

Interviewee: CYNTHIA CARR BOYDEN  
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS  
Location: Tamworth, NH  
Date: August 20, 1997  
Media: Audio-cassettes (3); Video-cassettes (2)  
Interview no.: 20  
Transcription: Ellen Dissanayake, August 24-25, 1999; corrected, Mary Emma Harris, August 2000.  
Notes: Converted from Word Perfect by Mary Emma Harris, September 2013.

**[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1 ]**

**MEH:** [GIVES IDENTIFYING NAME, PLACE, DATE]. Cynthia, how did you come to be at Black Mountain?

**CCB:** When I was, oh, must have been when I was ten or eleven, my mother was looking for a place to get rid of me in the summer, [LAUGHS] and she found a wonderful camp in Maine called Alamoosook. Alamoosook Island Camp, in Bucksport, Maine. The camp was run by the wife of the headmaster of the Cambridge School of Weston, a progressive co-ed school there. The counselors at the camp were Mrs. French's children and their friends and so forth.

**MEH:** This is Jack French's wife?

**CCB:** Jack French's mother, and Jack French was one of the counselors, and Sophie Hunt, who ultimately became his wife, and Froggy French — Caroline French, his sister, and Nat French, his brother, and numerous other counselors. They all had been to Black Mountain College, and they told me all about it. I was an impressionable pre-teen, and I said, "That's where I want to go." I wanted to get out of New England.

**MEH:** Where did you live?

**CCB:** I lived in Winchester, Massachusetts, which is a suburb of Boston. I don't remember how old I was when I went to that camp. But anyway, my mother was also— I must have been a young teenager, twelve, thirteen. They didn't take them much older than that, but I went to that camp for a couple of years. They told me all about this college, and my mother found out about it and she was more enamored of it than anybody [LAUGHS]. I was determined to get out of New England, you know — that stuffy Puritanical thing. Far away from Boston, and co-ed— I went to a Quaker girls' boarding school.

**MEH:** Where was that?

**CCB:** Providence, Rhode Island. It was called the Lincoln School of Providence, Rhode Island. Very good school. It prepared me so well that I didn't do a lick a work at Black Mountain for two years [LAUGHS]. But that's neither here nor there. Anyway, that's how I heard about it. We visited Black Mountain, and my mother— She was so taken with it, she just could hardly tear herself away, especially the art program.

**MEH:** At Black Mountain?

**CCB:** At Black Mountain. And—

**MEH:** Did she come down to visit?

**CCB:** She and my father and I all went down to visit, and visitors at Black Mountain – I suppose, many of the people you've interviewed have told you how we treated visitors at Black Mountain [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** How did you treat visitors?

**CCB:** No? They never told about when Eleanor Roosevelt walked through and nobody paid any attention?

**MEH:** That I know.

**CCB:** I remember meeting Einstein on the pathway once, and I said to somebody I was with: "That guy looked like Einstein!" and they said, "Oh don't be silly." Well, later on, Ted Dreier told me, "Yeah, that's who it was." We just sort of took them in stride. But I know when I visited with my parents, I felt that feeling of intruding into a very close community where everybody knew everybody else and visitors — aah! This is at Lee Hall, on the other side of the valley. I had two years there and two years at Lake Eden. I enjoyed the visit. Derek Bovingdon, who was kind of unofficial greeter — I don't know how he happened to be, but, you know, very charming guy. He was nice to visitors, and he arranged so that I could go with a group of kids down to Roy's. Have you been told about Roy's?

**MEH:** Tell me about Roy's.

**CCB:** Roy's was at the foot of the mountain where the college was at that time, and it was a little beer joint that Steve Forbes, who was a great friend of the college and who subsidized a lot of things, he said there ought to be a place for the kids to go and drink beer and have a good time without offending anybody and so on. So, he, as I understand it — I may be wrong — he bought it and set it up, and so everybody would sort of gather down there and drink pitchers of beer and play the jukebox. It was all reasonably healthy and, you know, harmless. I don't know— I've forgotten how, how it petered out. It was still going when I left there.

**MEH:** Actually, it was going as long as the college was going.

**CCB:** It was? Yeah, well we had a good time at Roy's. So, that was the only thing I did with people there, but I could see within twenty-four hours that I knew what the college was like and I wanted to go, whereas my mother could hardly be torn away. My father wished he hadn't come, of course.

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

**CCB:** My father was a lawyer in Boston, had little or no interest in art, music, education, you name it [LAUGHS]. But he was the kind of guy who let my mother make all those decisions, and so she said, "This is a wonderful place, absolutely wonderful place." I said, "I want to go home, I want to go home." [LAUGHS] She thought that I hated it, and I said, "No, I thought it was wonderful," but I didn't want to stay there as a visitor. So, that was where I decided to go. It was no problem. In those days, Black Mountain was desperate for money, as it always was, of course. The system for admissions – They found some Black Mountain person around your area to interview you, and Jack French was – At that time I think he was a graduate student or something, and he interviewed me. We filled out some things, and you sent them a piece of your work. Well, I was, you know [LAUGHS], – "piece of your work"! I was, you know, seventeen years old. I was younger than that, I guess. I don't know. So, I sent them an essay I'd written on Robert Browning at school. [LAUGHS]. When I think of it today, oh, God! It still embarrasses me. Little did I realize they would have accepted anything. Anybody who paid the full tuition – which was the enormous sum of twelve hundred dollars.

**MEH:** That was a lot of money back then. What did you – I've lost my question. I have another question. Go ahead.

**CCB:** No, that was all. You just asked me –

**MEH:** Oh, what year was this?

**CCB:** This was – I graduated from school in '39, in the spring, so it was the fall of '39 that I went. Yes, I was there from '39 to '43.

**MEh:** Did you have any idea what you wanted to study?

**CCB:** No. Hadn't any idea. I was a very timid sort of person intellectually and was always afraid, if you know – If I took up something about which I knew nothing, I would then not be able to learn anything. That's why I never did anything in music with my – My sisters all did things in music, and my mother was very disappointed that I didn't do it. But I realized that was what I loved most was literature, so – I had just loved it at school. I didn't care that people said to me, "Oh, when you can't do anything else you study English literature." They said that – All my life, people said that. "Oh, literature! Who needs that?" That's what they say about history now. It's depressing. The humanities – out the window. Nobody studies them anymore. God. Very sad. But I was glad I settled on that, even though, as I've told you before, I was – I don't know how many times Ted Dreier and John Evarts pushed me to study painting or at least Albers' color classes.

**MEH:** Did you ever take anything from Albers?

**CCB:** No, I didn't even like him [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** Why not?

**CCB:** Oh, he was such a poseur, though he was a wonderful teacher, I'm sure. All my friends said he was a marvelous teacher. That was part of his teaching technique, you know, "Ze watermelon, ze peaches." [LAUGHS] No, he was, he was okay. I resented a little bit his attitude toward intellectual pursuits. He distrusted, or mistrusted books, the written word. I don't know whether that was partly because after all his mode of expression was painting and – But Anni Albers, certainly, had no problems that way, and I think she kept Juppi on [LAUGHS] – She, you know, always pitched right in and backed up people who said, "Well, we get to do more with book learning, and we must talk about getting books for the library." Library [LAUGHS]. He was willing to get a few art books, but he didn't think we could spend money on readin' books. I wasn't – I wish I had, of course, and I remember Ted Dreier saying, "You'll be sorry," and I am, because his color classes would have been wonderful. Over the years, you know, I certainly have seen how much they would have meant and how easy it was for anybody to study the kind of thing that he was doing. I went to a lot of his – He used to give little lectures, and we'd all gather in the big lobby there, Lee Hall, and he'd show slides and talk fascinatingly about all sorts of things, you know. Those little bitty pictures that they stick in the middle of the text in The New Yorker, you know, he'd have one of those, and compare it with something else. He was very interesting, but I never did take a course with him.

**MEH:** Who was teaching literature?

**CCB:** Kenneth Kurtz. Well, there were other people teaching different kinds of literature. Bob Wunsch taught some classes in dramatic literature, and Fred

Mangold, in his writing courses – Has anybody interviewed you about Fred Mangold? Because he was one of the most wonderful people there.

**MEH:** Describe Fred Mangold.

**CCB:** I don't know how to describe Fred Mangold. He was such a quiet, retiring person, and I never took real classes with him. He taught writing. Some people knew him very well. Fernando knew him very well. I don't know why. I can't really tell you much about Fred Mangold. I didn't know him well. I wouldn't attempt to describe him.

**MEH:** Yeah, but why do you say he was such a wonderful person?

**CCB:** Because of everybody who studied with him told me that, and just in casual meeting, I mean he was so very charming and sweet person. But I didn't know him well at all. I didn't know him well at all. In fact I have now forgotten – I haven't thought about the Mangolds for years. I've forgotten his wife's name.

**MEH:** Anne. [SP]

**CCB:** Anne Mangold, yeah.

**MEH:** So, you didn't, you really didn't take his class. So, you took primarily with Kenneth Kurtz?

**CCB:** Well, the first two years. I mean, you know the way Black Mountain curriculum was run. You could take anything you wanted to take, and the idea was to spread yourself around and try to get a general feel for a lot of different things, and then figure what you would like to do. Then when you were ready to concentrate, you'd try to pass these senior division examinations and have a – what did they call it there? – I know at Marlboro they call it a senior plan, but I've

forgotten what we called it at Black Mountain. But anyway, you pass the senior division examinations, and then mostly you did work on your own and with a tutor. Before that I took music courses, and I took a psychology course with Straus. I hadn't the faintest idea what he was talking about. Little did I know that what he called "psychology" was going to be a basic philosophy course. So, I was completely lost for a whole year. Just sat in Room Something-or-other in Lee Hall, smoking cigarettes, watching Paul Wiggin roll up his sleeve.

**MEH:** What was Kenneth Kurtz like as a teacher?

**CCB:** He was a very uptight sort of person, and seemed an unlikely person to be at Black Mountain. But I'm sure that he was – You look back on people like that and you think, "Well, wouldn't it have been fun to figure out that man." What he really was like. Because what was he doing there, you know? A man who was so well-organized. All his books, in those wonderful Modern Library editions with the soft cover [LAUGHS]. They were all arranged carefully in his study. If he lost one, he nearly went out of his mind because it had all his notes for studying that particular book in it. So, he was very careful about lending his books. But he was an attractive, young guy, but he seemed like a fussbudget old man to me. [LAUGHS]. He was married to this sickly wife, so, he was a little nervous all the time. A little nervous. But he was full of a plan – at least that's the impression I have – that he wanted to convey to everybody the kind of community life they were living, so that they would be aware of it, and he would come into the dining hall, and we'd sit down, and we'd go [INAUDIBLE] our breakfast and he'd say "Que es la vida? La vida e suena, suena, suena." He would have a deep



discussion about life at breakfast! But he was very serious about taking care of his duties, and he saw to it that I read the books and talked about them, and I brought him a paper twice a week – The system at Black Mountain was based on something somebody picked up at Oxford which is you and your tutor. There wasn't anybody you could fall back on, you know. So, you really did knuckle under and master the material and read a lot of stuff. I didn't do any original work or anything of that nature. I think some of the stuff people do in their senior plans at Marlboro College are way ahead of the kind of thing we did at Black Mountain. Very rigorous work, if you do it well at Marlboro.

**MEH:** What would you – at Black Mountain – what sort of things were you reading in Kenneth Kurtz's class? What –

**CCB;** Oh, all the English literature from, you know Beowulf right on up. But I left out – people laugh so at me – When Kenneth was scouting around to get an outside examiner for me, he billed me as somebody who studied English literature minus the English novel. [LAUGHS]. Of course, I'd read a few of those, but for some reason we decided that there wasn't time to really do a good study of the English novel, so, we just left it out. So, to this day I've only read about three of Dickens or Thackeray. I don't think I'll ever read any of them. But I certainly caught up on, you know, say Jane Austen or Virginia Woolf or James Joyce or whoever. [LAUGHS] But for my examination, he wasn't going to ask me. I'll tell you who else taught literature, later on, was Eric Bentley, and Eric Bentley had no use for me. [TEXT DELETED]

**MEH:** Absolutely!

**CCB:** I take it back. Cut that out, will you please? Honest! I don't want that to go out on  
–

**MEH:** I won't, I won't.

**CCB:** Because he really cared only for people who were quite unusually bright and who worshiped him. There were a couple of girls – well, I won't go into names. Actually, I think they're in Duberman's book – a lot about Bentley from those two girls.

**MEH:** He definitely had a clique around him of people who were devoted to him.

**CCB:** Well, it was very – I think Duberman went into this quite deeply – one of the rows, which happened after I left, and that was that Fran de Graaff, who was a wonderful woman who taught languages – Dutch – she was very taken with Eric Bentley. But he was kind of mean, and they teased her. There was a lot of ill feeling, but that was all hearsay from what I heard about it, because that happened after I left. There were a great many rows always. I mean it was just the standard procedure. There'd been one just before I came when they threw out Mr. Rice, and then after I left they had to be split when all the early settlers – Ted Dreier and that whole bunch – that happened after I left. It's a miracle that it lasted as long as it did. I had friends who visited down there after I was married and living in Marlboro, and they'd come back and say, "Well I stopped at that place, Black Mountain College, I couldn't quite make out what was going on." Or "I met somebody in the print shop. He or she told me a little bit about it."  
[LAUGHS] I really know very little about – first hand – about what happened after Olson took over and how they managed, you know, with no money and no

organization at all. It always has baffled me. It seemed to be running quite smoothly, except for a shortage of money, when I was there. But –

**MEH:** You were really there between rows. Between the Rice and the Bentley.

**CCB:** Yeah, we didn't have any big rows, but we did have crises, because the War came along in my last two years. Half the faculty and almost all the guys had gone. I mean some of the best – Roland went, Charles Lindsley went. I forget now what other teachers went. So, my last year there was, well, pretty small community. How they survived during the War – I visited once during the war on a leave I had, and Sam Brown was there. Have you had any dealings with Sam Brown?

**MEH:** I talked to him many, many, many years ago.

**CCB:** I wonder if he's still alive.

**MEH:** Unless he's died recently – He'd had a stroke and was in a nursing – We'll talk about that off tape. But going back to literature. It seems from the course list that I've gone through that very little American literature was being taught, that it was primarily English.

**CCB:** I remember now. See, I have just forgotten. It's been so long. My daughter, my youngest daughter, is an American Studies person, and my nearest neighbor in Vermont manned the American Studies program at Marlboro, and – But you have to understand that American Studies was not something anybody did. The first program in American Studies at Harvard was after World War II. Dick Judd was one of the first people in it. They didn't do that. But Ken Kurtz, with Bob Babcock – has anybody ever talked to you about Bob Babcock? Well, just

exactly what he was teaching – political theory, I think, and stuff. But between them, they gave a course called American Life and Letters. It sounds to me, looking back on it, rather like one of those general American Studies courses that they do now. But at that time, colleges didn't give courses in American civilization or American Studies generally, which is so popular now that you can study comic books or film or whatever, anything that's American. But he did things like – start with the Constitution and Benjamin Franklin and work on up through – Each person in the class was supposed to pick something and do it in special – I did American poetry. Most of the stuff I studied, though, my own personal stuff, was English poetry, English poetry. That's really what even the most conventional colleges and high school curricula did. They didn't do much American stuff. It's funny. I think the general feeling in schools and colleges then was that America's only been going a little while, and, you know, have to look to Europe and England for all that stuff. But I think that's certainly changed, when you think of how they study madly people like Hemingway in France and so on. Henry James made it, you know. People think of Henry James as English, but I think he made the transition.

**MEH:** So, what about – You took dramatic – You studied with Bob Wunsch?

**CCB:** No. No, I didn't study with Bob Wunsch.

**MEh:** You were in some of the plays though?

**CCB:** [LAUGHS]. The last thing in the world I could do. I want to tell you a funny story.

They were putting on The Cherry Orchard that year. Wonderful people in it.

They really did good drama down there. And [LAUGHS] [UNNTELL]. Janie

Stone was Madame Ranevskaya. Anyhow, they cast me – because I thought Play Production I, or whatever it was called, would be an intriguing way to get into literature. I'd never been in a play in my life, you know. The second shepherd in the first grade [LAUGHS]. So, I was cast as Dunyasha. Well, if you know your Chekhov, it doesn't matter how small a part it is, it's all very important. So, I got up there and started whatever lines I had to say, it was one of the rehearsals with Bob Wunsch. "Stop!" he said. "Cynthia Carr. Get off the stage, you'll never be anybody but Cynthia Carr!" [LAUGHTER] That was the sum total of my dramatic experience. I have never had any desire really – It's funny, my daughter is a theater person. She and her guy first got to know each other working on a crew here in Tamworth at the Barnstormer's Summer Theatre. She's done everything in the theater except acting. Frances Cleveland could not get her onto the stage except as an animal in Wind in the Willows, when she was a little girl. [LAUGHS] But I think she's very like me in that sense, and some of my family are like that. My sister, Sheila, had the same problem with some of her music. As soon as she had to do anything where she would be singled out – she played the cello –, she had to play a solo or something, she went all to pieces. I don't know. We're all timid. We may not seem timid, but we're all timid deep inside. [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** You're one of three daughters?

**CCB:** I'm one of four.

**MEH:** Okay, and three of you went to Black Mountain?

**CCB:** I don't count Dottie and Sheila as going to Black Mountain anymore than I count Tom Nee as going to Black Mountain. I went to Black Mountain for four years, and I graduated from there with what amounted to a degree. I tell people, "I don't have a degree. I have an education!" [LAUGHS] But no, Dottie was there very briefly and then, who knows, I don't know what happened. That was after I had left. Sheila was only there for, you know, a few weeks in the summer. Those summer institutes, who knows what happened at those. I don't think very many of the young people who went got much out of it. Did they? Wasn't it mostly the big shots who went down and had a chance to –

**MEH:** Not really. No. I think the young people got a lot out of it. Depends on the person, you know. Every person's different. But it was a totally different atmosphere, and they got something very different than people who were there on a regular basis got.

**CCB:** Well, I went down there for a couple of things, because I loved the place so much. From the day I hit that place, I just absolutely loved it. Everything about it – the whole way you lived, the way it was so easy to make friends, the way nobody had to be introduced or have to call them up. I never had had a date in my life, because I'd been incarcerated in the girls' boarding school. So, I had friends from camp and friends from here and there, but nothing. I was, you know – I just couldn't believe that it was such a wonderful set-up that people lived and ate and studied together, and everybody seemed to get along. As you say, there didn't happen to be any terrible rows, although there were lots of little niggling things that peop- you know, hated each other, and there were cliques, of course,

and that sort of thing. Then, there were always some sad people that got left out.

**[END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 1]**

**[BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1]**

**CCB:** Well, they probably did, eventually, but I can think of quite a few people who didn't seem to have friends, or didn't seem to have a group of friends. But that must be true at almost every public high school in the country. I don't know. But for me, I certainly was a very naive seventeen or eighteen, however old I was. I just was astounded at the simple kind of way you could carry on a social life. I don't know if you remember what it's like to be seventeen, but I look back on it and think, "Heavens, to be, you know, sort of dumped into this amazing place!" I certainly didn't know the way it was looked at by the people who ran the place. I've learned a lot about that since. I got to know Ted Dreier pretty well [LAUGHS], but – I didn't want to leave. I remember the first vacation, I didn't want to go home. So, I came back the next summer – My father thought I was insane, but I came back. They ran the college as a summer inn, and Charles Lindsley was the boss. Morton Steinau, wonderful Morton Steinau was the assistant boss, and various members of the student body took the different jobs, and – Trying to make a lot of dough out of the place.

**MEH:** Well as an inn, did people board there?

**CBB:** They came, and – They made reservations, they came, and they stayed, and we fed them –

**MEH:** Where did they stay? Where did they sleep?

**CBB:** Well, this was at Lake Eden.

**MEH:** Yeah, but where at Lake Eden? Were they in the cottages, or the lodges – ?

**CCB:** Oh yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. They rented – Wonderful people. I met some really incredible people. Since we were all rather unusual for waitresses and lifeguards and lawn mowers and dishwashers, you know, we got to be good friends with the guests. We got no pay. My father really, he said, "You mean you're going down there to work as a waitress, and they're not going to pay you anything?" I said, "Well, I get my board and room and my summers, and I get four dollars a month spending money!" [LAUGHS] Of course, my dad was really very generous, and so I had my allowance. What do we need money for? We didn't need any money.

**MEh:** Yeah, really, nobody – I haven't really spoken to anyone, I probably should have asked Morton more about this – Mort. So, people really – People came and just like a summer resort?

**CCB:** Yes. I don't know whose idea it was. Probably a combination of the, you know, the governing of that place was a mystery to me. They had no trustees. They had no – It was owned and operated by the faculty, and the Board of Fellows was elected from the faculty with one student, Jim Raymond [LAUGHS]. I mean he wasn't always the one, I guess. But he was when I was there. When they decided to run it as an inn for that summer, I have no idea but they asked for people who wanted to come down and work as waitresses. Hyalie Yamins and – No, it was Sybil Yamins and me and Maude Dabbs and a friend of Maude's who was not a normal student but she came up – she had the most wonderful



Southern sort of name: Willowdean Ryan [PH], Willowdean. Only in the South could you have a name – She was a very attractive girl. I've forgotten who else. Blond girl that I can't think of the name of. I have a picture somewhere of us all in our little waitresses uniforms. I don't know where it is now, somewhere in [Marlboro (?) UNINTELLI].

**MEH:** That would be wonderful to have.

**CCB:** We had to wash and starch our little white aprons. So, we all lined up and then we turned around and they took a picture of us from the back, with the little bows in the back. I can't believe, but I have a memory of wearing those little things on your head. But anyway! I was perfectly willing to sweat gumdrops waiting on table and – oh, hot? North Carolina in the summer? Even in the mountains – Boy. But we served a simple family-style meal without much choice, and so, it didn't matter that we didn't have notebooks to write things down and so forth. We just took the orders and found out whether they wanted tea, coffee, iced tea, whatever, and then served – Or occasionally they served people from outside, but mostly it was just for the people who were staying there. They could swim in Lake Eden. It seems to me Derek Bovingdon, who was the sort of person who would do this, was the lifeguard. I mean he looked like a lifeguard. He was the lifeguard. He was killed in a training accident before the War even got rolling. But Fernando Leon [LAUGHS] – I forget. He did dishwashing. Paco Leon did the lawn mowing. His mother, who was a very charming Spanish lady of the old school, came down to visit and she could not believe: "My sons! Dishwashing!" She could not believe that I was at such a

school. "If I had a daughter, she would not go to such a school." Little did Carmen Leon know what I'd been doing with her sons! [LAUGHS] She was such a nice lady. She really was. But we all did pitch in. Tommy Brooks, I remember. Is he still around? Do you know?

**MEH:** I haven't talked to him. I'm not sure whether I've found him or not. I can't remember.

**CCB:** He did something that summer there. I can't remember exactly what. We all pitched in. I have no idea how successful it was, from the financial point of it. They never tried it again. Other years –

**MEH:** I have one other question before you – Who did the cooking? Were Jack and Rubye – Did they cook in the summertime?

**CCB:** Oh, Jack Lipsey was still around, yeah, because he – We had to get out, you see, of Lee Hall anyway, every summer. Lee Hall was leased from the Blue Ridge Corporation, this religious group that owned it. So, every year you had to put back the electric wires and take all your stuff out and store it and this and that in preparation for coming back after the whole summer religious thing was over. So, that's why they eventually bought the property over there at Lake Eden, and I guess maybe this was the first, the first time they really gotten rolling using it. I'm not at all sure. But the next summer, they had a work camp program, and they – to get the place in shape for us to move over there. They were building – I think that was the next summer, but I may have the years wrong. They were building a servants' quarters, as they called them, and naturally everything was segregated like mad and – So, this was going to be

where all the various black people were going to live. The work program was to work on building that building and doing some work on the farm, which was an ongoing project. It was one of Ted Dreier's favorite things. Who knows whether it was really helping or not in the finances. And do various jobs around, and that kind of work program which was based on the Quaker work program things, you know. You'd pay money to learn how to work [LAUGHS]. Well, I didn't pay money, but I came down and gave my services, worked doing various things.

**MEH:** That was the second summer. You stayed again.

**CCB:** I'm not sure if that was the second summer. [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** I think it was, because before you could move to Lake Eden, they had to have a place –

**CCB:** Yes, that was the second summer because that's when I met Roland. He was down there sanding floors for the new servants' quarters.

**MEH:** Had he just come? He came your second year?

**CCB:** No, that was the summer of my second year, and then he was going to come the following fall to teach. I had seen him once before when he came down. People who applied to be teachers at Black Mountain were always put through the most horrible kind of drill. They had to come and give a lecture and talk to people. Who knows what they do at conventional places. But I had seen him there. He had been well-acquainted with Black Mountain because his sister had taught there. She was one of the first teachers there. In your book there's a wonderful picture of the first teachers, and Helen is in that picture.

**MEH:** Help me straighten out the family now. Helen was his sister. Okay, she was Helen [OVERTALK] Boyden Lamb Lamont.

**CCB:** Helen Boyden. Helen Boyden Lamb, she was. She didn't marry Corliss until much later. And –

**MEH:** And his mother was –

**CCb:** His mother came down in the thirties, because his father had died and her daughter, Helen, was at Black Mountain then. So, my mother-in-law then went down to be with her daughter at Black Mountain. She loved Black Mountain. She found it fascinating, and she kept a journal of all the things she did when she was down there.

**MEH:** Does that still exist?

**CCB:** Oh, yeah, I have it in Marlboro somewhere. She – You know, a lot of interesting people went through there. What's his name – You know, Our Town. Thornton Wilder was there for quite awhile. Grandmother Boyden would go – she would go to all the lectures and sit in. She had some sort of a fake job that Helen dreamed up or somebody dreamed up. They were great friends – Somewhere along the line they'd become great friends with the Dreiers, and I don't know how they knew all those people, but I didn't know any of them then. They made her kind of hostessy-dietician [OVERTALK], something, but it was just a fake thing. She just was living down there. I mean she didn't take any money, and she did quite a lot of helping, planning, and things like that, but mostly it was because she wanted to be down there with her daughter. Roland was in law school or something, and her eldest son was married, and who knows? But that

was before I knew any of them. So, there was just Mrs. Boyden and Helen Lamb and Roland that were all there. Roland was only there one year, just that one year and then the War came along and whoosht!

**MEH:** So, you first saw him sanding floors?

**CCB:** First saw him what?

**MEH:** Oh, after he gave his lecture. [OVERTALK]

**CCB:** Oh, that was the year before. But I never really met him then. But when I first saw him sanding floors, yeah. Yeah, there was a hole in the – You know how a sander works? The floor sander works with a big bag to pick up the stuff, and there was a hole in the bag, and he was very subject to hay fever, and the sand from the – He was sneezing all over the place. I did the big favor of getting him a safety pin or something to close the hole in the sander. That's what I remember about it. We didn't actually get very chummy until early in the fall when I had to take my senior division exams. That must have been the beginning of my third year. I took my senior division exams up in Ken Kurtz's study, and Roland – Roland was on the examining thing. Dr. Straus and Roland and Ken Kurtz, on the oral part of it. I guess I'd done okay on the written part. He walked me up to the examination room.

**[TEXT DELETED]**

**MEH:** So – But he had his law degree at that point?

**CCB:** Oh, yes, he'd practiced law actually with the family firm, Ropes-Gray for a year, and then – Then he had – See, he graduated from Harvard in '32 and then went to law school, because it was a great tradition in the Boyden family of law. This

Uncle Bert, who left us this house, was a lawyer. Uncle Roland, after whom my husband was named, was a very distinguished lawyer. He was a senior partner at Ropes-Gray.

**MEh:** Was this in Boston?

**CCB:** Ropes-Gray, the biggest firm in [UNINTELL]. Until just this year there's always been a Boyden in Ropes-Gray, but my nephew, Lin Boyden, retired and there are no Boydens in there anymore. [LAUGHS] But the reason he quit – Even though the family – The Boyden family– a wonderful family– they always wanted people to do things in a traditional way but they always supported each other, no matter how they moved out of it. They always expected him to be a lawyer and go into the firm and so on. He decided he didn't want to do that corporate law. He was a very liberal, left-wing type. I don't know how they all got that way, but Helen and Mrs. Boyden, they were all – not his brother so much. He just didn't want to do that, so he went back to school. He went back to graduate school at Harvard, and he lived with the Baileys – David and his family. The Baileys were great friends of the Boydens, and Mrs. Boyden was down in Black Mountain so he boarded with the Baileys. His friend, Tad Bailey, had been his roommate at college. Ruth Bailey, went to Bennington, was one of his girlfriends. All Roland's girlfriends were Bennington girls. [LAUGHS]. Bennington had started just about that time. Molly Gregory, who you've probably had dealings with, was one of his old friends. So, he had connections at Black Mountain one way or another. But he went back to Harvard and studied history, and that's what he wanted to do. Then he decided that he couldn't spend all his life in Widener Library reading

history [LAUGHS], as he'd been doing about – After he left Ropes-Gray he'd been doing that for about four to five years, it seems to me. He said, "There's a war coming. I'd better get out and do something else before – " So, he looked around and saw that he could probably get a teaching job down there. He was always interested in the kind of teaching where you don't have to do what somebody else told you to do. That's why he was interested in Marlboro College.

**MEH:** So, he went down – He was at Black Mountain one year.

**CCB:** One year.

**MEH:** Teaching political science?

**CCB:** Teaching history.

**MEH:** Teaching history. Did you take his course?

**CCB:** Yep. Modern European History, though mostly I said I'd like to concentrate my part on, of course, English history because I'm studying English literature. That's the way he managed the course. He'd never taught before. If I'd had a little more perspective, I saw later how hard it must have been for him, never having taught, to carry on a class the way he carri – the way he had been doing his graduate seminars at Harvard. He taught undergraduates at Black Mountain the same way that he'd been – Here we – You know, here we were, a bunch of ignorant kids. We didn't know any history at all. Roland was expecting us to be on a level with graduate students in the seminar. I can remember that class very well. I remember Janey Stone giving a talk on Catherine the Great. [LAUGHS] I remember Ed Kaye, who was John Stix's cousin, lying full length on a – You

know, Roland had his classes in his bedroom study. He was just lying full length on Roland's bed while he gave his report. [LAUGHS]. Very casual. One of the seats in Roland's study was a stack of New York Times about that high. [LAUGHS] Roland was always a newspaper nut and had to have the paper every day. I don't know where he got the New York Times every day, so help me, at Black Mountain, North Carolina. Must have been a Sunday Times. No, he was only there that one year, because the War was coming.

**MEh:** What courses – You took Straus' psychology?

**CB:** Um-hm [AFFIRMATIVE]. I took a music course – don't remember what it was called – with John Evarts. Two years, in fact. Learned a lot.

**MEh:** What do you remember about John?

**CCB:** Ohhhh, he was my advisor, my friend. Wonderful man. Loved him, absolutely loved him. The last time I saw him was really just before he died. John Stix and I – it was quite a few years ago. John Stix came up here and then we drove up to Windsor, where John's family were and – I'm not sure really if – He remembered John, but I don't know if he remembered me. His sister was a wonderful woman, looking after him. Anyway, John was one of the most valuable people at Black Mountain because he was so socially wonderful to everybody. He was friendly to everybody, concerned and interested in everybody's – without being nosey about it. Now I know he had his own personal problems, but I never knew anything about that when I was there. He was great friends with Roland. They roomed in rooms – I don't know if you know the set-up at Lake Eden, but in South Lodge – and North Lodge – there would be two rooms and then a john in



between. You could put maybe two people or three even in each of the rooms and then they would share the john in the middle. Teachers had classes in South Lodge. John Evarts and Roney had the set-up in the corner with the john in the middle. They were good friends. Just that one year. But John had been there since, oh, I guess John had been there since the beginning, I think. I don't really know. There are so many connections with people that I have missed, you know. My friend George, for instance, was old friends with – Oh, I'm so terrible with names. Who was that musician who was there just before me? Allan Sly. George had known Allan Sly and his music – who knows where: Yale or Illinois or – it couldn't have been in Illinois. He didn't go to Illinois 'til after the War. It must have been at Yale or someplace. No, he didn't go to Yale till after the War. I don't know where he knew him. But, anyway, Allan Sly came up here to visit George Hunter, and he brought him over here. I had never heard of Allan Sly. I said, "You were at Black Mountain?" He said, "Yes," and he told me all. I said, "I didn't know about you. You weren't there when I was there." Nobody had written any books about it, and told you who was there before, so I wish I had followed up on that. I was always surprised there wasn't more about Allan Sly in some of the books that were written, because he was really a very fine musician, according to George. He was always – Since George and I had been seeing each other, he was always saying "I'm going down to Boston to see Allan Sly. Shall we go down together?" Then he died. But then he had some problems with his wife, who was – I don't know what the problems were. I guess there was something [INAUDIBLE].

**MEH:** What more do you remember about John Evarts?

**CCB:** John and Allan Sly were both teaching music the year before I got there, but by the time I got there only John and Dr. Jalowetz, who had just come. John gave a wonderful course for people who didn't know very much about music, you know. I mean I suppose in an ordinary place it would be called Music Appreciation, but it was a little better than that. It was music history, and you also had to kind of work on some techniques of music. I remember he making us write canons and stuff, besides just listening to music. I think he just called it Music I, and then there was another one, Music II. A lot of my friends were musical. Jimmie Jamieson graduated in music, John Stix graduated in music. I don't think I hear much about the people who graduated from Black Mountain. I only hear about the famous painters who went through there. It has always irked a lot of us that the people who went to the college and did the sort of boring usual thing, you know, are not what anybody remembers about that place. They just remember big names. That's not what I remember. I remember, you know, teachers like Jalo and teachers like John Evarts and Ken Kurtz and Fernando always remembers Charles Lindsley as the most wonderful science teacher. I had a biology course, too. I remember now Barbara Sieck and I taking biology, because I loved biology when I was in school.

**MEH:** Who was teaching biology?

**CCB:** Well, he died. His name was Dick Carpenter, and I don't know who took over after that. That was over at Lee Hall.

**MEH:** What was Dick Carpenter like? [TELEPHONE INTERRUPTION]

**CCB:** He [Fred Mangold] would say a short story is a moment in life made real.

**MEH:** That was Fred Mangold.

**CCB:** I don't know if that's really what he said but that's fair enough.

[BREAK IN TAPING]

**CCB:** My grandfather had a farm in New Hampshire. I always spent summers there.

But I think children have to be kind of introduced to the wonders of the world. I don't think they just automatically take to them. Do you?

**MEH:** No, I absolutely do not.

**CCB:** But I don't know much about that. I raised kid but I never understood them. My children all love the country. They all garden. They also do a lot of things I never did like sewwww. Agggg! [IRRELVANT COMMENTS NOT TRANSCRIBED]

**MEH:** Tell me more about Marlboro College.

**CCB:** I love to talk about Marlboro College, too, because it's been central in my life ever since the War. Right after we were married Roland got this job there.

**MEH:** [BEGINNING VIDEOTAPE ONLY] When was it founded?

**CCB:** It was started in '47.

**MEH:** So it was just being founded then.

**CCB:** Yes, Roland was one of the founders – well, one of the first teachers. [END VIDEOTAPE ONLY]

**[END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 1]**

**[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2]**

**CCB:** It'll come in in the sandy places on the roadside. And where I live they don't do anything to the roads. They didn't even scrape my road this spring. You couldn't

get through it. They just got as far as my driveway and nobody could come through from the other way. I finally had to butter up the powers that be. We were talking about Marlboro.

**MEH:** Marlboro. It was founded right after the War, after World War II.

**CCB:** Yeah. It was founded primarily because Walter Hendricks [PH] had been in some set-up, the army had a college, an army college in Biarritz. He realized, you know, it'd be fun to be head of a college. He had this place up in Vermont, his summer place, and he got some interested people, and it started on nothing. An absolute shoestring. It's a miracle it survived, because – That's another long, long story about the rows and how it got down to 26 people at one point.

[LAUGHS]

**MEh:** Was this a private school?

**CCB:** Always a private school.

**MEH:** It's still a private school?

**CCB:** Oh, yes. Of course, it took GI students, and that's how we managed to have enough students.

**MEH:** How did you become involved?

**CCB:** I was married to Roland.

**MEH:** No, but how did Roland Boyden become involved?

**CCB:** Roland Boyden became – because he was looking for a job right after he got married, and he heard about it from Arthur Whittimore, [PH] who was one of the founders. He was a lawyer in Boston, and he had a summer place in Marlboro, and he knew Walter Hendricks, and he and Hendricks and a banker in

Brattleboro all got together and decided it would be nice to have a college up there on the hill where all these people lived in Marlboro. Roland heard about it from another friend, who knew somebody connected with it. So, he just looked into it, and Walter snapped him up. He was the only person who'd applied for a job there who even began to have a Ph.D. Roland was finishing up his thesis right after the War. So, by the time he was hired I think he had finished it. So, Hendricks made him Dean because he was the only one who had an advanced degree. But, no, I think he was interested probably, and I think that's mainly the chief influence of Black Mountain on us was the way he felt that you could form the curriculum at a college that you were involved in developing. Get in on the ground floor and start a college, and you could do it the way you want to do it.

**MEH:** So, how – What was some of the Black Mountain influence on Marlboro? How were they similar.

**CCB:** Well, the program at the beginning was very like the program there, even though Walter Hendricks, who was ultimately thrown out, but he really wanted to make it into a kind of a little Amherst, rather more traditional. But we had an organization called a town meeting, very like the general meeting at Black Mountain, for governing the college. We had a curriculum very like that with students taking examinations after a couple of years and then majoring or whatever they call it, "doing a senior plan." There were some rather more conventional aspects certainly about the living conditions. I remember Flora Hendricks – because it was mostly boys at the beginning because of the GI Bill, but when we had some girls, she said, "Oh tsk tsk, [INAUDIBLE] girls, girls."

[LAUGHS] She was afraid – and then when the sixties came along, oh oh

[SIGHS]: "Boys and girls are sleeping together, whew whew whew!" I said, "Just be glad it's only boys and girls." But – It's the curriculum that's been the most influence, I'd say.

**MEH:** You mentioned senior examiners. How did that [OVERTALK]

**CCB:** Outside examiners, same system.

**MEH:** So, it was really strongly influenced by Black Mountain.

**CCB:** Nobody at Marlboro now will acknowledge that there was any influence or anybody who had anything to do with Black Mountain that had any effect – Nobody there.

**MEH:** Why is that?

**CCB:** I don't know. I don't know. Roland did not ever push that kind of thing. He was not that sort of person. But I was always talking about it, and I remember saying to Tom Ragle who was maybe the third president. "You know, that's the way we did it at Black Mountain, blah blah blah," and he'd look at me and say, "It died, didn't it?" [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** How is Marlboro different from Black Mountain?

**CCB:** Oh, heavens. We didn't have any grades or exams at Black Mountain.

**MEH:** And you did at Marlboro.

**CCB:** And they do at Marlboro. Yes indeedy, because times have changed. The kids want them. They've got to have a gradepoint average. I said, "What's a gradepoint average?" [LAUGHS] No, you couldn't possibly have a place like Black Mountain anymore. Kids finished at Black Mountain, and somebody called

up someone at Harvard in the history department and said, "I have a student here, you know. What do you say?" "Okay, send him up." You know, that's the way it worked. In the fine arts, you know, Albers knew everybody at the School of Design and whoosht – okay. And go up there and study with Gropius and Breuer and all the rest of them. It's not like that anymore. All our graduates had no trouble getting into good graduate schools. Of course, you had to be pretty good to graduate [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** That's true.

**CCB:** Then a lot of people came to Black Mountain who didn't have the slightest interest in a regular academic graduation business, and I only did that because I came from a conventional sort of New England background where my father and mother taught me that when you start something you finish it. [LAUGHS]. I think they're quite mistaken about some things, but then they – Well, a lot of the artists did make it longer. Have you talked to Don Page? He took, I think he took five years. I can't remember about Bela Martin – whether he finished. Or wasn't he – Yes, he was in the arts. People did different things. But a lot of my friends graduated, even though they had to go through all kinds of strange situations and changes in people during the war. Janie Stone, for instance, kept switching and she got married and – But she got wonderful examiners. She had Lionel Trilling and Jacques Barzun as her examiners! I can't even remember who mine were.

**MEH:** I was going to ask you who was your examiner?

**CCB:** I can't remember his name. He was at Bard College. He was a, you know, literature professor.

**MEH:** Did he come down to examine you?

**CCB:** Oh they all, they all came down.

**MEH:** What do you remember about that whole graduation process?

**CCB:** Almost nothing except I wore my best shorts [LAUGHS]. No, no, that wasn't part of the process. That was just when they called me in to say that I had graduated. That was apropos of what they do in commencements. No, the exam, there was a whole lot of written exams that the outside examiner sent on or gave to somebody, and I just took them to my study and did them, a couple of days worth, as I remember. Ken Kurtz was very conscientious about preparing his students for exams. He gave me trial exams to do, so that I wouldn't be overwhelmed with the kind of thing. He knew the kind of thing they'd do, and so I did these trial exams, and so they didn't seem terribly difficult. I think you were allowed to use reference books if you wanted to look up dates or something, but you know, it was all honor system and – I don't remember much about it because at the oral that the outside examiner held for you, they were – Some people didn't mind having a lot of observers, but you were allowed to say if you didn't want anybody there. Of course, there was some faculty committee or interested faculty that sat around while he examined you, but if you didn't want your friends and enemies to come and listen in you could say "Don't come. I don't want to." So, as I remember it, it was just not a very long oral exam in Bob Wunsch's study where he asked various questions. I kind of think it's the way



orals are most places. They take your written stuff, and they say "Could you expand on this?" or "Why didn't you mention so-and-so here, there and elsewhere?" But I have very little recollection of it.

**MEH:** What about – What do you think about this as a process –

**CCB:** I think it's an excellent system. I think nowadays it seems to me though, I know not very much about it, but it seems to me that people that graduated from college after college with just piling up a bunch of credits and, you know, grade point averages. It doesn't seem to me they have to take any real responsibility. Just like the kid said when he asked the teacher if he could study something, she said, "You don't have that 'til next year." Or "You had that last year." Roland had one student at Marlboro who couldn't understand why it was that he was expected to know stuff that he'd studied the previous year, when it came to his examination. He said, " But I've done that." Roland said, "Well, we hoped that you learned something." He was of that school that thought once you pass an exam and get a grade, that's out of the way. You don't have to have anything up here or anything in here, anything in your library. No, you did that. Well I find many, many, many people do that, you know. So, I read Shakespeare when I was in junior – No, I think it's a very good system. I think it's terribly specialized, especially at Marlboro. I don't know that it was that specialized, because I don't know what other people were doing there, but at Marlboro your senior plan, you can pick anything you want. If you can get a sponsor and get it through the faculty meeting, you can do things. But some of the outside examiners have

said the work that kids do at Marlboro are on a level with the Masters work they do. But that's not everybody, of course.

**MEH:** How large is Marlboro now?

**CCB:** Oh it's very small. It's been growing. When Roland was sort of in charge, he didn't want it to get much bigger than, oh, two or three hundred. I think it's getting up there. But it's very small – well, it's the smallest college anywhere. It's been small right along. But if it gets much bigger, they're going to have to spend a lot of money on housing and – That's one of the big problems with the private colleges – you're running a hotel. All that stuff, that takes an awful lot – that plant business. Ohh, I don't know. I'm glad Roland isn't here to be worrying about it again. [LAUGHS] He'd never had – They'd just finished a big campaign at Marlboro to get an endowment. They've never had much, and, you know, I get requests from Harvard. Being a Harvard widow, I get requests for money. I can't believe a place that has three billion dollars [LAUGHS]. But, of course, they have terrible responsibilities.

**MEh:** So, when were you married?

**CCB:** 1945. September 1945.

**MEH:** Roland, he went into the –

**CCb:** He had been in the service. We were engaged. People did that in those days. We were engaged when he left –

**MEH:** In 194 –

**CCB:** When he left Marlboro in '42. I mean left Black Mountain. He went in the service. He was in four years, and so he got back right after VJ Day, and we were

married. Or I forget – VJ Day, maybe it was before. What was the date, do you know? How old were you then? [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** VJ Day, what was it, in April? It was in the spring. I don't know the date of VJ Day.

**CCB:** The VE Day was earlier, right after Roosevelt died. But anyway, anyway we were married in September 1945, and we lived in Cambridge while Roland finished up his dissertation, and I had my first child that spring. Because Roland was already, I thought, over the hill. I wanted to raise a family before he was old.

**MEH:** How old was he?

**CCB:** Let's see, he was about 33 or 4. People do that nowadays. Think nothing of it. I mean my daughter Rachel had Amy, who's only five, and she's 42 now. So, she had her last child quite late.

**MEH:** Leslie Paul's daughter – She had her first child when she was 50.

**CCB:** [LAUGHS]. Please cut that out. I mean you probably read about the woman that's sixty-something. But that was quite artificial. But this girl had just a perfectly normal pregnancy and everything at 50? My father, who was a lawyer, told me about all these contingencies that had to be included in various documents in case something like that happened, that there was further "issue". [LAUGHS] I said don't be silly, after fifty? Well – But, I hadn't thought about Leslie Paul for years. Of course, he's related to people who are re – You can't believe the ins and outs. I drove up to my nephew, or my husband's nephew's wedding in Weston, Massachusetts, or Lincoln, out that way, at Parton [PH] Field, and a car drove up next to me and they got out and it was Gonzalo Leon,

Fernando and Paco's brother. I said, "What are you doing here?" He said, "Oh my cousin, my wife's cousin, is getting married." I said, "My nephew's getting – " [LAUGHS]. So, I told Fernando. So, now finally after all these many years we are almost related. [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** Well, at Black Mountain during the thirties, there was this network of the Frenches and the Baileys and the Boydens – New England – Dreiers. The New England families who knew one another through camp or school.

**CCB:** Well, I suppose you could say that the Baileys knew each other. I mean, the Baileys and Boydens knew each other just because they were neighbors and friends in Cambridge. I have no idea how the Dreiers fitted into that. As one of those books – Have you read Mr. Rice's book, I Came Out of the Eighteenth Century? He said Ted Dreier had money in his bones. Boy, what a strange man Ted. Now, he must be gone by now.

**MEH:** He died this spring.

**CCB:** Oh, no. I would like to write to Bobbie. Where is she?

**MEH:** I don't know. I need to write to her too, and I'm not sure whether she'd be in Iowa where they lived, or –

**CCB:** They lived in Iowa?

**MEH:** Mm-hm [AFFIRMATIVE]

**CCB:** Why'd they live in Iowa?

**MEH:** We don't need to put all this on tape. We'll talk later. So, anyway, getting back to Black Mountain, what about – You were there when they built the Studies Building.

**CCB:** I'd forgotten all about that! [LAUGHS]. Sure. Yeah, I worked very hard. Boy, I mixed concrete. Oh, yeah. The one thing I have here is a little brochure. We were trying to raise some money, and it has pictures of people working on the work program and working on the Studies Building. There's a picture of Connie Spencer, who was so beautiful, hammering. A picture of Barbara Sieck- – a lot of beautiful girls down there. Do you know Barbara Sieck? She married Derek Bovingdon.

**MEH:** I haven't found her.

**CCB:** I lost – She was my best friend for about two weeks.

**MEH:** Do you know what she did after Black Mountain? After Derek died?

**CCB:** No, no. I'm sure that somebody like Fernando probably kept up. He was always cuckoo about her. She dumped him for Derek. I don't know. I never did keep up. Her sister, her older sister had been at Black Mountain before I was there. Katie Sieck. One of the few people who had a car, as I remember. John Stix.

**MEH:** About the Studies Building, what –

**CCB:** The Studies Building was an amazing, really an amazing accomplishment. It turned out it was not very well done. I've been down there, and it's all falling apart. But, you know, we moved over to Lake Eden before things were really ready for us, but we had been – you know, whoever organized things – we had been working over there the previous year while we still lived in Lee Hall. So, we'd go over there and work and move rocks around and survey for sewer lines and built those servants' quarters and this and that and the other. So, we had already done quite a lot of stuff from Lee Hall, and during that summer and all.

So, then we moved in there, and things were just not finished, really. It wasn't only the Studies Building, but putting heat in those little cabins and in the dorms, and the Studies Building wasn't finished. So, we had to live in the lodges.

[INTERRUPTION OF VISITORS].

**[Text deleted]**

**MEH:** Well, we were talking about the Studies Building.

**CCB:** The Studies Building was an amazing feat. I don't know who organized it, but they got this guy named Hans [Richard] --

**MEH** Gothe.

**CCB:** It wasn't pronounced "Gothe". But he was kind of the boss. But we had a wonderful local carpenter – and his name is recorded.

**MEH:** Charles Godfrey?

**CCB:** Right. I remember him very well. He was much better at helping the kids do a good job when they really weren't trained. There was hardly any of us who had any skills at all in that line. There were a few boys who, you know, had done that kind of carpentry and building, but mostly we were just completely – just bodies, you know. But there were people who learned. Ted Dreier had, I don't know, given his wife as a birthday present a bulldozer. [LAUGHS]. I mean that's the way Black Mountain was run, you know. Ted and Bobbie Dreier's money. So, I remember a guy named Deaver. We called him Danny Deaver, but I don't know what his real name was. He loved driving that, so he did a lot of that work. We got, you know, just slave labor to move rocks around and mix concrete and stuff like that. That's what I did. I carried these boxes of sand and gravel and

somebody'd carry some this and that and dump it in a cement mixer, to mix it. Somehow things got done. I remember laying floors. I learned how to do a lot of stuff, but I've never taken to that sort of thing. Not the way my daughter seems to love building. But there were plenty of people who could supervise, but I don't know that things were done really right. But when we finally moved in there, everybody had a study. I was very lucky, because later on people had to double up on studies, and things kind of fell apart. But we had a pretty good set-up after the Studies Building was finished. Before it was finished, that fall we had to sleep and study and everything, three girls in one small room.

**MEH:** In the lodge?

**CCB:** In the lodge, yeah. That's when I was taking my senior division exams, I remember. But my roommates, of whom there were many. I can't even remember all the different roommates. They were very good about it, moving out so I could have a little quiet. But we were all kind of packed in there for awhile. Somebody wrote an article, I suppose it's in the archives somewhere, in Look magazine, of how people lived at this funny college, you know. They had the bunks suspended from the – just the springs, you know, to make an upper bunk that could be folded up. Jeez, I haven't thought about this for so long! But the Studies Building was really very nice. Really very nice. There was a nice apartment at the end that Bob Wunsch had, with a big room that could be used for meetings and things. Nice site. There was an article in Time magazine, I think, with a design that Breuer and Gropius, or Breuer anyway had done earlier, but was much too complicated and could never be implemented. So, we

had another guy named Kocher, who designed this building, and he supervised generally. He was there as a teacher and lived right across from the dining hall. But he must have had a hard time. I don't know how they did it! But by the time I moved into my study, it was really pretty okay. There were some unfinished things about it, I remember. Strange, strange kind of stairwell at the end that I never quite understood about – all stonework. [LAUGHS]. I don't know. What else did you want to know about the Studies Building? How we did it?

**MEH:** Yeah. Do you have any particular recollections of anecdotes or things that worked or things that didn't work?

**CCB:** Well, I just recollect that there was something posted every day about the work program. When most of the work was done must have been in the summertime of the previous year, but we still had the work program. That was something different. You asked about Marlboro College. We have never had anything like the work program at Marlboro College. There was a stab made at something to do like that, but it was never anything like – I don't know how successful it really was, but it was a very important part of the whole program there. All the years I was there, almost everyone worked on the program. Somebody would come in and give you a little lecture if you didn't show up [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** What sorts of things did you do on the work program?

**CCB:** Oh, everything, everything. I used to get enlisted by Ted Dreier to do whatever he was doing. But I did farm work and I did work on the Studies Building when that was going on. I did – I remember Don Page getting me to do some gardening. It just came into my mind. What kind of gardening – I don't know



anything about gardening. But he must have already been a gardener then. That was the kind of guy he was.

**MEH:** Did you work on the farm?

**CCB:** I worked on the farm, yeah.

**MEH:** What did you do?

**CCB:** Yeah – Oh, I don't know. Cleared brush, cut corn. I remember we had a forest fire one time,-. The only time I ever saw Roland run [LAUGHS]. But I don't know, they put up a notice on the bulletin board in the dining hall and you – somebody assigned – It seems to me Bob Bliss, did you ever interview him? Is he still alive?

**MEH:** [INAUDIBLE]

**CCB:** Well, it seems to me he assigned people to various jobs and then made somebody a straw boss or something. But I can't really remember much about the different things we did. I mean the program, whether it was the building program or not, the program I think was supposedly a real part of the college system, but I was, of course, there just when they started that, and I don't know how it was before. Has anybody talked about a work program earlier?

**MEH:** Yeah. They started really at the beginning of the college, partly for financial reasons. But there wasn't the construction going on.

**CCB:** Well, we all – we all took part certainly in jobs around, you know. But we never cooked or – When my sister Dorothy was there, she told me that they really did a lot more about maintenance at the college than when I was there. She said she remembered firing furnaces and stuff like that. But I didn't see that we did

very much about general maintenance. Somebody came in. Some nice  
[VIDEOTAPE ONLY SECTION BEGINS] black lady came in and mopped the  
hallways for instance. I don't remember much about the work program. I  
remember thinking it was a necessary evil. There was a lot of talk about –  
[VIDEOTAPE SECTION ONLY SECTION ENDS]

**[END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 2.**

**BEGINNING OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2]**

**CCB:** I don't think they called it "peer pressure" in those days. What was it called in those days? But we had no rules, you know, there. The system just sort of flowed along, and – such a small place that if there was any problem, somebody, maybe your advisor or maybe a friend or maybe a teacher that particularly liked you or something, would come and talk to you about it. That was a very winning thing about Black Mountain. No rules. No rules but those "agreements" we talked about, that everybody has said just these few agreements. I don't know whether they changed them later to more or less, but the only ones when I was there were you didn't go through somebody's Do Not Disturb sign, and you didn't visit members of the opposite sex in their bedrooms. Plenty of other places to visit them. Everybody had a study. That's the other thing I've never understood – how people go to college the way they do now and live in a room with a roommate and have to study there, too. I could never have done that. They have to find a place to work, I don't know how they do it, because we all had our own studies. The only time I ever got any work done was alone in my study. But I suppose people share, somehow, take turns.

Things are very different. I found it an absolutely wonderful place. If you wanted to goof off and do nothing, nobody made a fuss about it. It was only when they evaluated students, and who knows when the faculty did that. Roland used to tell me, but I've forgotten. They would discuss them, and they'd say, "So-and-so doesn't seem to be doing anything, but I'll talk, advise him, I'll talk to him." So, only a few people were really tossed out because, you know, they didn't seem to be getting anything out of it. You wouldn't toss out anybody who was paying the full fee [LAUGHS]. I have been affiliated only with colleges who have no money [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** So, you know how they operate.

**CCB:** But Marlboro's very different on that. Marlboro had a Board of Trustees.

Marlboro paid its faculty. Black Mountain didn't pay its faculty much. They never had any money. But the early years at Marlboro, they didn't pay its faculty enough to live on and so many of our faculty members were people who had independent incomes, and it was hard. Or who were so wedded to the idea of living in the country and teaching the way they wanted to teach at a small college – nobody telling them how to teach a class or what the syllabus had to be or – Then, you know, we didn't have much money. One of Roland's jobs that he hated, but he was dean for, I don't know, twenty-five years, was to tell the faculty that they weren't given a raise this year either. [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** Going back to the work program. What do you think – No, not in terms of details. What do you think was the effect or the value to the students in having this sort of thing?

**CCB:** Well, I often wondered about that.

**MEH:** I mean do you think it really had any –

**CCB:** Well, in terms of community, which after all is one of the things that interests people, or at least used to interest people about Black Mountain – Mr. Duberman called his book An Experiment in Community, or something like that, and it seems to me Paul Goodman wrote something years ago that – somebody who was teaching a course in Utopian Communities at Marlboro College used that. That's how they heard about Black Mountain. But doing the kind of work to keep the place running is bound to bring people together, and it's a common cause that if you care about the place at all – There's always people who say, "If you think I'm going to go out and beg for food for my wife, you're crazy." Ken Kurtz told me that he would do anything for Black Mountain College, but he would not go out and beg. He just wouldn't. He loved the place, and he loved thinking about other things you might do there. He'd say, "Well, we could put a stone wall in, you know, because we really could raise grapes." He loved thinking about utopias and communities and all that kind of thing. So, then we all had to work together to build the Studies Building and keep the place running and even go out and raise money, which we did one winter. We had brochures and ran around and rang doorbells to raise money. God, the people in Winchester, Mass. thought I was out of my mind. "You what?!" [LAUGHS] My father, for once, didn't put his foot down and say, you know, "I can't have you doing that!" [LAUGHS] But – no, I think that that's the value of it, whereas the true value of it was that we didn't have any other way to build the college. We

had to have another building, and there it was. I don't know what happened after the original people left, the big row and – I heard so many different versions. Being old, old pals with the Dreier bunch – I even saw Ted a lot in Cambridge after we moved – after I was married and lived up there. Ted and Bobbie actually lived in the same apartment that Roland and I lived in later. It was crazy. But I heard an entirely different story from Ted Dreier, for instance, than I heard from people who had been in the Eric Bentley bunch. Reading about it in Duberman's book, it didn't make any sense at all to me. So, I just said, "Well, you know, that's the way things happen." I know nothing about – well, I know nobody who was there with Charles Olson. I don't know any of those people. I've heard this complaint from other old-timey ones. Fernando went out to one of the reunions. I forget which one, whether it was the North Carolina one or the California one that he went to where he said, "It was all those later people took it over, and nobody paid any attention to us." He was terribly hurt about that. I said, "Well, why didn't you assert yourself?" [LAUGHS] But people get crotchety as they get older, you know, and they remember their part of something and – So, I have wonderful memories of it, but I'm not about to worry about what happened with Charles Olson [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** Do you remember any particular parties?

**CCB:** Parties. We didn't have parties. We didn't have parties. You mean like those ones they describe in the summertime? All those crazy things, when – those pictures, pictures in all the books of what's-his-name, the dome, the geodesic dome guy. Bucky Fuller?

**MEh:** No, no. I mean just regular – I heard about costume parties, Saturday night and various things, where you decorated.

**CCB:** After my time.

**MEH:** What about –

**CCB:** Costumes! Heavens, no. Nobody ever put on costumes. Saturday nights we always had a dance, and John Evarts, who was the most wonderful guy for making a party a party – if you want to call it a party – Because two or three times a week after supper, he'd sit down at the piano and play dance music, and everybody danced. I had more fun the four years at Black Mountain, dancing, than, you know – aside from all the academic work and everything, but thinking of the recreational things – dancing. I love to dance, and everybody did. There were only a very few people like Jeffrey [CCB: Jim Raymond?] who couldn't dance [LAUGHS]. Though he tried. But I enjoyed it, very much. He'd play just for a little while after supper. Then on Saturday nights the girls put on a long skirt or something. Everybody looked fairly – You know, we worked on the work program, and we grunged around during the day, but everybody looked fairly civilized at dinner. That was just the way it was. Hardly anybody ever came looking dirty and ratty and torn, the way they think it's fashionable to look nowadays. No. We, Saturday nights, actually dressed up to the extent of putting on a long skirt, because it was fun for dancing. Jack Lipsey, such a sweet man. He always disapproved of the kind of shoes that the girls wore, because it was fun to dance in flat or soft shoes, you know, instead of some idiotic high-heeled things, none of – nobody had those anyway. So, we wore – lots of people wore

espadrilles and sandals, and would dance in them. He always disapproved.

"What are you wearin' those things," he'd say. We swapped clothes around, you know. We didn't have a lot of clothes, so we'd borrow people's skirts or people's long dresses, swap around. But that's all I remember about Saturday night parties. We also had a concert or something like that on Saturday. We didn't have – Well, we had classes Saturday morning. Yes. In fact, I went right through a school system where we studied on Saturdays. Everything stops in the world today about Friday noon is the impression I have. Even Fridays is kind of an ~~oegh~~ [?] day, where you "dress down," whatever that means. But when I went to school and college, we worked on Saturday mornings. But I don't remember parties. I mean there might've been cliquy little gatherings, but – I'll tell you what we did on Sundays. I'm sure everybody remembers this. The help was off, and so they put out a lot of stuff after breakfast and you made your sandwiches for Sunday lunch. So, that was a kind of arrangement to share with your friends Sunday lunch, with a picknicky kind of thing, or, you know, you could have some gadgets in your study – toasters or hotplates or whatever – to have with your Sunday lunch. That's all I remember about – I don't remember parties. Have a lot of people talked to you about parties?

**MEH:** Yeah.

**CCB:** When?

**MEH:** Throughout the college's history. But maybe more so in some times than other times. What about visitors? Do you remember any visitors to the college, in particular?

**CCB:** Well, I – No, except that meeting with Albert Einstein on the walk, and – No, I remember when Eleanor Roosevelt came in, but none of us moved from where we were sitting [LAUGHS]. She drove out again. No, I don't remember anything. Very likely there were very distinguished visitors who came and spoke or something, but – Ah yes, May Sarton and Eva LeGallienne came, and – They must have talked about theatre, art, something. I really – That was my first year there.

**MEh:** Did you know who she was at that point?

**CCB;** I knew who Eva LeGallienne was. I didn't know who May Sarton was. Subsequently I learned that my husband went to school with May Sarton. Shady Hill School in Cambridge, when it was outdoors. I have a picture of them all dressed up as little Greek children. [LAUGHS] No, I don't know what their interest was in Black Mountain. Lots of people came through there because they'd heard, you know, about this interesting place. That's what that Bob What's-His-Name said in his letter. Something about the depressing state of American education at the time. I don't remember there was anything terribly depressing about the state of American education at the time. One of my sisters was doing very nicely at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, and another was at Cornell, pre-med. What was so depressing about it? It was not what I wanted to do, but – I thought he had a very funny attitude about it, as if, you know, as if Black Mountain had gone through some very – That's still there, that kind of education's going to be with us forever. The Black Mountains and the Marlboros are going to gradually be assimilated, and they'll be an addition. But as Tom



Ragle did say, "Oh Black Mountain died." But what I remember about it was that it was emphasized over and over again that this college was started to give a central place to the fine arts, which were out in left field at all the other colleges. That doesn't seem to be what Bob What's-His-Name thinks it did. But that's, that's what Mr. Rice and the people who started it wanted to do, to make the fine arts the center of the curriculum. Whereas at other colleges, they were extracurricular activities. You had no academic credit for playing the piano or painting a picture or acting in a play. Harvard didn't even have a theater at the time. [LAUGHS] So, that was one thing that was very different about Black Mountain. That was the center of the curriculum. That did not mean that they didn't teach other stuff, and I think that there has been a lot of misunderstanding about that. But they were pretty deficient in, say, the physical sciences.

**MEH:** Did you take any science?

**CCB:** I took biology, but I wasn't going to take –

**MEH:** What do you remember about Dick Carpenter?

**CCB:** Practically nothing except that he was a very serious young man. Very serious and solid teacher. That he had an affair with somebody in the secretarial staff [LAUGHS]. Rachel Somebody. That's all I remember about him. Then he left, and then we heard he got sick and then he died. Very soon. But I remember enjoying the biology course very much, but I had loved biology so much at school that, you know, I had vaguely thought, you know, I'd like to stay in it. Then I realized how terrible I would be in sciences, you know. That it wasn't the scientific part of biology that I loved. It was the part that they don't know anything

about, you know – Where is life? [LAUGHS] But I – I was just trying out different things, you know. One of the things I liked the best was singing in the chorus with Dr. Jalowetz. Loved that. I've been singing in choruses ever since. Well not in the last fifteen years.

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

**CCB:** Oh, probably mostly I remember just his extraordinary winning personality, because I didn't actually study with him. He conducted the chorus, but I didn't take any courses with him. I took only music courses with John Evarts, but my friend Jimmie Jamieson studied with Jalo, and John Stix. A lot of my friends studied with him. They all adored him. He was just probably the most lovable man that ever came through there and he couldn't understand the bickering and the fighting and the factions, you know. I think that was very hard for him to take sides in any of those arguments. But I didn't know him well. I knew Johanna better, his wife, because, I guess because we sang in the chorus together. I don't know why – she was around the summer I worked there, the two summers I worked there, I was very friendly with her. Very nice lady. Yeah, I know her daughter, Lisa. She didn't actually go there.

**MEH:** To what extent were you aware of the plight of the refugees?

**CCB:** We were all quite aware of it because there was a lot of talk. Odd men from the FBI kept showing up and asking questions. We never could figure out. I mean these people were quite clearly innocent refugees, but they were – Who knows in wartime why people – When you look back at the things that [LAUGHS] have happened once they're released from the CIA or one place or another. No, I

don't know whether they thought there would be "columnists" or whatever they were called among them. I know Dr. Hansgirg was a problem. My family had connections with a scientist in Winchester who was at MIT who knew Dr. Hansgirg, so, I never could quite figure out what the problem was. But he was actually not classified in the same way that Dr. Jalowetz and Dr. Straus were and was only allowed to be there – in this country – under very strict rules. I don't know if that was because he had been affiliated with some Nazi outfit or why. I never knew. They were certainly a very unlikely pair to be at Black Mountain. Most unlikely pair. [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** How was that?

**CCB:** Oh, heavens. Mrs. Hangirg had seven fur coats. Dr. Hansgirg had every, every little gadget and gadget you can imagine, for whatever, you know. He had a paint sprayer. Why? He was the kind of person who liked to acquire things. They had money. I don't know why they had money? What were they doing there? I don't know. I tried to find out from my father, because of this scientist friend of ours who lived in Winchester who knew something about the Hansgirgs. But I never found out, and I couldn't figure it out. They also had a very funny attitude toward art and literature. They didn't think anything good had been written in music since Beethoven. [LAUGHS] And were very, very conservative in their views on lots of things. On the other hand, they seemed to fall in with the – you know, the pattern of life there, even though they weren't really cut out for that kind of a life. So, they lived in one of those cabins. I don't remember which one. Sort of made it a little rich person's cabin. [LAUGHS] Mrs. Hansgirg would give parties with

champagne and strawberries floating – Who knows. I could never put it together about the Hansgirgs, and what he was doing there. Was he teaching? What was he teaching? Science? I don't know. It's a mystery to me. I remember going on a mountain trip, climbing Grandfather Mountain or something, and he was on that trip. That's about all I remember about Hansgirg. Not, not my type of people at all. [LAUGHS] I'm sure there are other people who remember them better or remember something more about them. I think it was only one year though.

There were other people there that made very little impression on me that other people may know. There was a man named Miller. Well, now, Miller was the most boring man I have ever met in my life. He kept telling you about when he had breakfast with Gandhi. Well, I don't know what his background was, or why he was there, but, you know, these people were famous in some way and whoever was in charge was always getting famous people to come down because maybe we could get some free teaching out of them or something like that, I guess. But Herbert, was it Herbert Miller? I never studied anything with him, and it was just the last year that I remember they were rather conventional people. So, when Gisela Kronenberg and I, who were the entire graduating class in 1943, when we graduated, Mrs. Miller decided there should be a ceremony, and so, she threw a little ceremony, and I guess we took off our best shorts and put on a skirt or something and went up, and she asked people to come and meet the graduates. I thought that was very sweet of her, but I don't remember, I have no picture of her at all. I think they were retired. He was a

retired civil servant or professor from somewhere else, or he'd been in government. I don't know.

**MEH:** What about – Did you take any language courses?

**CCB:** [LAUGHS] Oh, things were so hit or miss at Black Mountain. I don't remember that they had anybody officially teaching languages.

**MEh:** Was Fran de Graaff there when you were?

**CCB:** Oh yes, Fran was. Fran was – She was very good at that, but I didn't study with her. Roland actually, the one year he was there, he wanted to learn was it Dutch? He studied some Dutch with her. Faculty members were always taking classes, you know. That was one of the great things about that place. But I had studied, as we do, four years of school French. I said, "I'm never going to do that again." You know, that's the way I was about – "Naah. French? Forget it!" [LAUGHS] But I thought it'd be good to know a little German. Why? I don't know why. Trudi Straus, who was a violinist, said she would teach German. Funniest class I have ever been in in my whole life. There were about four or five of us in it, and she didn't have the faintest idea of how to go about teaching a language, you know. There are very special techniques to teaching languages. Change all the time, you know. So, she taught us to sing Schubert songs. I think we learned a few cases, this and that. I'll never forget when one of the kids didn't show up, and she asked about him, and we all chorused together, "He's gedropt." [LAUGHS] But Trudi Straus was a flaky lady. Very sweet. But she was primarily a violinist. She was not a teacher. I suppose she could have taught violin. The Strauses were interesting. They arrived from Germany with a good deal of very

hefty German furniture. I never understood how they fitted it in that little cottage they lived in. Interesting pair. I never really understood Dr. Straus. He was a terrifying sort of person. [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** But you took his course.

**CCB:** I took his course, but I didn't understand anything. It turned out to be philosophy really, and I didn't have any background at all. I tried, but – I think he called it Introduction to the Problems of Psychology, and I realized that if I should start over again, I could then use some of the stuff that I picked up in that course as a basis for really getting down to business in philosophy. You know. "Do you see the problem?" "Yes, I see the problem." "Once you see the problem?" is about as far as I got [LAUGHS]. But he thought we all had read Kant and Descartes and everybody. You know, none of us – I thought it was going to be a psychology course, and I had some weird idea that people studied psychology to find out why redheaded people behaved the way they do. You can't believe how naive. Well, you can. You can believe. Seventeen years old takes a course called Problems in Psychology.

**[IRRELEVANT REMARKS ABOUT GETTING NEW TAPE, AND PROCEDURE OF  
TRANSCRIBING AND RETURNING TO INTERVIEWEE FOR APPROVAL, ETC.]**

**MEH:** There were a few other things I was going to ask you about. During the War, you were in the Navy?

**CCB:** I was in the Navy, and when I joined the service, all my Black Mountain friends wrote me letters and said, "You're out of your mind! I don't want to even know you" [LAUGHS]. It wasn't a very Black-Mountainy thing to do. Of course, all the

guys had to go, and with the exception of very few – you know, Sam Brown, somebody, almost everybody I know was in the service, and all the faculty except the older ones. Of all the women, I think there were only perhaps three of us who went in.

**MH:** Who were they?

**CCB:** There was Evelyn what's-her-name \_\_\_\_\_. [ NOT CLEAR]

**[END OF SIDE 2, TAPE 2]**

**[BEGINNING OF SIDE 1, TAPE 3]**

**CCB:** – in Nyack, and stayed with Lisa. I forget what the occasion was – just, I guess just Lisa and John decided to have a gathering. Jane Mayhall was there, but Leslie couldn't come. He was a sick man.

**MEH:** He was really sick, yes.

**CCB:** I didn't inquire what was the matter with him.

**MEH:** He had Parkinson's.

**[TEXT DELETED]**

**MEH:** You were talking about enlisting in the Navy.

**CCB:** Oh God! [LAUGHS] That didn't have anything to do with Black Mountain.

**MEH:** Well, I'm interested in knowing what you did. [INTERRUPTION ABOUT MOVING INTO THE SUN]. You were talking about –

**CCB:** Evelyn Somebody-or-Other went in, and she seemed like the sort of person who would be perfect in the WAVES – or the WACS, whichever it was. I don't know which she was in. Jackie Tankersley. I would love to know where some of these people are. Are you going to have time to tell me something about –

**MEH:** Sure. Over lunch you can interrogate me.

**CCB:** And Jackie Tankersley went in, and she must have looked pretty *soignée* in her uniform [LAUGHS]. But I don't know why I did. I think it was a pretty dumb move on my part, but I graduated in '43 and I went up to Washington and stayed with Roland's sister, Helen, and looked for a job in Washington where there was a lot of talk about the great demand for help. So, I thought it would be a breeze to get a job. You know, the War effort. It was not a breeze. I must have interviewed I don't know how many people, but they always asked you what your major was in college. I want to tell you – a major in English literature is not wanted anywhere [LAUGHS]. So, I should have said well, my major was economics or sociology or history, but, no, I never lie. There didn't seem to be any openings, even at the lowest level of government jobs, which they had – You know, everybody said, "Oh, they need people in every area." So, I went on home and I developed – it seems to me this is the way it happened, but, by god, it was a long time ago. I developed an infection in my jaw from a wisdom tooth that an incompetent dentist in Asheville had pulled out, and, you know, it had gotten infected and really was terrible. They didn't have anything like penicillin in those days. So, my family made me go to this dental surgeon who put the fear of god in me. He said, "You have to stay in bed," because he was afraid that the infection would spread, and he said, "If you don't do what I tell you to do, I'll have to cut your jaw open." Scared me to death and my parents, too. So, after recovering from that, and looking into Rosie the Riveter type jobs, where – I think it was Susie Noble who had one in Cambridge and told me they needed



people – I just suddenly said, "Oh, I know where they need people. They need people in the armed forces." Whsssht! I went into the first naval district and said I want to join the WAVES. I thought, of course, they'd give me a commission instantly. They said, "Oh you can't have a commission. You didn't go to an accredited college." [LAUGHS] So, that's the only "influence" that Black Mountain College had on my navy life. It was that I became enlisted instead of an officer, for which I was duly grateful after I'd been in a a very short time. I was glad I was enlisted. Ooooh, WAVE officers. [LAUGHS] Navy nurses, oooooh. No. So, I spent two-and-a half-years, and that was it. Nothing –

**MEH:** What did you do?

**CCB:** I was in the Hospital Corps, and the Hospital Corps of the Navy does all its own everything. Every branch of the Navy was like that, and as soon as they found out that I could read and write and spell, they made me a secretary instead of carrying bedpans, and so that's what I did. I was always the secretary to the head of some hospital. I was only in two, one in Memphis and then the rest of the time I was in Gulfport, Mississippi. Hell, but, you know, I survived. It's time out of my life that was a waste of time. I mean, I suppose it was some aid to the war effort. No Navy people, no Navy guys wanted to see us coming, because we released a man for sea duty – that's what the WAVES did [LAUGHS]. So, I mean every time a WAVE corpsman, as they called us, came along, some poor sailor in the Hospital Corps would have to go out with a Marine battalion to the South Pacific, which was the worst duty imaginable. Only one medical person in the Marine battalion in the jungles of – Uhhh! God, no. It was probably a bad

move. Roland was not too thrilled when he found out. He came back on leave. He couldn't find where I was. [LAUGHS] He hadn't gotten mail. He was stationed in Alaska, and he came back on leave and didn't know where I was. Got in touch with my family, and they said I was in New York at boot camp. He went to New York. I had already been transferred to Washington, and – We finally got together, and then he was shipped off to Hawaii, but that's all about the Navy.

**MEH:** Did you ever work? Did you ever hold a job? You reared your kids –

**CCB:** I worked without pay doing a good many things. [LAUGHS] I worked, actually I worked at Black Mountain for Ted Dreier, as secretary, and I had had the most rudimentary secretarial training you can have which was six weeks at a summer secretarial course so that I could learn proper touch typing. I learned a kind of shorthand. It was easy speedwriting, and so, I'd – I worked – One of the jobs at Black Mountain that I had was working in the office there. It probably was because Ted Dreier ran it. I don't know. But let's see, when I was first married I worked for the a Veterans organization, a veterans organization. It melted away. It was one of the left-wing ones, and I worked in Cambridge for them. A volunteer. I never held a paying job, since I left the Navy.

**MEH:** You reared three daughters?

**CCB:** Yes. Rachel actually interviewed me about this kind of thing when she was doing some work on the changing status of women since the boopy-doo-bity-doo. Nobody believed it. "You mean you never wanted a career?" I said, "No, I never wanted a career. Perfectly happy." I said I'd thought some of going back to school, because I always liked, I always liked studying, learning. So, I, there I

had, yeah, free GI Bill. Well, Roland was at Harvard so I would have probably gone to Radcliffe. Well, they wouldn't let me do graduate work without Latin. Can you believe that? In 1940-something. I mean I'd had Latin, but I had Latin back then, in school, you know. Get through Virgil while you remember. But I've always been glad I'd had Latin.

**MEH:** Looking back, what do you think was the essence of Black Mountain? What do you think really made it of value as an education venture?

**CCB:** Letting people make decisions, make decisions – with the help of, you know, people who know a little more or had been around a little more, think they know a little more. But letting them grow up and learn on their own. I think – You make a lot of mistakes that way, and you wish you could do it over, but I think that happens everywhere in life, doesn't it, when you look back and think "Ohhhhh, why did I do that?" I often think that about why did I join the Navy. But then I wouldn't have had a career anyway. I thought, you know, if I could get a job in the book world, in publishing, editing, stuff like that. I'm good at that sort of thing. But I don't know. I never feel deprived that way. I really don't. I think you can be perfectly happy, if you don't need the money. A lot of women have worked all their lives, you know, putting the grommets on the sneakers in a plant and nobody talks about that. They talk about the women who become lawyers and who become up in the top echelon. Women have been in the workforce since my great-grandmother walked down to Lowell, Mass. to work in the cotton mills, you know. It's a fascinating topic. It really is.

**MEH:** But getting back to Black Mountain, what do you think really was the essence of the college?

**CCB:** It's only – You know, it's only a personal thing with me, and it's so hard for me to generalize and talk about that. I don't know enough about education and the role of – People always talk about Black Mountain as an experimental college and a breakthrough and this and that, and the only thing I know that was really different was the place of the fine arts at the center of the curriculum, and the life of, that life of the community where so many different kinds of people managed to live in a small group together. Now, when the sixties came along, and the kids all started clumping together in communes and so forth, they, they thought they were doing a new thing, whereas anybody who's studied a little knows that way, way back there they were doing this community thing, and certainly, in the thirties, Black Mountain College was doing that. It's not so very different. It's just that there weren't very many of them, and the previous experiments in community had kind of failed – Oneida and those other ones that the New England people did. But I just found it – But having seen what happened in Marlboro. I see that it's not so unusual. I mean Marlboro College has survived. It's a little different, but there's a small community up on a hillside, with nothing to do but what you make yourself. It survived. I don't know what was so terribly – In that, in that context, in that day and age, I suppose, it seemed very different. I know when I went home one time, a kid that I'd known in junior high or somewhere came to the door for some reason. She said, "Ah, you're that girl who sleeps in haystacks." Or they'd say things like, "Oh, you went to Black

Mountain? That free love colony." Stupid! The kids at Marlboro started making noises about co-ed dorms and this and that and non-negotiable demands and one thing or another. They didn't believe me when I said, "Well you know I lived in a co-ed dorm back in the forties." They said, "You did?" I said, "Yes I did. Nothing terrible happened. We all lived in the same building, in fact." [LAUGHS] Oh, I don't know. Every generation thinks they've got something new. I think Black Mountain was certainly different at that time, but in a historical context. I wish my husband were alive. He'd put it in – He had a long-range view of things, you know, several thousand years. Small potatoes, really. But for a personal thing, it was a big thing in my life. It really made my life. In addition to a wonderful education that I got, I met Roland, and I think that both of us thought it was a wonderful idea to go to a small college that was just starting, because of our experience at Black Mountain. But I don't know how to assess a place like that. I never have had a historical imagination anyway. I take things very personally.

**MEH:** What do you remember about the Dreiers? What was Ted like?

**CCB:** Oh, puleease, I couldn't possibly [LAUGHS]. What was Ted like? Oh what a man! Hmmm. Ted Dreier was the sort of person who believed, he really believed, that you should act before you think. He said that. My husband was just the opposite, and he – After Roland was on the faculty there, so I'd get a little – I mean he was very discreet with, but still he'd come to my study after the faculty meetings, and he'd mention a few things that had gone on. Although he was fond of Ted, he just could not believe anybody who really did live that kind

of life. Plunge right in, see how it all comes out and then think about it. But, of course, Black Mountain probably would never have kept going or even got started if it hadn't been for kooky people like Ted Dreier, who had some money. But I don't know. I couldn't – I could talk about Ted Dreier for two hours straight and still – [LAUGHTER]. I don't know. I'll just give you one side note. He did like the young girls. He and Bobbie came by here shortly after my husband died. They were, you know, on their way from one relative, someplace on their way to Martha's Vineyard or something, and they'd heard that Roland died, so they came by to commiserate with me and stuff. I remember – I hadn't seen them in years, and I remember kind of reminiscing. I remember Bobbie saying that, "Oh, yes, Ted did like those young girls." She accepted that, without minding very much, I guess. I remember having fended Ted off for quite some time, some girl came up to me, and she said, "You know, Cynthia, you're not the first." I said, "Yeah, I know." [LAUGHS] But he was an odd man. He had, you know, like Martin Luther King – "I have a dream." He had this dream, and, by god, he was going to make it work. I think he was terribly disappointed when that row came when he and some of these early people had to leave, because – I never knew the details of that, but I'd see him up in Cambridge then, and he seemed a little down. He was taking a long leave-of-absence that year, and then was going to go back but then he ultimately left. Roland and I saw him occasionally in Marlboro because I think he took some kind of job over in Schenectady and would come over the mountains. But I don't know. Their whole life and career and what happened to them after I left was so foreign to the way I think that I

just never kept up. You know, they followed gurus all over the world, either because of Bobbie's lameness or because of some misery because their son died. I don't know. I never followed that. I have very little patience with that kind of thing. I've had many, many, many student acquaintances who were doing that, wrapped in a parlor curtain and going to India and all the rest of it. It just shocked me that Bobbie and Ted Dreier were doing this. You know, grownups? But, you know, there are plenty of people who believe in Scientology, Christian Science, going to Hale-Bopp, the comet or whatever. So, I haven't followed it. I kept asking people who knew them. Like Fernando. He's the one I've kept up with most over the years, and he'd say, "Oh well, you know," he'd just brush them aside, say "Oh well, they're out following a guru somewhere." I know that Bobbie and Ted were devoted to the Leons, and Bobbie was especially fond of Fernando, and he just "Well, you know – " He may have known more about them, but I never heard. I had a whole bunch of friends who were anti-Dreier. Like Sam Brown. "Tedious Dreier." he called him. Or the Stones. Ted was nasty to my friend Janie. Oh, terrible.

**MEH:** Why?

**CCB:** Oh, he thought she was promiscuous. I thought "Ted Dreier thought she was promiscuous!" [LAUGHS] But, I don't know. There were always people who were on one side or another of something. It was difficult in that sense. I have been that way all my life, have friends in opposite camps. It's very difficult. I don't know how to deal with that problem. It isn't that I always see some good in everybody. It's just that I happen to fall into it and like people, and then they

have these violent convictions and can't stand somebody that I'm fond of. But I always got on very well with the Dreiers. [TEXT DELETED] [LAUGHS] He worked very, very hard for the college, and he was officially treasurer. And, of course, on the Board of Fellows. When money got low and tight, he would call a general meeting, and he would smilingly tell us that there wasn't enough money to keep the college open more than three more weeks or something like that. Then he'd put on his best L.L. Bean moccasins and his green tweedy suit and go up to New York and beard some foundation in its den and get some more money. I don't know how he'd do it. He did know people with money. After all, it was his aunt who financed the Museum of Modern Art, and – I don't know. I think Bobbie's family had dough, too. Her sister married Dwight Morrow, you know, the – I don't really know much about the Dreiers, how they got involved. I guess he was teaching at Rollins College, and that's how he got started. He left with Mr. Rice and the bunch that left. I always thought it was a really romantic way to begin a college – to leave in a huff and go with, you know, like thirty-five hundred dollars and rent a place on the side of a mountain [LAUGHS]. But it's surprising, isn't it, that it survived that long.

**MEH:** It is.

**CCb:** I was very fortunate. I hit some pretty good years, even though the last two years of course, it happened that everybody was off in the service. But the year that I came was the biggest entering group. Forty of us. That was a lot then. Forty of us came in that year.

**MEH:** That is a lot.



**CCB:** Yep. Of course, the attrition rate was – [LAUGHS]. Very few people, really very few people, I mean, if you count those forty, and, of course, they weren't all – we didn't have a regular class – you say the Class of This, That and the Other, we never talked about that. So, I don't know how many years of other places people would have. But of those forty who came in, two of us graduated. But others may have graduated later. I mean, I don't know when Janie Stone came, but she graduated later. You could do things all year round, sort of. Strange way of – I got to be very, very close to the Stones. I guess I told you that. Because when they came up from New York to Cambridge, they got a house and Roland and I, and when we left Marlboro – we left Marlboro for two years, we had a row there. We left Marlboro, and he got a job in Cambridge, or he got a grant to do research, and we lived with the Stones, and our children and their children got to be very good friends. But both gone now. I wish everybody – Well, I wish I'd kept up with people before it's too late, you know. Have you talked at all with Morris Simon?

**MEH:** [IRRELEVANT REMARKS] Now you can interrogate me, because there are several things that people you'd asked about that I could mention, and I don't put all that on tape time. Yes, I just talked to him last week.

**CCB:** How is he?

**MEH:** On this trip. He's good.

**CCB:** Does he still live right there in Burlington?

**MEH:** Yeah, same house.

**[END OF SIDE 1, TAPE 3; NO RECORDING ON SIDE 2]**

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**