

Interviewee: FRANK EISENDRATH  
Interviewer: MARY EMMA HARRIS  
Location: Newport Beach, California  
Date: February 14, 1998  
Media: Audio Tape (1)  
Interview No.: 215 (initially confused with 251)  
Transcription: Mary Emma Harris, August 2001. Corrected by Mary Emma  
Harris. Converted from Word Perfect February 2015.

**[BEGINNING OF TRANSCRIPT]**

[INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS NOT TRANSCRIBED]

**MEH:** Frank, how did you come to be at Black Mountain College?

**FE:** I think they had a registrar or a person that went around to different high schools. A man by the name of David Corkran—I think was his name—visited the school I was going to in Chicago and told me about it. So, I went down and visited in the spring of '48, I believe. I seemed to be interested in the place and decided to go there. It was a small college at that time, I think less than a hundred people. I had sort of indefinite plans of going to college at all. It seemed that this was the type of school that interested me as I'd been going to a small high school. So, I enrolled there in the fall of '48. Took some courses from—took one course from Albers in drawing and took some courses with Mrs. Jalowetz in bookbinding. Another course in science from Natasha Goldowski. I found it very interesting. [TECHNICAL COMMENTS NOT TRANSCRIBED]

**MEH:** When you went, did you have any particular interest?

**FE:** I think I had an interest in working with my hands more than really scholastic abilities. I had taken some art in high school and really hadn't formulated what I wanted to do. I had sort of the goal of—my father had a manufacturing

business—of going into business in some capacity with him on graduating from college. I think possibly I had the idea of getting some business classes which were not present at Black Mountain. So, I was must more or less in a liberal arts type education for the moment. While I was there I took a course in math, I think, one summer with some gentleman whom I can't remember from I think some New York university. He was quite dramatic in math.

**MEH:** Max Dehn I think was gone that year. It was sort of a short guy. I can't—?Scholtz. Was his name Scholtz by any chance?

**FE:** It could have been. Yeah. He was very—made math very interesting. He was an excellent teacher I thought. I think most of the teachers down there were quite excellent. The second semester there I didn't take any courses from Albers. He was teaching a course in color and I should have taken it. A friend of mine by the name of Ruth Asawa was taking it so I sort of worked with her on it and got some ideas from her. It would have been much better going and taking the class but I never did enroll. I don't know what else to say.

**MEH:** What do you remember about Albers' class?

**FE:** The thing I remember about Albers' class is that there were maybe twenty people in it and a lot of the young people—I was probably one of the youngest at eighteen—but a lot of the people were artists, so to speak. He was teaching a class in drawing which consisted of some people—I can't think of the right word—modeling and also maybe techniques of sort of basic techniques of drawing, of making letters I think of the English alphabet, of the English design of letters. I think a lot of the people that were in the class felt that they were

above all of this, that they knew art, that they were artists and didn't think that this was something that really delighted them. To me it was something new and interesting and consequently took probably a heavier interest in it than a lot of the others. Consequently, as a result Albers took more of an interest in me it seemed like than he did in a lot of the people because he realized I wanted to learn. These other people just—it was above them—or below them really. So, I got a great deal of—I don't know if I can say knowledge or of something. I haven't been able to use really after that but I think it was beneficial to me.

**MEH:** Do you remember any of the particular exercises that he was doing in his class?

**FE:** Well, just drawing the alphabet and the individual letters. I think they were Tudor design letters. I think he put a lot of emphasis on that. I remember the modeling. As far as anything else goes, I really can't remember it.

**MEH:** Modeling for other people to draw.

**FE:** Yeah. Models. We'd have a model. One of the students would be a model and the rest of the people would draw it. But I'm really no artist and it's hard for me to put something down on paper that you can see with your eyes. They aren't coordinated that well together.

**MEH:** Albers was not offended by having someone with little experience in art?

**FE:** No, I think he really relished that in a sense. He thought that he was there to teach. He probably had the ability and the knowledge how to teach and thought that anybody should have the basics, that they could always use in art for their

type of work. I think some of the people didn't grasp that, just treated it lightly, I guess.

**MEH:** What other courses did you take?

**FE:** I took a course—I can't remember in order of which—I took a course in bookbinding and I took—

**MEH:** Was that with Johanna Jalowetz?

**FE:** Yeah. That I found very interesting.

**MEH:** What do you remember about Johanna Jalowetz?

**FE:** She was an elderly lady at the time, I thought, and very skilled and patient. Very high esteem in my opinion.

**MEH:** Where did she hold the class?

**FE:** You got me.

**MEH:** Ok.

**FE:** I don't know. Maybe in the studies building or some location, I would imagine.

**MEH:** What else did you take? Any psychology or—

**FE:** I never took any psychology or literature. No, I took some chemistry, I think, from Natasha. I took photography from Harry Callahan, but that was at a later date. I really can't remember.

**MEH:** Do you remember what you did on the work program?

**FE:** I worked in the school store for most of the time I was there with Pete Jennerjahn. I think Pete Jennerjahn was the head man there. Maybe Betty and Pete, but Pete predominantly.

**MEH:** This was the store that was in the dining hall.

**FE:** Right. Right off the dining hall in part of the building.

**MEH:** What sorts of things did you carry in the store?

**FE:** Oh, just things that the students wanted like drugstore items, I would say.

Toothpaste. Other things could be ordered through the store. I ordered some Eames chairs that were made by I think Herman Miller or visa versa through the store. I think Pete ordered some for himself. But you could order pretty well anything I guess.

**MEH:** How would you have been familiar with Eames chairs at that point?

**FE:** I think there were some at the college. I think what happened was that Black Mountain had some kind of article in one of the architectural magazines, and in the photograph they had a classroom or something with an Eames chair in it. So, Eames or Herman Miller thought that was really good so they obliged us by sending us our order which were two beautiful wooden chairs for me, one of which I still have. I guess somebody else ordered some others.

**MEH:** What do you remember about meals at the college?

**FE:** Very little, really.

**MEH:** The dining hall.

**FE:** The dining hall I remember. That everything went on from people changing their children's diapers on the top of the dining room table to food and conversations. It was sort of an open, pleasant time I think of getting together with people.

**MEH:** Were you aware of the friction that year, the controversies going on?

**FE:** Probably to a certain degree. I don't recall them too much, but I remember there seemed to be some heavy-duty conflicts which I really can't remember at

the moment. I know it was Albers last year. It turned out to be. He went on to Yale from there. I don't remember who else left. I think Ted Dreier stayed on. I'm not sure.

**MEH:** Ted Dreier left and Bodky [at the end of the 1949 summer]. Trude Guermonprez.

**FE:** Ted Dreier did leave? Trude left also.

**MEH:** Yeah.

**FE:** Really. I don't really recall what it was I about. So, did I, but I left also and went onto another college. I really don't know why I left.

**MEH:** Did you stay through the summer session when Fuller was there?

**FE:** I left—pardon me.

**MEH:** You stayed through the summer when Fuller was there?

**FE:** Yes, I did. Right. And took a course from Fuller.

**MEH:** How did he conduct his course?

**FE:** There were really short lectures that only lasted three to four hours. It was a really crazy type of lecture. He'd start off at point A and go to point L and M and would be in a configuration of a circle, one item attached to another item attached to another item that seemed to be irrelevant of the initial subject. Then at the very end he'd come back to the initial subject and show how it all would tie in. Which made it somewhat difficult. Some of his ideas [INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]—Most of his ideas were on inventing things were at least twenty years ahead of himself I believe. I remember, I think one idea he had was to ship everything in containers. Everything was shipped individually at that time. I

think his idea was that if they used a container, it would prevent stealing from the longshoremen, which I believe was at some point back of a lot of things being taken by them. It made it a lot easier to handle products. I don't know if he had anything to do with the invention of the container, but it certainly has gone that way very heavily today. Just his general ideas. He was really hard to follow for me aside from seeing his project of the Dymaxion House [geodesic house?] that was in its infancy stage right then which was very unique and interesting. I did not actually work on that but I followed it. Some of his followers from the Institute of Design in Chicago, I got to be friends with them, lasting friends and were quite interested in it. He was a remarkable man with his Dymaxion automobile and his other inventions.

**MEH:** Who were the students that you remember from his—ID students who came down with him?

**FE:** My hearing is bad.

**MEH:** I'm sorry. The students who came down with him from the Institute of Design. Which are the ones that you remembered?

**FE:** The Godfreys I've kept up with every since. Gene and Mary Jo Godfrey. I think they lived out here in California for a while. I got to meet them and keep up with them. I don't know about this Ken Snelson or something. Was he from the Institute of Design? Do you know?

**MEH:** [NEGATIVE]

**FE:** He wasn't. Anyway, some of his things were sort of Buckminster Fuller design, I think, or really incredible design stuff which I would have liked to maybe have

taken a course or be able to do some of the things he did. The other people from the Institute of Design would be Harry Callahan whom I took courses from.

**MEH:** Yes.

**FE:** Are we talking about Fuller or Callahan?

**MEH:** We're talking about Fuller now. Callahan was there in the summer of '51 so we'll come back to that later.

**FE:** I don't remember any of the other people that were with Fuller actually. Mainly, Mary Jo and Gene Godfrey are the mainstays there.

**MEH:** What about—did you have any interest in the dance—in Vashi and Veena, the Indian dancers. Do you remember them?

**FE:** Vaguely as a matter of fact I do but not until you mention them. Were they from the Fuller era?

**MEH:** Right.

**FE:** They were with Fuller?

**MEH:** They were with him. They were teaching.

**FE:** Yeah. I think they were quite incredible.

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

**FE:** Just that they were a different type of people than I had ever been acquainted with. I think they wore a spot on the center of their head and were incredible dancers. I really don't remember much more.

**MEH:** Did you take physics or chemistry with Natasha Goldowski?

**FE:** Chemistry I believe. She was a dynamic teacher as well as a dynamic person whom had, I guess, worked at the University of Chicago on the atomic bomb.

Then when the war ended because of Russian tension was relieved of her job there, inasmuch as she was Russian, I believe. She was just a fabulous human being in my book.

**MEH:** What about her made you feel that she was really a fabulous human being?

**FE:** She was very, very dynamic. I think she was my advisor. I really can't remember much more than that, but I remember I was very impressed with her.

**MEH:** Was it physics or chemistry you took?

**FE:** I believe it was chemistry. I'm not sure.

**MEH:** Why don't we go on to the summer of '51? What did you do when you left after the 1949 summer session?

**FE:** I went on to a school in New England called Goddard College which was another small college. I believe I spent three years up there and the diploma, my B.A. or B.S.

**MEH:** Why did you decide to make a change?

**FE:** That's something I really don't understand—why I did. I think maybe because I'd gone to the same high school, grammar school and kindergarten in Chicago for thirteen years. I think I felt I had a false sense of security there or realized I had somewhat of a false sense of security and decided that—I don't know. I didn't want it to happen again necessarily—for some psychological reason. Black Mountain was—possibly because it had a feeling of being bit split-up. I don't know. Some of the people that I respected quite heavily were leaving. I'm not sure why I left. I think it was because maybe I just had too much security

there and felt I should kick myself in the butt and get on with life [SOUNDS  
LIKE "lights"] I was never—when did Olson come in?

**MEH:** He came in—'48-49, the year you were at the college, he was coming down for long weekends once a month for like a four-day weekend. Then he came back in '51 to stay. Do you remember him?

**FE:** Yeah, to a certain degree. For some reason I wasn't that impressed with him. I had a feeling that a lot of students were heavily impressed with him and I had a feeling he was coming in maybe and made too much of himself perhaps—to take over something as a result of that. I'm not sure if the result was something I had a feeling it was there or maybe that for some reason he didn't grab me, I guess.

**MEH:** How would you compare Goddard and Black Mountain as schools?

**FE:** I really downed Goddard in comparison to Black Mountain when I was there and thought Black Mountain had it all over Goddard in many respects. I can't tell you why I thought that. There was one instructor there that I think was a very knowledgeable man by the name of Will Hamlin, who had gone to Black Mountain and seemed at that point to want to deny it as much as possible and wanted to disassociate himself with me because I'd gone to Black Mountain. There was some rub there. While I think he was a good instructor, his personality was a little different, one that I didn't appreciate too much, I guess. I enjoyed myself at Goddard and thought it was a good school but I still think that Black Mountain had a lot more to offer.

**MEH:** In what way?

**FE:** Probably with staff, with the teachers. I think at Black Mountain they had incredibly well-known teachers that were there to teach and really had a feeling of belief in what they were teaching. I think that mostly they were really dynamic people, a gathering of dynamic people, which is something that I don't think is found probably in many institutions at the high percentage rate that Black Mountain had. I can't remember any instructor or teacher that was pretty well-renowned in his field. I remember one gentleman by the name of Emerson Woelffer, who painted not necessarily the way I thought a true artist would paint. He put his easel across the room and threw paint at with his paint brush and called it a painting. I'm not sure that was my interpretation of what art was all about. But for the most part, I thought they had some unbelievable human beings there. Wouldn't you say that's true?

**MEH:** Yes, definitely. I think if it had not been for the incredible quality of the faculty—

**FE:** There would have been nothing.

**MEH:** Or it would not be nearly as interesting. It would have just been another progressive school

**FE:** Yeah. I think the faculty were just absolutely outstanding.

**MEH:** What school had you been to in Chicago?

**FE:** I'd been to a school called Francis Parker. It was a private school in Chicago.

**MEH:** It was part of the progressive—

**FE:** Somewhat, yes. I would say it was.

**MEH:** In terms of organization—Goddard and Black Mountain—were they similar in terms of how you took classes?

**FE:** The classes were small. I think we took three subjects a semester and they were informally—you know, not in the lecture hall or anything. I think they were somewhat the same.

**MEH:** Why did you go back to Black Mountain in the summer of '51?

**FE:** Because I still had an incredible taste for the place. Was it the summer of '51?

**MEH:** When Callahan was there and Motherwell?

**FE:** Yeah. I thought it was something that I just wanted to go back to and enjoy. I didn't have it out of my system by a long shot. So I thought I would just drive by and see what was happening and then stayed for, I think, it was most of the summer.

**MEH:** Do you remember what you took? That was the summer that Callahan and Siskind were there.

**FE:** I definitely took photography from Callahan and what else I can't remember.

**MEH:** Did you take painting with Shahn or Motherwell?

**FE:** I really don't know. I don't think so. I was familiar with them but I don't think I took a course from them.

**MEH:** How were the photography courses conducted?

**FE:** I think we did printing and developing to a certain extent and then went into Asheville and took photographs. It was mostly in Asheville, mostly abstract photography, I would say, of entrance ways and partial signs. Photographs of partial signs. To take the real and make it look abstract, I think, in actuality. I thought it was quite interesting. I have a recent book of Callahan's, and he certainly changed his mode of photography considerably, I would think. I also

kept up with Callahan a little bit in Chicago after I got out of Black Mountain and visited him occasionally in his studio or his residence. He was a very gentle, obviously a very sensitive human being. I thought he was a rather interesting human being.

**MEH:** Do you have any other particular memories of the college, of people, of anecdotes of things that happened?

**FE:** I remember once we went down to—On one of the spring breaks I had a station wagon and we took it down to Florida. There were about eight of us or nine of us. We went into Jacksonville, and I guess headed south on the beach—we heard we could drive on the beach—and got the car stalled badly in the sand, wedged down. Finally, after pushing and heaving and what-have-you, one of the people ran to town—or hitched a ride to town—which happened to be a long ways away to get a tow truck to pull us. It wouldn't even come on the beach to pull us off. I've got some photographs of it somewhere. I don't know where they are. We camped out in a concrete block house that was on the beach—it didn't have any roof on most of it—for about two or three days. It was a very pleasant trip. I don't know how artistic it was, but it was enjoyable. Rene Siegel was one of the people that was on it.

**MEH:** Who else?

**FE:** I wish I could find some photographs of it. I had them. Would you turn that thing off and let me look, see if I can find them? Do you have a minute?

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

**MEH:** Did you have a camera? Were they your photographs or some somebody else made?

**FE:** I had a camera but I—it was sort of a [SOUND LIKE: rocket] one. It was I think an Argosy 3 or something which wasn't notoriously good on taking photographs.

**MEH:** At this point, any photographs are valuable. They are what exists. So, you went back that summer. Before we go on, are there any other particular memories you have of the college, events that took place, anecdotes—

**[END OF SIDE ONE.BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO.]**

**FE:** I think the science lab burned down there while I was there. There were a fair amount of keg parties, as I recall. There were some interesting parties. I worked on the farm, I think, one summer that I went back. Or maybe two summers. I'm not sure. I think both summers when I went back I worked on the farm. I can't remember the man's name that ran it.

**MEH:** Trayer.

**FE:** Yeah. Ray Trayer. Was it Ray? He seemed to be a very nice human being. I had worked on a farm preceding going to Black Mountain in the summertime. My father had a farm outside of Chicago. I think that's how I spent my work period. Or maybe more time than that—on the farm. I remember when I went down the second summer—this is not really an educational experience—but I got out of the car and must have walked into a herd of chiggers that attacked me. I went into—stopped at Natasha's house and had tea and itched so badly I had to leave. I had them the whole summer I was at Black Mountain, and soon

as I left, they left. Which made life not the most comfortable and interesting. I don't think that's going to make the history of the college any better, one way or the other.

**MEH:** Did you have any interest in music?

**FE:** Not really. It sounds like I don't have much interest in anything and maybe I don't.

**MEH:** I know that's not true.

**FE:** No, I really didn't. I enjoyed the music programs they had and the dance displays or whatever—performances. I was interested in ceramics which I don't know if I took. I took ceramics at Goddard but I don't think they had very much going on at Black Mountain. I thought bookbinding was an interesting trade or something interesting to pick up. My father had been in the leather business and so we were able to get some leather and put some leather covers on some of the books which I thought was interesting. I told you this was going to be a lost interview.

**MEH:** No. Who are the students that you remember most clearly?

**FE:** Ruth I would say, and a gentleman by the name of Willie Joseph. And a little bit of Fielding Dawson. Betty Jennerjahns' brother—I don't remember—a gentleman who was down there I think that summer, Schmitt, Conrad Schmitt, I think, was his name. There was somebody at the reunion up at San Francisco. I can't think—he was married to Gerda? Who would that have been?

**MEH:** Married to whom?

**FE:** Some girl by the name of Gerda—Gerta?

**MEH:** Oh, Gerta. There was a Gerda Slavson.

**FE:** Maybe. Her husband was a Black Mountain student.

**MEH:** I'm not sure.

**FE:** And Inga Svarc [SOUNDS like: Wages. Married name is Lauterstein.] was very friendly, too. And Rene Siegel. I think Rene definitely was on that Florida trip. I think maybe Inga was, too. Probably she was. If I had pictures to look at, I could tell you who I knew and who I didn't know. There was a gentleman by the name of Jackson or something that was somebody who didn't seem to be the Black Mountain type of person, as I recall. There was a woman who I can't remember the name of.

**MEH:** What do you think was the effect of the landscape on the college?

**FE:** It was a picturesque setting for sure with the lake there and the trees coming right up to the road, as I recall. I don't recall too much about the landscaping. Was it well landscaped or not?

**MEH:** I'm thinking more about the mountain setting.

**FE:** Yeah, it was very beautiful. It was a very beautiful location. I'm sorry I didn't go back for that reunion about two or three years ago. I didn't think anybody had gone back, and then I found that a lot of people did that I would have liked to have seen. How about Hazel—Hazel Larsen? I've talked to her since then. A gentleman by the name of Carroll Warner—something like that.

**MEH:** Carroll Williams.

**FE:** Williams, yeah.

**MEH:** Carroll Warner Williams.

**FE:** Is that his name? His father had done a sculpture for my parents of myself and another one I think he did maybe of some cousins of mine. He was a—plaques he did. I can show it to you later. He went to the same high school I did, I guess, in Chicago. But I really don't remember knowing him. I have talked to him on the phone since for one reason or another. But Hazel I've talked to recently too on the phone—just sort of out of the blue. She must have a book of photographs—of the photographs.

**MEH:** She has a lot of photographs.

**FE:** She does.

**MEH:** Hazel. Yeah, a lot of her photographs I used in my book, actually.

**FE:** She has boxes of them, I guess, doesn't she? I imagine she could supply you with everything you could possibly use.

**MEH:** She was not on the trip to Florida.

**FE:** Where is this photograph? I had it.

**MEH:** When you left Goddard, what did you do?

**FE:** I went into service for two years and then—this was after the Korean war—I spent about thirteen months in Korea, but it was just shortly after the war. Then went out and got a job selling some industrial equipment. Then got into the industrial paint business—selling business. Then moved out here in 1961 and invested some money like a big quantity of five thousand dollars in a small business that was growing and started to grow. Finally, got into real estate. In about 1962 I bought a piece of property and fixed it up and have brought property ever since. Bought it and maybe sold it or bought it and leased it out

for the last thirty odd years. So, all I did was artistically make these houses livable with all my training from Josef Albers. I really have not done anything in the arts to speak of.

**MEH:** Obviously, you love the sea.

**FE:** The sea. Yes. It's sort of a collection of different things, nautical motif, so to speak. I used to—when I went to Goddard I used to go to auctions practically every other weekend. I'd buy antiques, mostly tools of way of life, like butter churns and yarn winders and different things like that. It was sort of a hobby. Some of them I fixed up and kept until I moved out to California. Some of them I would buy to sell right away to students. My general goal was not to buy anything for over three dollars. Times were a little different then.

[UNINTELLIBLE WORDS] It was a lot of fun and interesting and not really too educational, but I enjoyed it. And it sort of showed the way life had been at maybe the turn of the century. Vermont was pretty primitive anyway.

**MEH:** Still is in most areas.

**FE:** In most areas. Yes.

**MEH:** Have you been a sailor yourself, or a boats person or—?

**FE:** I was in the army for two years. After I came out here, I had a small boat, a sailboat—twenty-four-foot sailboat and had had one in Chicago before I came out here. But it is just sort of—there again a way of life. Things, old ships lights and brass compasses and ships wheels and stuff like that. Stuff that's not being used anymore predominantly on boats.

**MEH:** Looking back what do you think the importance of Black Mountain was?

**FE:** For me?

**MEH:** For you and more generally.

**FE:** I think it was just a small community of getting to know people, especially people who were incredibly talented. It was an experience that I can't obviously recall very well but one that I think was a very important step in my life as far as maybe the enjoyment of life. I wasn't the academic human being, and they had a lot of things to offer that weren't really academic.

**MEH:** At Goddard were you able to do the same sort of things that people who liked to use their hands do like bookbinding and art?

**FE:** A little bit, a very little bit. I did build a potter's wheel up there and did some ceramics. I guess I took some art classes. But I also was able to get a little bit more of a business thing, mainly majored in economics and took other academic courses of science and English, different things. Not as much English possibly as I should have, or literature, or felt that would have been useful to me. I did take some ceramics in Chicago, a little bit, when I got out of college for a semester maybe. It was just a very nice fulfilling feeling, I think, being at Black Mountain and meeting people like Ruth Asawa, who I have kept up with ever since. Maybe—I'm not sure that I have a good appreciation of art, but I do have an appreciation of the people that I know who do it, of their works. To me it's more understandable, knowing the person that does it, I guess, such as going to a museum and looking at stuff. There's a gentleman by the name of Bob Rauschenberg, whose art I really don't understand. I really don't see what

it's all about. I've read a couple of articles in relationship to him. It was in Era  
[??] I believe. I'm not sure it was a good one as far as—I don't know.

**MEH:** He was at the college when you were there.

**FE:** He was a student.

**MEH:** Do you have any particular memories of him?

**FE:** He was the gentleman that—he and his wife changed their baby's diapers on  
the dining room table. Susan Weil, I think, was his wife's name. Not really. I  
don't recall seeing any of his art down there. I know he's famous now, but I'm  
not sure why. He's a really good salesman himself. I had a cousin that went to  
Harvard and graduated in art and came to California. He had three shows in the  
Santa Barbara area within four weeks. Mainly not because his art was good,  
but he was a good salesman for himself. I think maybe Rauschenberg sort of  
fulfilled that—or is similar to that. Maybe I'm wrong. Obviously, I'm wrong. They  
had some of his work here at the local museum and I don't think—it just doesn't  
do anything for me. Why don't we stop that thing for a minute and let me take  
your through the rest of the house?

**MEH:** Wonderful.

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

**MEH:** How do you remember Ruth at the college? What was she like?

**FE:** Her feeling was that it was going to be her last year. I think she'd work six hours  
and then take a nap for twenty minutes and then work six hours and then go all  
the round the clock continuously like that. She was really, I think, just an  
incredibly unassuming nice lady, which I think she still is. Really interested in

art. Probably more stable than most of the students there, more mature than most of the students. Also more interested in learning than I would say ninety percent of the students, conceivably. I think she was more interested in learning than in getting into the—as I recall—the conflicts of the organization of the college. She pretty well minded her own art and not the politics in the school, as I recall. She's an incredible person I think and a wonderful person to know throughout the years. I spend Thanksgiving up there, practically every Thanksgiving and have for years. I think she certainly was an asset for the college.

**MEH:** Did you think most of the students were serious about their studies?

**FE:** I think they were. Some of the older—I would say—students that had been there. Like Willie Joseph, I think, was very heavy into it. I guess people like Fielding Dawson might have been. I don't really know. He was pretty young at that time, like eighteen or something or less. I'm sure most of them—actually Willie, a lot of them were. The Godfreys certainly were and the Jennerjahns. I would say there was a good element of people that were heavily into their field of endeavor, probably more so maybe than in most schools percentage wise.

**MEH:** Did you ever go to Roy's? It was like a local beer house.

**FE:** I don't recall.

**MEH:** It may have been called Ma Peek's at that time.

**FE:** I don't know. I don't think so, but maybe.

**MEH:** What about Asheville? You had a car.

**FE:** I did.

**MEH:** Did you get away from the college much or—?

**FE:** I don't think I did. I can't recall that. Those were drinking places or activity places?

**MEH:** I was just curious—to go to movies or to go into Asheville for any reason or whatever.

**FE:** I really can't remember. I must have but I don't really know.

**MEH:** Any other memories in particular?

**FE:** I remember once we drove back to Chicago, a carload of people, and there was this Delores somebody who was a Black lady. We went and stopped in some restaurant, and they wouldn't serve her. So, it was a lightening [?] of the ways of life. I remember driving down from Chicago back to North Carolina and getting lost in the Cumberland Mountains or something like that, not knowing what state we were in or anything. Pete Jennerjahn was following the moon or the stars, navigating by that. But I really don't remember much activities.

**MEH:** How did you react when they would not serve Delores?

**FE:** I think we went to another restaurant or something as I recall. But it was sort of earthshaking to me because being from the North, I wasn't used to that or anybody else in the car wasn't either for that matter.

**MEH:** Within the college community was there any real—

**FE:** Animosity or anything. I don't believe so. Not that I know of.

**MEH:** I mean with respect to racial tensions. She was the only black student there then?

**FE:** I believe so. I don't think there was any thought of racial monkey business because I don't think there were that many people from the South down there maybe, or student wise. I don't know about the neighboring areas.

**MEH:** Did you feel there was any real tension from the neighboring areas because Black Mountain had a Black student?

**FE:** No, I think they generally thought Black Mountain was pretty far out. In general. I don't think there was much community action or reaction or association with the community from the local community. Is that a picture you've gotten or not? The college was pretty much a private entity. What happened to Dreier after he left Goddard?

**MEH:** After he left Black Mountain.

**FE:** Yes. Black Mountain. Pardon me.

**MEH:** He'd worked at General Electric before he started teaching, as a physicist. He went back to General Electric until he retired. How do you remember him at the college?

**FE:** I remember him as a quiet friendly human being mainly. I don't remember much more about him than that. He seemed like a very nice pleasant guy or man. I remember his son, I think Ted, Junior. And the other son was killed as I recall. Is that right? At some later date.

**MEH:** He lost two sons. How do you remember Ted at the college?

**FE:** I remember him as a very nice man. I don't know. I guess he taught but I'm not sure what. I think he seemed to be a very pleasant person there. As far as

remembering much about him, I don't really. He didn't seem to be a dynamic person at all, as I recall but I don't know.

**MEH:** Do you think Black Mountain was really effective as a community? Do you think it was a success as a community?

**FE:** I really don't know how to answer that. I think there were probably good points and bad points. I don't know. I would have conflicting thoughts on that. I would say that the feeling is that Mr. Olson maybe came in with the idea of taking over initially or just fell into taking over. I have to stop to think for a minute. I think as far as the community is concerned at Black Mountain, I think, as I recall, which I really can't recall well until it refreshes my mind that there was a dispute going on. I can't remember what the dispute was all about. Probably a power struggle to a certain degree. But I can't remember who and what and why it took place. I imagine it was somewhat disruptive to the students there at the time. It's been so long ago I really can't remember it. I thought in general the community worked fairly well as it was structured. Everybody with their work program. I think in reality it was a good setup. Why it split up again I don't know. Why did it?

Ray Trayer fired me for doing something and then I pleaded with him for the job back. I think I was working for him more than—it was more than a work program. I was supporting my—you know, getting my room and board and a couple of courses free that summer. The thing was I was supposed to work at the farm. I think I maybe reneged or something a little bit. I was living at the farm as I recall. Anyway, I tightened down and got my head on straight.

But—anyway. You know, looking back, you forget a lot of things. But the general impression was I think one of that it worked for me. I don't know why I left in reality to go on to another place. I've been trying to figure that out in the past few years—why I left. Maybe the people—some of the students I was friends with were leaving. I don't know what the situation was.

**MEH:** Your parents were willing to pay the tuition.

**FE:** They did. Yes, I did pay full tuition. They didn't have anything to do with the decision to leave. At Goddard was a gentleman that practically had started the school, and it was a very forceful man in some respects and an incredible speaker. He could take what you said and twist it around and make it work for him. Unless you were a good speaker, you really couldn't get up against him. He had a knack of, I think, incredible brain power it takes to be able to take things that are said and make them work for you even though they are against you. There are few people I have ever seen that can do that. I have great respect for that. I can't remember. In the community they must have had meetings and stuff like that but I can't remember that at all at Black Mountain. Community meetings. I know they did at Goddard, where things were pretty well aired and stuff like that. I think maybe Albers was pretty much in the background by the time I was there as far as college politics. I can't even remember where he lived. Of course, I don't really know where many of the faculty lived.

**MEH:** Where did you live?

**FE:** I think I lived down by the dining hall, a little bit further away from the studies hall than the dining hall, in a dormitory, whatever it was.

**MEH:** Did you have a study in the studies building?

**FE:** Yes, I did. You know, that was the hangout for everybody. But it was the essence of great privacy, too, I think. It was a nice idea the studies building. There were a lot of classes held there, as I recall. I can't remember if they had a work program or not. Like you were off for two months during January, February anything like that.

**MEH:** At Black Mountain?

**FE:** Yes.

**MEH:** No.

**FE:** They did at Goddard. It's been a few years.

**MEH:** Quite a few.

**FE:** Yes. Like—

**MEH:** Fifty.

**FE:** Fifty. Yes. A long time.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT.END OF INTERVIEW.]**