cement and pouring foundations and so forth.

MEH: How did the country carpenters, masons, whatever, how did they deal with all of the unskilled labor?

NOS: I don't know what they really thought, and again this is a language thing. But I think they were amused about all these enthusiastic students, and I think they quite liked it. Looking at it now, or thinking about it now, I think that if we ever had held conversations with these people, we would have found that their thoughts would have been quite different from ours, that is politically. They probably were all rather reactionary. So, it's a good thing. I certainly never talked about anything but stones and cement and so forth.

MEH: But you really felt that you had found your, your craft in the stonework.

NOS: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

MEH: This was pretty – Was this heavy stone you were dealing with? (OVERTALK)
Did you have helpers?

NOS: Fairly. Oh, yes. We worked together. Well, you are strong at that time in life
[LAUGHS].

MEH: Did you work on any other parts of the construction?

NOS: I worked a lot on the foundation of the main building, because I think all of us
did because it was a tremendous job pouring all this concrete, a tremendous
job. I'm not sure how much, but I think the – Doing the Jalowetz cottage, that
was almost like having dessert. [LAUGHS]

MEH: How do you remember Lawrence Kocher?

NOS: I don't remember him except physically sitting there and talking, because I
wasn't really interested in architecture. Even though I'm sure there's more than
I can remember, I can't bring it back somehow. I don't remember that well. But I
know what he looked like. I can see him sitting there. I think he smoked a pipe.

MEH: Do you have any other particular memories of the Work Program? Anecdotes
of the construction of the building?

NOS: Oh. Well, there's the man who was in charge of the "Werk" Program, as he
called it – what was his name?

MEH: Goethe?

NOS: Yes, yes.

MEH: I'm not sure how you pronounce his name. G-O-T-H-E. Goth?

NOS: No. Well, he certainly wasn't called "Goethe" (GERMAN PRONUNCIATION).
No, he certainly was not called Goethe. What was his first name? Maybe we called him by his first name.

MEH: I think it was Richard, but I'm not sure.

NOS: Dick Gothe. Yes. He was, I thought, very amusing. I mean he was terribly serious, deadly serious. The "Werk" Program was the important thing. This is why we were there. He was, I think, a very good organizer, because we certainly all pitched in. I don't see how it could have been done without him, because it needed someone to be old-fashioned slave driver, which he was. I liked that, because I think I've always liked physical work and hard work. It was in a way easier than sitting down and studying a Greek play or – So, Dick Gothe. That's right.

MEH: He was the one who set up the work crews and that sort of thing.

NOS: Yes. He organized the whole thing. I don't think he was there in the beginning. I think they realized that someone needed to come, who would do this, be hired to do this.

MEH: Did you have a particular schedule? Did you get up in the morning and go to work, or –

NOS: We had a schedule, and, of course, we all attended classes as well. It wasn't that it totally displaced classes. We all had classes, and I had classes. The Work Program, I think, was in the afternoon and I suppose on weekends. Not on Sundays. Everyone went off on Sundays, had Sundays off, but probably Saturday.

MEH: It must have been exciting to see this enormous building arising.

NOS: Oh, it was wonderful, and we are doing it. I don't know who gave the pep talk that this was something that we needed to do, whether that was Dick Gothe as well, or whether someone else did that, maybe Bob Wunsch. The fact that no longer are you going to be housed in this comfortable Lee Hall, but we have to get our own accommodation. We put up with everything. I remember our dormitories at Lake Eden had no heat. I don't think anything had any heat until after Thanksgiving. It's cold down there.

MEH: Right. That was the second year.

NOS: That was the second year. The spirit was terrific, just wonderful – the enthusiasm.

MEH: So at Lee Hall, you had a study, your own study to work in?

NOS: Yes. Yes.

MEH: What do you think was the effect of having a separate place to call your own, for work?

NOS: In theory, I think it's a wonderful idea. In practice, since for me all this was so new, every part was exciting: the Saturday night dances, the fact that daily you saw people of the opposite sex. I probably would have done better in a library where other people were sitting and doing their work. I think I did a lot of frittering around. I don't even remember what my study looked like!

MEH: You don't remember how you set it up?

NOS: I just remember admiring other people's studies, like Jane Marquis, who was very artistic and used wonderful colors and had wonderful dishes and all kinds of things. I don't remember my study. I remember Claude's study a little bit, but not mine. Claude's study was across the hall from me. [LAUGHS]

MEH: Fate. What classes did you take? You took some classes.

NOS: Oh, yes, yes. I took a full – I took creative writing, I took English lit from Kenneth Kurtz. I took I think Ronnie Boyden's American history. I took French from Fran de Graaff. I think she was there that year. I'm not sure.

MEH: Maybe the second year.

NOS: Yes, maybe. That's hard to remember which was which. I took psychology. Jack French was teaching psychology, I think. Let's see. I was in the chorus.

MEH: So you took a serious academic curriculum. Basic stuff.

NOS: Oh yes. (OVERTALK) I also – but I think that was the following year – took a drawing class from Josef Albers and I remember that particularly. You don't want me to talk about that yet.

MEH: Go ahead. That's okay.

NOS: First of all, because it was marvelous, and I thought nobody would ever be able to teach me how to draw. It wasn't that that was so marvelous, but he was such a fantastic teacher, though he had a terrible way of using a model to sit for us to draw. Then he would analyze the character of that model. "She sometimes looks very sad," he would say and then "Why might that be?" I know he once got somebody to cry because he was very close to the truth. Another reason why I remember Josef Albers' class so well is that when I went to Radcliffe afterwards, I was interviewed by a particularly stuffy woman who was then, I guess, the head of Radcliffe College. I think her name was Cronkhite. She asked me what classes I took to see what I could get credit for. When I mentioned Josef Albers, she said, "Well, did you have art history and that kind of thing?" I said, "No, we learned to draw." She said, "Oh well, that's too

practical. We can't give you credit for that." It's a definite strike against Radcliffe. I'm sure they wouldn't say that nowadays.

MEH: We'll come back – While we're on the topic, when you went to Radcliffe did they accept most of your academic credits?

NOS: I was given a year for my two years, which isn't bad.

MEH: No credit for stonework?

NOS: No, no, no, no, no – nothing practical. [LAUGHS] No.

MEH: What are classes that you remember particularly?

NOS: I remember particularly writing class with Bob Wunsch.

MEH: How did he conduct it?

NOS: We had topics, I suppose. I don't remember specifically. Then we discussed thoroughly – and read things, other writing. It was a very sort of gentle but firm guiding to become better at expressing yourself. It was really very good. I do remember that very well. I remember Ronnie Boyden's history class, but I didn't like it. I never, never could really warm up to American history. Let's see, what else do I remember? My classes. Music, very much. I've always loved music and liked being involved in it.

MEH: Who was teaching then?

NOS: Heinrich Jalowetz. Wonderful man.

MEH: Was he doing the choral – directing chorus?

NOS: Yes. And he gave private lessons. He gave lessons to Maude Dabbs, who played a great deal. I don't know if she became a pianist or what, but he was very good and, again, it was partly his personality, as with Albers. The accent,

which added to it, which was wonderful. At the moment, I can't remember any other classes because I didn't really major in anything until I came to Radcliffe.

MEH: Did you take part in any of the drama activities?

NOS: No. No. Probably felt I wouldn't be any good. My English wasn't good enough.

MEH: Did you, basically, did – The German community was pretty strong at that point at the college. Did you speak German together mostly, or English?

NOS: Not really. No. We didn't. I think everyone was very conscious of the war against Germany and that we should all learn English. So – No, there wasn't much German spoken. I never spoke much German with either – I mean there was Erwin Straus and Jalowetz, of course, who spoke German, and Albers. But they all had turned their back to Germany so I think it was just like in New York. All the signs were changed from Old Heidelberg to Old Seidleberg – people kind of thought "Okay, let's speak English."

MEH: Were you aware at that point of the real seriousness of the situation in Europe for Jews? How aware that early were people at the college of what was going on? Do you recall?

NOS: My feeling is – and that's maybe only my feeling – is that it was really, people were very nonpolitical because I thought how could we have been in this place, in North Carolina and not have been outraged at the position of the black people? It couldn't be that only I didn't notice that everyone else was outraged. I couldn't have been that far away from it. The same with the War. When war finally was – when America declared war, it was like a bomb. It was really drastic, as if, "Oh my God! We didn't think it would get this far." So when some people said Black Mountain was an ivory tower, I think it was in a way.

MEH: Do you recall the bombing of Pearl Harbor, where you were when that happened?

NOS: I must have been at Black Mountain. That was in December, wasn't it?

MEH: Yes. I think you would have been there.

NOS: Yes. I also – there's always "Where did you come from? What are you ol- what's your own background?" That was important. My mother had stayed in Germany, and she had stayed until the American consul said, "I can no longer be responsible for you." Then she came over. She came over just a month before Pearl Harbor. So I was particularly aware of Pearl Harbor. My feeling was "Thank God. Now America will be involved in the war, and it won't go on forever." Because I felt very European still at that time. Still do.

MEH: What was it like, having had a European education, suddenly to be in this experimental community?

NOS: I have written this also to Robert Sunley. It wasn't so amazing to me. Black Mountain College, in a way, felt a little bit like home. It wasn't so amazing to be taught by all these very important people. I was sort of used to sitting down to dinner at home with a musician from the symphony or a conductor from somewhere else, or a renowned painter or actor. My parents had a lot of friends and there were a lot of people in and out of the house. It wasn't a big deal. They were – and I think the German intellectuals hung together, particularly when Hitler was arriving on the scene, and things were beginning to look bad. So Black Mountain was comfortable for me. Maybe too comfortable. A college where you're supposed to learn something should be somewhat uncomfortable.

MEH: How do you remember Heinrich Jalowetz? What was he like?

NOS: He was intensely musical. He was what one would call an absent-minded professor. No doubt somebody told you the story of how he brought breakfast to his wife one morning when she was ill. In Lee Hall we would go into the kitchen, get a tray if we were taking it to someone. Johanna was ill, and he had gone into the kitchen. He had this tray and we watched him come out with the tray and the cup of coffee and whatever else was on it, and look at it, and he put it down on a table and ate it. [LAUGHS] That was Heinrich Jalowetz. He was charming, and she was wonderful. I'm sure that she comforted a lot of people who were in distress. They were wonderful people, really wonderful. I'm sorry that I didn't know them any better than I did.

MEH: What about Straus? What was Straus like?

NOS: Well, he was a bit pompous, I would say [LAUGHS]. You know, he was very sort of – He seemed tall to me. I don't know about his theories, but he also acted as the school's doctor. That was a little scary. I once got a huge splinter in my foot that was really – I mean this big – at running down the hall, and the hall was very splintery. He had me in his study and he was asking Trudi, his wife, for something to take it out with. I thought, "Oh please!" I mean – a wrench? Luckily he sent me to the doctor in town. But I was quite terrified. I didn't take any classes from him. I'm sure Lucian told you about his classes There was the "brain trust" of Lucian and Jerry Wolpert and some other students who used to say they were going up in Dr. Straus's balloon.

MEH: Did you study any music with John Evarts?

NOS: I may have. I may have. Music theory. Certainly he was an important figure as far as I'm concerned. Of course, besides playing on Saturday nights, which was

marvelous, he just pounded the piano when we danced. I just don't remember quite.

MEH: What do you remember about mealtimes at the college?

NOS: A wonderful idea to have meals with your teachers. I feel now, in retrospect, and I felt, you know, long ago in retrospect – that I didn't take enough advantage of that, partly because of my reluctance with the English language. That would have been such a marvelous opportunity to ask questions and bring ideas out and so forth. I'm sure a lot of students did this. It, i think, is a wonderful idea. As I listen to my husband (Black). who taught boarding school, he said he got most of his work done at breakfast with the boys. So I think it was an important and very good thing.

MEH: Was the food good?

NOS: Mmmmm, no, it was institutional. I didn't mind it though. I'm not fussy with food, but I don't think it was very good.

MEH: How did you dress at the college?

NOS: Very informally. Blue jeans. Clean enough. We were all taking showers and so forth. We always dressed up on Saturday night with long dresses – the girls. The boys looked tidy and good.

MEH: Did you ever leave Black Mountain and Lake Eden to go to the town of Black Mountain?

[END OF SIDE 1, AUDIOCASSETTE 1. BEGINNING OF SIDE 2]

Or into Asheville or the surrounding area?

NOS: Very very rarely. There were groups, I know, who went to Roy's for drinks – beer and so forth. I never went along. I didn't do that at all. I think I earned my

name "One Beer Oldenburg" when I went once, maybe [LAUGHS] because that's about all I could take. But I was always a bit envious of this group that went roaring down to Roy's and had a wonderful time, but I was also very shy so I never would have pushed myself to go.

MEH: Are there particular incidents or anecdotes that we haven't discussed that you think are important? Particular memories you have?

NOS: Well, none academic. Again, the countryside really was beautiful. I loved it, especially I think – well, no, both, both Lake Eden and Lee Hall. So – go ahead.

MEH: I was going to ask you, what do you think was the effect on the college of this setting?

NOS: Oh, I think it's important to be in surroundings that are nice to look at and nice to walk into. I think it does something to you aesthetically and maybe something to the spirit. It's just very nice. I do remember just a brief event when it had newly snowed, when we were at Lake Eden. Someone once had skis and I remember going with Lucian up, probably just a hill near there, as it was snowing. It was wonderful, wonderful, to just be able to do that, rather than driving somewhere and going through big deals of ski lifts and so forth. You put on your skis and you'd get going. But I remember coming down this hill, and Lucian was in front of me. It was snowing so hard that I couldn't see his marks of his skis. I thought "Where am I going?" I've never forgotten that. It was sort of mixed feeling of, "Oh my God, am I going the right way?" and how wonderful it was, how beautiful it was. [Swimming. (?)]

MEH: I mean the college was very isolated. What did you do to entertain yourselves? You had Saturday night dances?

NOS: Yes. Well, people went for walks a great deal. Sunday was always – you made your own lunch and you went off for picnics, either with a group or with a boyfriend or girlfriend or whatever. The rest of the week, I think – I don't know when people went to Roy's. It must have been on the weekend also, probably Friday nights, I remember, because I think we were pretty busy. Reading or preparing for classes. With the Work Program taking up so much extra time. I think the Work Program took the place of entertainment. But, of course, there were concerts and I believe extra lectures. So there was a lot going on.

MEH: Do you remember any visitors who came to the college?

NOS: Yes, I remember Einstein.

MEH: What do you remember about that visit? You were aware of who Einstein was at that point?

NOS: Yes, indeed [LAUGHS]. I remember him shaking hands with little Eddie Dreier, who was tiny, red-cheeked, blond. I remember this wonderful picture of Einstein sitting on a hill, on a green hill, grass and little Eddie coming up and shaking hands. I thought, "How wonderful." I also think that another fellow student, whom we called Mouse – Morris Simon, did you – ? He said he was never going to wash his hands again! So that's what I remember. What a nice man he was, besides being famous and a genius. I remember some other visitors, too, I think. Also trying to remember – there was a farm nearby. Trying to remember if that was near Lake Eden or near Lee Hall. No, I think it was near Lake Eden. There was a farm and there was a farmer. I remember going for a walk on Sunday and seeing him fishing and asking him whether he ever caught any fish, and he said, well, he didn't really care. He said he just liked to sit quietly.

That farm we worked on also, when we stayed behind, some of us, during spring vacation. We dug ditches and I learned how to milk cows. That's something else I learned at Black Mountain College. I do think that when Paul Radin visited, and he taught for a short while, must have made an impression on me because I majored in anthropology at Radcliffe. I remember his stories. I don't remember what he taught. He told lots of wonderful stories.

MEH: Why did you leave the college?

NOS: Well, it was partly financial and the fact that – I remember my advisor told me that – I think he said, "We're really a little disappointed in you. You didn't come up to your expectations." Something like that. Probably put better than that. That was true, and I see this very clearly now. What I needed is to be in panic, which I was at Radcliffe – see if I'm going to pass that class. I think some people don't need that and some people do need it.

MEH: You felt you really needed that structure and discipline.

NOS: I did. I regret the fact – It probably would have been better had I done it the other way around – gone to Radcliffe first and then to Black Mountain, to take full advantage of both of them. But as it was, this is the way it was. Of course – I think getting to know other people was a very important part of Black Mountain. I don't know whether it's because of being that age, whether college friends are always friends for life or it was particularly Black Mountain.

MEH: You studied anthropology at Radcliffe.

NOS: Yes.

MEH: You and Claude were married before you finished or after you finished there?

NOS: On the day I graduated from Radcliffe.

MEH: Have you worked professionally since?

NOS: I worked very little in anthropology, because I think you need a university for that. When we lived in St. Louis, I worked a little bit with Preston Holder, who was actually an archaeologist. Very little because my children were small and I couldn't really do very much. Then I drifted away from it partly because, well, I wasn't right in a university. I worked at Harvard for a year after I graduated – maybe two years. Yes. Two years, for Clyde Kluckhohn who had a project on Navajo Indians. That was good. But after that I drifted into librarianship, through my children, basically.

MEH: Did you work as a librarian?

NOS: Oh yes. I was librarian in the Mill Valley School District for close to thirty years.

MEH: When you say you're still working, what are you doing now?

NOS: I'm working as a, they call it "consultant," which doesn't mean really that you're consulting. It just means you're working. I'm working as a sort of adjunct to the literature program, because I know the books so well in the collections and because the English teachers have been asked to teach periods of history through literature. So what I do is go to various classes, as needed, and introduce novels, for example, of historical fiction, and then work with the teacher and the children in, you know, discussion, writing, everything – which is quite intense, as we meet twice or three times a week. I usually take the reins and the teacher goes to the background and so on. Right now I'm supposed to work with new teachers so that they get – It's been expanded. At first it was just middle school, then third grade on up. Now I even do second grade. Do fairy tales with the second grade.

MEH: That sounds like fun.

NOS: So I'm really doing what I love to do best, and that's working with the children directly and not worrying about the mechanics of libraries.

MEH: Looking back, I mean as an educator and as someone who was a student there, how do you think Black Mountain College worked as an educational institution? Do you think it worked?

NOS: Well, I think it worked for many people very well. Yes. I think people like Jane Marquis, who came from a sort of traditional American background and was thrown into this sophisticated atmosphere, it was absolutely wonderful. Nothing else would have done that much, I think. I think for lots of other people in the same way. I'm sure it did work for me very well except for my own faults that made it not work. I think it's a marvelous way for young people to learn – to be able to take a walk with their professor after supper and discuss something. I mean that's a dimension you never get when you go to a traditional place. But at the same time, I think the conflicts were also a typical part of that kind of school. You are simply almost too close to each other. The faculty members who didn't agree with each other. It was too evident. It was always there. You can't take even a leave of absence or be in another department or something. You're all there, together. You're sitting in the same pot.

MEH: Were there a lot of conflicts when you were there?

NOS: There were beginning to be. Yes.

MEH: What were the issues?

NOS: Partly political, I think. I think it was political. People get hot tempered and get up and leave. They can't stand it anymore.

MEH: You were there when Mark Dreier was killed?

NOS: No, I wasn't there. I wasn't at school when he was killed. I don't know why not. I know he was, of course. Do you know what time of year that was?

MEH: I can't remember. (OVERTALK) I think it was in the fall.

NOS: I think it was during one of the breaks.

MEH: Maybe so.

NOS: Yes. I certainly was there, you know –

MEH: You were enrolled, but just not there.

NOS: Yes. Right.

MEH: What do you remember about interludes?

NOS: You mean –

MEH: Like you had a week when all classes would be cancelled? Do you recall those?

NOS: I remember breaks, like spring break. I don't remember – Interludes, to be thinking and so forth?

MEH: All classes would just be cancelled for a week, so everybody had time to catch up on stuff and relax –

NOS: Yes. I probably misused it. [LAUGHTER] See, I was also very romantically involved.

MEH: This was Claude?

NOS: Yes. That's very important at that time in life. I think personally I never had a chance to have an adolescence because of Hitler coming into Germany, my having to leave my home country, which I didn't want to leave. But I mean this is the way it was. I didn't have time to have the traditional adolescence

syndromes. So maybe I was a belated adolescent when I was in Black Mountain College. So I'm sure I spent a lot of time with romantic thoughts.

MEH: Are there other memories you have of the college that we haven't covered? Anecdotes?

NOS: I'm sure there are. It's just – [OVERTALK] It takes a while to trigger them because other memories when I went to Radcliffe and so forth, are more recent. Or library school. It seems such a long time ago. Really a long time ago.

MEH: It was!

NOS: Because it's close to the time when I came to this country, and that was more than fifty years ago. I do know that I felt, when the book came out and when the reunion was taking place in San Francisco, that the subjects other than art were really neglected by the people who recognized what the college did. I think they were, at least at my time, tremendously important. English literature was very strong, philosophy, psychology, sciences – there was Peter Bergmann, who was a brilliant scholar. I mean all those things. It was really evenly matched – the arts were by no means the most important ones.

MEH: Did you take Peter Bergmann's class?

NOS: No.

MEH: You know he came to the reunion at Black Mountain?

NOS: Oh, he did?

MEH: Yes. He and his wife. It was nice to have one of the refugees. He wasn't really a traditional refugee (OVERTALK), but to have someone from that period.

NOS: Oh yes. He was certainly very noticeable. Now I don't know why I remember him so well, so maybe I did take a class with him. I may have taken a beginning

science class with him. I have a feeling I did, because I see him standing there in that lecture room.

MEH: Do you have any materials from the college? Photographs, art work, anything like that?

NOS: I do have some old photographs, but I can't put my fingers on them because I have so many old photographs. I have my sister-in-law from New York sorting them. When she comes to visit once a year for a month, she sorts the photographs. I have a few, yes.

MEH: If you could sort those out and just send me photocopies of them, then I would have a record, you know, of what – Because I'm going to want to use a lot of photographs if I put this project together.

NOS: It probably would be the same – I mean Claude must –

MEH: Probably a lot of them, but you might have some different ones, because other people were photographing.

NOS: I'm now wondering... we were talking about breaks. On one of those breaks we went – Fred Stone once led a group into the caves in Virginia?

MEH: Tennessee, I think.

NOS: Tennessee, right.

MEH: But they said the girls did not go down in the cave.

NOS: No. Well, there was only Slat and I, Jane and I. Janie Stone was supposed to go, but she didn't. There was Fred Stone and Claude and probably Jerry Wolpert. They called themselves the Gashouse Gang. So that may well have been one of those breaks where you're supposed to catch up with your work, but you do something else.

MEH: And you had told me before when the tape was off, you and Claude were divorced, and you said you lived alone. And how was this you met your second husband?

NOS: Well I knew him, of course, because I met him when I was house-daughter for the Blacks in 1938. He was there. He was quite a bit older than I. He was gorgeous, and he was very nice to me. That was the first year. Then the second year we did spend a lot of time together, lots of walks. He, I think, grew very fond of me as well. But when the War broke out, he said, "You really must go to America and be safe." So that was that. I was sixteen. So I didn't see him again for thirty-eight years.

[I don't want to belittle it. It just simply wasn't for me a really solid academic experience. [NOS: "How does that fit?"]

MEH: Maybe it was an important transition for you in this new country. Obviously you met your husband there. Really your life was really directed there in many ways.

NOS: I think so. I think that's true, without panic, so to say, because high school was just – it was unreal. Then Radcliffe was quite hard.

MEH: It was a community where there were other people from Germany. So it wasn't as if you were just totally isolated in an American community.

NOS: Right. Exactly. Yes. Yes.

MEH: But frequently people – Other people have said that they benefited from having been to a traditional college and having learned some discipline before they went to Black Mountain.

NOS: Yes. I think that's what – I know Lucian went to UCLA, I think, first. You needed your own inner direction in order to take full advantage of what was offered at Black Mountain.

MEH: What was Albers like? How would you describe him?

NOS: Very sure of himself. A brilliant teacher, really. Good sense of humor. But definite political, as far as I'm concerned – closed mind. I shall never forget when we had little children and Claude, who adored him, and went to – he was at Yale then – went to his house, we went to his house and Claude had taken some slides in St. Louis, very interesting slides of warehouses and things, you know, marvelous to look at. He showed them to Albers, and Albers said, "Oh, you've gone socialistic," or some such term. That was, I mean Claude – he did not notice or admit it or even remember, but he was crushed. Here was his adored teacher. So I felt bad about that. I liked him. I thought that she was just a bit too holy. I probably shouldn't say this. I'm being recorded. That may not be true. She may have been – though she always interpreted for him and was better in English than he was, but it may also have been a language thing with her that it seemed that she was very aloof. She was not very warm, while he certainly was. She apparently was very gifted. Did a lot of work after she left. What else? No, it was a good place to learn to live with other people. Very good. So how many things –

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]