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

MEH: [GIVES IDENTIFICATION] Patsy, how did you come to be at Black Mountain College?

PW: Well, after I graduated from high school, I didn't want to go on to college the way all my friends were going, so I took a year out – which people promote these days, but then that was kind of unheard of. I was a piano student so I practiced the piano, took piano lessons, and worked, and just enjoyed not having to go to school. While I was doing that, I read about Black Mountain in Mademoiselle magazine. I was in the beauty parlor, waiting to get my hair cut.

MEH: Where was this?

PW: In St. Louis. In Clayton, Missouri, a suburb of St. Louis. I read about it. There were pictures of students on tractors and the mountains and people in shorts. It just looked great. A little blurb about it saying, "This school doesn't have grades. It has a work program. It has a sliding tuition. It's small. It's a community where the students take part in what goes on." That all appealed to me tremendously. So, I told my mother about it. She was an adventurous soul, and she said, "Well, why don't we drive down there?" I think it was in the spring of forty – I've forgotten what year I went – '42, I guess. So, we drove down in

June or so. They were in the middle of their summer program, but it wasn't a Summer Institute. It was a work program summer, and so I just kind of joined in with what was happening. But I've overstepped my answer.

MEH: That's okay. Did you stay?

PW: Yes, and so I stayed. (LAUGHS)

MEH: Did you apply? Did you ever apply?

PW: Yes. Yes. I finally applied. But I just sort of blended into this summer program of sort of a motley crew of people from here and there. Part of the faculty was away. I can't even remember what work I did. I guess I worked on the r- – I painted or helped around. I just loved it. It was sort of a free atmosphere then, a wonderful opportunity to acclimatize myself to the mountains and to life there and everything. Since then I've realized how important that location was. Extremely important.

MEH: What do you think <u>was</u> the importance of the landscape to the college? How do think it affected it?

PW: Well, I think for the students, it meant that they were always in nature. It wasn't just out in the country. It was in nature. That we had the advantage of quiet nights and dark nights where you could see the stars. We could hear natural noises of birds and insects and not see telephone wires all over the place and not have to wait at a bus stop for a bus to go to some college on a city block. We were <u>really</u> lucky. We were so fortunate to be in that environment and to walk down from the Studies Building at night in the darkness. It was just so quiet. For six years I was exposed to that, and I realize that that had a

benevolent effect on me. Today there's no student that doesn't have to drive to their class or take a bus or a subway and then go up elevators or go down halls. We just didn't have that. More natural –

MEH: Did you grow up in a residential area?

PW: In St. Louis, yes, it was. Well, it was quite middle upper class, I would say. It was a residential area of homes on a lane. It was called a lane. It had colonial homes and nice trees and not too many people. But people knew each other. So, it was fairly private. But I think I, in retrospect, that's why I feel about Black Mountain that way was because I did live in a city afterwards, and I have lived in places where there's a lot of traffic and where the colleges and the schools always involve a lot of travel and hang-up, you know, just to get to your class and get back.

MEH: You knew that you wanted to study music?

PW: Well, I knew that that was what I brought there. It was my special interest in music and also some aptitude. Not that, but experience. I'd already had lessons and so forth. The first person I met there was John Evarts, who was a musician, so he was pleased to hear that I played the piano. That kind of got me going in music. I had a good friend, Polly Pollet – Barbara Pollet – whose sister was also, had gone, Elizabeth Schwartz, who also went there. We played duets together and sort of fit in there. But I was just this naive girl from St. Louis, very provincial, conservative, traditional town. I was just all eyes. I was sort of waiting for someone to tell me what to do, but nobody tells you what to do. I mean nobody told us. We just sort of felt our way into it.

MEH: That first summer, what were they doing at the Work Camp?

PW: You know, some building, I think. I don't really remember. I remember there were these two fellows from Thailand who I think were architecture students. They were there for some reason – maybe down from Harvard. But we were just helping out, you know, doing any farming or painting or maintenance.

MEH: Had you ever done that sort of physical work before?

PW: (LAUGHS) No. (LAUGHS) In fact, I'm really not sure if I had to do that. In fact, maybe if my parents were paying for that, maybe I kind of got out of it, or I only had to do ten hours a week. I wasn't having to work hard the way the boys were working. Johnny O'Neill, whose sister had been there the year before, was there that summer. Oppenheimer, I've forgotten his first name.

MEH: Herbert?

PW: Herbert, right. We were a little clique. No one was telling us how to behave or what to do, so we were staying up late every night (LAUGHS) and just being kind of former high school kids, just sort of feeling your oats for a while.

MEH: How did you react to that freedom?

PW: Well I loved it, but it didn't take me long to see – I'm sort of a self-disciplinarian. I think if you're a music student you learn that early on. You learn that you have to set aside hours when you practice, and you learn what happens when you don't do your work. So, I could see after a week or so of this dissipation that we weren't going to get anywhere. A couple of the other kids also were disciplined, but then some of them were totally undisciplined. I could see that they could just go drifting along, you know, for weeks and weeks. So, I think after a while

we agreed that – There were some classes that we took, a few classes, so we thought that if we were going to study and be in these classes, we had to get our eight hours of sleep at night and buckle down a little bit.

MEH: What happened if, say, a student was not disciplined and just really wasn't doing anything? Was there anyone to say "Hey, you do something!" or –

PW: Well, everyone had an advisor, so it could be the advisor was told by a teacher, maybe, that George wasn't in class very often or George didn't seem to be able – wasn't studying or being prepared. Maybe the advisor would say something. But it could go on for quite a while as a secret. I think the one – the students who never did get used to the freedom finally dropped out. They didn't stay there very long.

MEH: So, you were there for the summer, and John Evarts was there. He left pretty soon, didn't he, after you arrived?

PW: Yes, in fact he went into the army. I went home then at the end of the summer to get some clothes and to properly come in the fall. Then I was a regular student. That's when the other students came back, including boys, but during that whole first year of '42-'43, the boys, one by one, left for the army or navy. Then after that time for about three years it was almost like a girls' college – with refugees. It was really a mixed bag of people. Kind of unique. But I wouldn't say that was typical Black Mountain, because of the fact that the War was going on and we were missing one of the genders very much. But it was a serious, it was a serious time. People were sad, and as refugees arrived, we were sad for them for having known, what they had just come out of. They

looked sad and they looked tired, but they were doing their best, you know, to teach and give whatever they could. Some of them weren't necessarily teachers. They just were very gifted people in their fields.

MEH: Like who would have fallen into that category?

PW: Well, like Jalowetz. I don't think he ever had taught very much. He was a conductor and – mainly a conductor, and probably an opera coach. He may have done a little teaching, but that wasn't his primary thing. I don't think that was – That wasn't Lowinsky's primary thing. But I took less – classes from Bob Wunsch, who was a teacher, and Bill Levi. Except that was later, wasn't it. (OVERTALK) It's sort of a blur (LAUGHS). I took a class, I think, from Eric Bentley. He was new that year, but I realize now he was just a tad older than the rest of us. But being British and thinking that he was a descendant of Bertrand Russell or someone like that, you know, he was acting very much the professor (LAUGH), but he was just a few years older and sort of a little bit juvenile himself. There were really interesting –

MEH: Shall we follow – I'll follow up on that. How was he juvenile?

PW: In his joking. Well, in his behavior towards girls, mostly. He didn't know how to behave towards American girls, and he thought he should say outrageous things to us and try to shock us and get a reaction from us. We didn't buy it. He was just rude, we thought, and kind of insulting. He finally got the idea and then he'd back off a little bit. But I think around, even around faculty, though, he was trying to show off around them to show how much he knew and how brilliant he was, how precocious. He was. It turned out he was! (LAUGHS) He was. He

was quite brilliant. But in his social being, I don't think he'd had much experience. He was British. We were different.

MEH: If Jalowetz was not teaching and Lowinsky was not teaching, how were you studying music? Were you?

PW: You know, there weren't many courses offered there at the beginning, and, in fact, I started to be interested in drama. I was taking courses with Wunsch and I was acting in plays. I was being sort of steered in that direction because I think they needed (LAUGHS) – Now that I look back on it, what the teachers needed was what they were trying to get the students to do, kind of, and vice versa. So, I was doing that a lot. I have a schedule of classes that I took, if I wanted to consult it. If you wanted to stop, I could get it.

MEH: Well, why don't we come back to it.

PW: So that was a primary interest, and I was taking piano lessons maybe one from John Evarts, or from Jalowetz, I guess, my first year. So, I had and a piano to practice on and was in some concerts as far as I remember, because I played these duets with Polly. So, who was I studying with? I guess Jalowetz. He was there that year, I think.

MEH: How do you remember Jalowetz?

PW: Oh, with great affection. Great affection.

MEH: How would you describe him?

PW: Well, he was a very sensitive man with a beautiful sensitive face, mouth and, you know, small features, who was interested in you – whether you were a simpleton or his most fabulous music student. I mean, he just was totally

unprejudiced, and nothing was too simple for him to explain or to work with. He wasn't a pianist himself, but he was able to get across the music, the interpretation and that kind of thing. So really what he worked with was just the technique that I already had. We were working on new things like Bartok. He had known Bela Bartok. We had great fun doing that, and I was in his choral group. Yes, he was there that first year. So, I would say he was my primary teacher and then Bob Wunsch. I think I took French with –

MEH: Let's go back to Jalowetz a minute. Were you aware of his importance as a musician? His relationship to Schoenberg and –

PW: No, no. You see. Well, people would say, "Oh," you know, "he and Schoenberg – " I would say, "Oh, who's that?" They'd say, "Oh that was twelve-tone music," and I would say, "Oh, what's that?" I had never heard of twelve-tone music. But I think I along with some other students were so naive we didn't realize. We didn't know about that whole school of music and art at the turn of the century. I think you would have studied that some way. Well, if you're right out of high school, you hadn't studied things like that. Also being young, we were more immediate about everything. We just did what was – we were doing that day, and maybe more involved in the other students and our relationships with other students, and getting used to the accents, and the sort of European quality of the teachers, which was a little bit put-offing, and yet attracted to. You didn't quite know: How am I supposed to behave around these people? Or, if he's so famous, how am I supposed to – what am I supposed to do? But I don't

remember that it ever antagonized me or made me feel inferior, because I could see other students had confidence.

MEH: Were there other music students, serious music students, when you were there?

PW: Yes. Ruth Currier. Was that her name? Ruth Currier, I've forgotten her – Who later was a dancer in the José Limon Dance Company. But she was a very serious student, and she was quite accomplished at the piano. Polly Pollet. She was also. And Sam Brown. I would say we were the sort of serious ones. So, poor Jalowetz, he had a class with four or five people like that in it, but we were all interested, and we could read music, and we knew what he was saying. We were learning from him.

MEH: But you took a lot of drama with Wunsch.

PW: Yes, I did.

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

PW: We were working on a children's play, and his niece – somebody Kelley – she was in it too.

MEH: Was that More Straw for the Scarecrow?

PW: Yes, that was the name of it! I haven't heard that name in a long time. But that was a little play, which we were in. It was just a bouncy, light play, and I had to play the part of a child. I think we took it to Asheville and we took it around to some schools. Probably it was written up, maybe, in the papers there. If it was, I didn't know about it, and there might have even been photographs, but I don't know anything about it. Then he did some Tennessee Williams plays, and one

of them was This Property Is Condemned, which is just a short one-acter. I did that with Bill McLaughlin, and we were a little girl and a boy, and we were walking along a railroad track. Well, by this time it was 1945, because when we took it there, to Chapel Hill, President Roosevelt died, in April. That was when we took this Tennessee Williams play there. Bill McLaughlin, I don't think he, I don't think he'd acted before or since then (LAUGHS). You know. We were just feeling our oats. We were just trying out things.

MEH: How did Wunsch go about directing a play?

PW: Very businesslike, very matter of fact, very low key. He talked so softly you could hardly hear him. Very undramatic, himself. He didn't use any expressions or with his body. He was, I think, a surprising drama teacher because of his personality. The personality didn't seem to express what he did. As you meet different dramatic people in your life and see what personalities they have, he just didn't have personality. Oh, I think he taught some classes in Greek drama, so I got these big heavy books that I had to pay a lot of money for and study ancient Greek drama. So we studied history and maybe did some just excerpts of things like, maybe, Molière or other plays, just maybe Shakespeare. But again, I don't have any programs from that time. I think a lot of that would probably ignite my memory. I was very unconscious. I was just this, as I said, this young unconscious wide-eyed creature from St. Louis, who was just amazed about everything that was happening there.

MEH: Did you work with Eric Bentley at all on drama productions?

PW: No, that I recall. Did he direct some?

MEH: [AFFIRMATIVE]

PW: Do you know the names of them?

MEH: I can't remember. He was very involved with Brecht. He did some readings, and then he did, I think, a group of small plays one summer. Did you sense tension between himself and Wunsch at that time?

PW: No. No, I didn't. I don't even sense any friendship or any connection at all. There probably was (LAUGHS). I imagine there was a lot, because they were such, I mean – Bentley with his bravado coming in there to show everybody, and Wunsch probably being very reticent and not able to stand up for himself. It probably was hard on him.

MEH: What other courses did you take?

PW: Well, let's see, I took French with Frances de Graaff. I was a terrible French student, even though I'd had three years of it in high school, which is very unusual because musicians are supposed to be good at languages. I was the exception. But she was a colorful picture, person, and also she and Bentley were great friends. They had this sort of chemistry going on. I remember – Let's see Clark Foreman came – but that wasn't that year. That was later. But he came. I think I took one of his classes, and he turned out to be a real political radical. There is a picture of me in the book, with Charles Beard and Foreman and Frances de Graaff and Eric Bentley. I think the reason I'm in that picture was because when it was being taken they said, "Oh, we have to have a student. We should have a student in here." They looked around and I just happened to be walking along at the time (LAUGHS), so it doesn't really

represent my interests. I wasn't interested in radical politics or in any of the people very much. Now, of course, I've run across Beard's name many times. I guess he was just visiting to check out the place and see what it was all about. So, a lot of the way I feel about things is in retrospect now. I just look back on it and I think "Oh yes, it was – " For instance, I realize that at one time, in an early Summer Institute, they invited Maria Louise von Frank [Franz], you know, who is still today a very prominent Jungian therapist and writer. She apparently was there, and then someone read a paper of Jung's in place of him because he couldn't be there.

MEH: That was in the Fifties. That was later.

PW: Oh, that was later. But anyway, I read that. Later, of course, everyone knew who Jung was. So, a lot of things that could never have happened anywhere were happening there, early on. Like the Tennessee Williams play. That was most unusual for us to be doing something like that in the middle Forties, even before "The Glass Menagerie," you know, was produced on Broadway.

MEH: Did you stay for the summer 1944, Summer Institute, when all the Schoenberg musicians were there?

PW: [AFFIRMATIVE]. Yes, yes. That was memorable, because I got to know the Kolisch Quartet who had been brought there to play, to produce the Schoenberg Festival. They were rehearsing the Schoenberg Quartet. They had projected it on a projector so we students could follow it. But I was invited to be their page turner, so that was very thrilling. I mean I was just, you know, right here with Marcel Dick on his viola and Kolisch, you know, on the violin, and a

very attractive woman playing – what did she play? – the other violin. I can't remember –

MEH: (OVERTALK) Johanna Graudan?

PW: Oh, she was playing cello.

MEH: She was playing cello.

PW: Right. I was sort of sitting in the floor between all of these stands. I'd turn one page and then turn another page. It was sort of choreography, and that was exciting. Then finally I found out how important Schoenberg was and the connection between him and Jalowetz and Johanna Jalowetz. I began to put their family into perspective, into some kind of context.

MEH: What was it like to be a student at an event as intense as that, with all the concerts and lectures?

PW: Well, it was intense, extremely intense. Every day you got up something was going to be happening that day, or there was some place you had to be to attend and to fill some kind of function. But in a way, it was <u>their</u> event, and we students were just absorbing it, taking it in. We didn't have the responsibility that they had. <u>They</u> had the responsibility. I found this out later, being a performer later myself, responsibility, but I could just kind of relax and watch them do all the work, and just notice the interplay between people, or their rehearsal practice, how they went about that, or when they took their breaks, or if they got mad at each other. The inner workings. That was <u>very</u> valuable. Very. I think some of the others – the music students – realized what a fortunate adventure they were having to get to see this, to be in on it. The Kolisch

Quartet. They were having a marvelous time. They were down there in that location just taking it in. I think somebody, somebody in the group, was in love with somebody else, (LAUGHS), and, of course, that was part of the, you know, the glamor of it. But who were some of the other people? There were some artists there.

MEH: Yeah, there were some artists. One thing I was going to ask you was whether you had any interest in the art courses. Did you study with Albers?

PW: Oh very, very. In fact, I almost – I could have majored in art. I took weaving with Anni Albers and then with Trude Guermonprez when she came. I took Albers's *matière* course and watercolor. Then at the end – in 1948 – I took the rest of his courses that I'd never taken before. I was sort of this inexperienced art student because I hadn't had any art, whereas all the other art students knew how to draw and were very skilled. But somehow, Albers sort of thought I was fun because (LAUGHS) I didn't know anything, and he could see how his teaching methods could work on someone who didn't know. He usually was pleased with the color studies that I did or just the way I would combine things, you know. He would say, "Oh, look. Look at Patsl, look what Patsl did!" He called everybody with an "el" on the end. But a lot of my student friends were art students, mainly they were. There weren't that many music students, really.

MEH: How do you remember Albers as a teacher and as a person?

PW: Well, we're talking about let's say in the middle Forties. I would say he seemed quite happy. He seemed quite satisfied with teaching and with classes. Always came very well prepared, face shining clean and his white jumper on. He was a

little eccentric looking because of the way he combed his hair and had sort of a curl over his eye. He had his cigarette and he sort of posed a little bit. But I really liked the way he ran a class and the way he did things. He was severe at times. He could be blunt with other students and maybe he wasn't aware of who he could crush and who he couldn't. He shouldn't have picked on these, you know, extremely sensitive types. He shouldn't have done that. I think a good teacher should know the ones not to do that with. But I think that was maybe European, too, the way they behaved. Anni Albers was always there with her white jumpsuit on and ready to go. They were very professional, because they had taught for years, and people had come to their classes with great expectations. But he must have been disappointed, because he had such a small group of art students to work with. Some of them were rank beginners or maybe not very talented. Then a few were gifted, but just a handful not a whole lot.

MEH: You were saying that when he – you were referring to like when you arrived in the mid-Forties, you'd said that he was a very happy whatever. Do you think that he changed before you left?

PW: Well, yes, I do, because that's when the politics all of the wrangling set it. The group of people who wanted to change things and wanted to make it different – and mostly Americans. He was sort of on the side of "Let's keep it the way it is." Or maybe he didn't want the arts to be lessened in their importance or something, because some other group who wanted to change things were people in history or in sociology or politics and that kind of thing. Yeah. So, I

think he was under a real strain, let's say from '46 on. You could see it in he had – His friends then were the people who were kind of on his side, and you could feel camps beginning to develop there. That was very uncomfortable because it was so small. You couldn't avoid people. Maybe you'd have to eat at the same table with them (LAUGHS) or look at them all the time or be aware of their presence.

MEH: Did people try to get you to take sides?

PW: Yeah. Oh, yeah. I was one of the last. I just – In fact, I don't think I ever did. I said "I just – I'm not going to take a side," because I had friends in both, on both sides. I guess I thought maybe as a student that wasn't up to me to take a side. They had to figure out their battles and settle it themselves. The gaps that you haven't to your satisfaction sort of filled in.

MEH: Well, I think probably I have the facts pretty clear now, insofar as they're facts, like dates, when people came and went, and when there were basic disagreements. But I think there always is new insight into what was happening into people's interpretations of these so-called facts, this information.

PW: I'm just thinking about it now, maybe one of the difficulties between the Americans and the Europeans, when they got into these hassles, was the Europeans probably settle things differently. They have a different way of arguing or a different way of picking up innuendos from people. The Americans had their way, and then the two of them trying to talk together. It just clashed. They clashed. It was hurtful.

MEH: Did you take any courses with Bolotowsky when he was there?

PW: No, no I didn't, but I knew him. Now he was a very gentle soul. I knew him later in New York, when I worked in New York at the Guggenheim Museum, because he came by there and he had a painting there. But I guess he was – I don't even remember. Was he on the side opposing Albers?

MEH: Well, I think in different issues, they – you know, there were a lot of issues going back. I think it was difficult when Albers was gone for a year and a half on sabbatical and came back. At that point Bolotowsky had his group of students. From what I understand, there was a lot of competition at that point between the two of them and the students needing to choose between one or the other.

PW: Yes, yes, and with so few students, naturally each teacher wanted to get the best they could. It's still like that in big universities today that to get the best students. But imagine in a tiny place like that!

MEH: Right.

PW: What that was like. Yeah, I think people were very confused (LAUGHS). I think new faculty coming in were confused. I don't think they were really prepared. I also think that just because – Again, just because they were successful or outstanding in their field didn't make them necessarily a good teacher. Today they would all be required to have education courses and courses in conflict resolution and (LAUGHS) and how to mediate and settle problems. But nobody knew how to do that. It was just people, people with the loudest voice or the greatest perseverance. Then there were the Quakers. There was that contingent the group of people who wanted to solve things as peacefully as possible or as unanimously as possible.

MEH: Who were these people?

PW: Well, I was thinking of Ted Dreier, for instance. I think that the Alberses kind of went along with that, and also Molly Gregory. There were a few men there who were C.O.s during the War – Chuck Forberg. They were trying to apply that way of reasoning to problems. But let's say a person who came in who didn't know the Quakers from anybody, "Unanimous? Well how can you get everybody to agree? That's ridiculous. We should vote!" You know. So, there was a lot of clashing. In that sense it was an experiment in education.

MEH: Do you think that it – Do you think it worked as an experiment, in terms of community and how things worked themselves out?

PW: Well, with great stress and strain. I don't know if communities like it today would have an easier time with people coming in with greater background in how to get along with people and greater grasp of psychology. I think it could have been harmful to some very sensitive souls, who felt they'd lost out. But I felt I learned a lot about life. In a sense, I was chicken. I just sort of backed off and did my own thing and finished my degree, because I was really working hard to graduate from there, whereas a lot of people were coming in and just spending a semester here or this or that. So, they were all into the fray of everything. I was just trying to be cool. I'm not the kind of person who likes to fight, anyway. So, I did graduate. I got something out of it, and later on I lived in a cooperative community. So, I guess I liked it or I wouldn't have gotten into a community afterwards.

MEH: Do you remember the crisis in 1943-44, when first they were talking about integrating the college?

PW: Yes. Yes, I do. We finally did get one black person. Fogelson [NOT AN AFRICAN-AMERICAN]? Or – Flossie someone.

MEH: The first year it was – Flossie Fogelson was there. She came the second year, and Alma Williams was there the first year [ACTUALLY ALMA WILLIAMS CAME THE FIRST YEAR AND FLOSSIE FOGELSON WAS NOT AFRICAN AMERICAN].

PW: Oh. [AFFIRMATIVE].

MEH: And then eventually I think it was – Spring of '47 there were maybe six black students.

PW: Of course, I wasn't a Southerner. Well, I was from St. Louis, so that was very close to – But I just didn't understand how – that someone had to accompany Flossie [FLOSSIE IS NOT THE CORRECT NAME] into Asheville. "Oh don't let her go in there by herself. Don't let her go alone. Someone should go with her and just stay with her the whole time. Go in and come back with her." To be as sort of an escort.

MEH: Were they concerned that whites might treat her badly because she was a black woman in this white college?

PW: Yeah, if they knew. Of course, anyone would have to know. I should think if she just wanted to go in and shop, she could.

MEH: What do you remember about the whole debate about integration? Before the college integrated.

PW: I don't remember very much. I really don't. I think people were pretty much in agreement that they wanted to integrate, but there were the very cautious ones who thought, "We've got to go slowly. This is the South and you have to be careful." I remember that being part of the argument. Then some people saying, "Oh, let's just go ahead and do it," like people from New York (LAUGHS). So, they were very cautious. They just went one at a time. Now that I think of it, that was tremendously bold. I mean the whole Civil Rights thing has happened since then, in the South, and the South was integrated, I guess. But it was shocking. I felt very compassionate towards the girls who came, feeling what they must be going through and how brave they were. But I don't really remember too much the impact. Well, she was a voice student so of course that was great she sang. She had a good voice. Some – A black singer came and visited.

MEH: Was this as a student?

PW: No, it was –

MEH: Carol Brice?

PW: Well, she came. You're right.

MEH: It was a summer session. Roland Hayes?

PW: Roland Hayes, Roland Hayes. But maybe that was before my time. But I just remember seeing his name.

MEH: He was there during your time. Did you stay for all of the summers or did you ever go home?

PW: No, I wasn't there for every summer. I was there '48 and '44, as you said, and '46 I might have missed that one. I think I did miss that one, because – In '48 was de Kooning, right? And Cage. I was very much there for that. I had already graduated in June, and I went home with my "Here's my degree!" I knew this marvelous institute was taking place, so I just turned around and came back for the institute. That's when I took all of Albers's courses.

MEH: You were at the college for six years?

PW: Right.

MEH: And how did your parents feel about this?

PW: Well (LAUGHS), they got used to it! I was the last of three children, and my two brothers were in the War. So, my parents could afford to send me there. But I didn't spend six full years there. I would stay home maybe for a fall and maybe for a spring, and I didn't go every summer. I did stay home one fall to work at the St. Louis Community Playhouse and get some experience there. That's when I thought I was going to major in music [DRAMA?]. Then after Wunsch left, and all that went on and everything, he was gone. There was no drama teacher. So, then I was sort of courted by Anni. “Well, why don't I major in art?” I almost did that. I thought I'll major in weaving. But then I thought, "But I have so much more experience and background in music. I already have so much. Why don't I just stick to music and go through it." Of course, Jalowetz was a wonderful teacher, and Lowinsky was very knowledgeable and a good teacher, so I stuck with that.

MEH: How do you remember Lowinsky as a person and a teacher?

PW: Difficult. Very difficult. He seemed like a – not a haunted man. But after all he had come out of the Holocaust. Well, he wasn't in a camp or anything, but he'd come out of Europe and he was a refugee. He was – he wasn't sad. I would say he was angry, probably. He was a good teacher and efficient. He gave everybody their money's worth, let's say. But I think his mind – He was also a dedicated musicologist, and his mind was on writing his papers and being in journals and raising children. He had a family there. I did learn a great deal from him. He loved early music. He imparted that to me, and I made a whole career out of Early Music.

MEH: Was this your first introduction to Early Music?

PW: Yes, right. He was a historian. He knew a great deal about medieval and Renaissance, and he just took us right through, and thoroughly, too. It wasn't skimming. So, I got a very good background.

MEH: What type of sources did you have?

PW: Well, just then a new history book had come out on the history of music, from Greek times really, up through like the 1800s. Why can't I think of who wrote that! Davison. Davison. Archibald Davison? We just plowed through that book from the beginning, and we either sang or played every example in the book. Then he would lecture on it and elaborate and add to the notes that were in this very – it was a wonderful book. So, that was one. Then he had us read other things, and I had to do quite a bit of extra work to get my degree. I ended up though with Charlotte Schlesinger, because by the time '47-'48 came around Lowinsky and Jalowetz were long gone.

MEH: In Lowinsky's early music class, what instruments were available? Did you just have the piano?

PW: Just the piano, which is really sad. No one even played recorder. Maybe someone who could play a stringed instrument would play a part of the polyphony on the stringed instrument. But it was really very deficient, I mean, when you see – Today I have a son who's getting – He's a music historian, and he's getting his PhD in Boulder, the University of Colorado. I know what he has what he can access and what they bring to the classes there, and they just have everything. When I think of how in a way primitive what we were doing – But it shows that in a way it doesn't matter. It didn't matter! Because when I went to New York people were playing recorder, they were playing harpsichords and viola da gamba, so all this music I had learned, I just got to hear it on the original instruments. But I knew the style of it, and I knew how it was supposed to go, and I knew how to read it without bar lines and in this early notation and all of that. So, I came with a real resource, as a resource for Early Music, into the New York scene. That's what I did.

MEH: Did you take any courses with Fritz Cohen?

PW: You know, I think I did, but I don't remember. I think I took like harmony or something. He was a nice enough person, but he was one of these sort of impatient and temperamental – more temperamental artists, composer. I think what really mattered to him was his own life as a composer and not having to teach students. It was important that people know who he was and what he had accomplished and that we should revere that, respect him. (LAUGHS) Of

course, since then on PBS, we'll see all of these history of the dance and here are his early – the early ballets that he and his wife did. They're really pivotal events in the history of dance. So, then I said, "Oh that's what he was doing, Fritz Cohen." I guess we weren't appreciating him. But he had just come out of that just like ten years before, so that was very fresh to him – what he'd just come out of. I mean the experience of those dances and writing the music.

MEH: Did Elsa Kahl ever dance at the college?

PW: [AFFIRMATIVE] Yeah. She did teach, and I think she would dance. I don't know if she ever put a dance together in a formal way and danced it for us. She may have, but I don't recall.

MEH: Did you take her class?

PW: I may have. I don't remember. But on Saturday nights there would be dancing, and maybe she would kind of get people going, or teach us something and then get everyone doing it together. Probably not, because by the time they were there, I was really – I couldn't take anything any more. That was just in the first few years, and then in the last years I had to just stick to music history and theory and harmony and composition and being in the madrigal group. I even had my own little madrigal group I conducted. I had books to go through and papers to write. Well, you know what that's like. Was Black Mountain your thesis, your doctoral thesis?

MEH: Albers at Black Mountain was my Master's. I don't have my doctorate. [TELEPHONE RINGS - INTERRUPTION] I can't remember what we were talking about when we broke.

PW: I can't remember either.

MEH: You were saying – and then we'll find where we were – when we were talking, that you didn't feel that you probably would have come to the Early Music –

PW: Oh, yes, yes. In fact I've been thinking about this with a lot of people that what if we hadn't gone there or what if I hadn't gone there, would I still have done the things that I've done since then? I very well may have done the things that I've done since then. So, I don't attribute everything to my Black Mountain experience, in other words. So, in what way was it important, and that's what got me to thinking about it was so wonderful to experience that community in such a location as it was. That was so healthy, you know. It was so beneficial. Then also it widened my whole attitude about people. Then I went to New York after that and lived in New York City. In a way it made me sort of much more sophisticated and cosmopolitan. I may not have become that. I may not. I might have just gone back to St. Louis or stayed in St. Louis and gone to some little Midwestern college or Antioch or some place – well, that's not bad. Maybe just worked there and met someone and lived there. But in a way Black Mountain led to New York and to my musical experiences there and to the co-op that I lived in.

MEH: Was Bodky at Black Mountain when you were there? Erwin Bodky?

PW: [AFFIRMATIVE]. Well he was there that summer of '48. That's when he and Cage really (LAUGHS) – speaking of clash.

MEH: What do you remember about that?

PW: Oh, poor Bodky. He was just so insulted. Oh! Well, of course, he was an authority on Baroque music and Bach ornamentation. He was really somebody. Cage was just sort of saying, "Oh, well, that stuff really doesn't matter. That music wasn't important." Or "Music stopped at 1600, stopped developing at 1600," and Bodky – see, his problem was he took everything personally and literally. I think Cage probably meant it, but you don't have to take it – I've learned that. Don't take everything you hear as the God's truth. But Godky – Bodky! – was so insulted, I think, and outraged. He would stand up and sputter and give his little speech. The people would clap or boo, and then Cage would stand up and give his speech. I don't know how important it was for that to happen, really, or how important it was for students to see that go on. I guess it was. There was an irreverence about Cage that finally gave permission, maybe, that it was all right to disagree with some of these European types. That was all right. We didn't have to believe everything he said, or just agree (?), and want to do everything he said. We could question them. So, that was important about Cage.

MEH: How did the students re- – You've partially answered my question, actually, but how did the students react to this situation? Where was Bodky doing his sputtering. Was it in the Dining Hall, or in class, or – ?

PW: It was mostly in the Dining Hall because when he gave his classes he was giving regular class and very respectful people were sitting in there, listening, and nodding and appreciating him. I forgot if anyone made the first attack. Perhaps Cage said something that was irreverent, and Bodky thought it meant

him or his whole position. I mean you can't just put down the music of the 18th, 19th, just like that, unless you're young and brash the way Cage was. So, I guess that must have started it. But Bodky had his following, and he had people who thought he was wonderful. But again, you see, there I was appreciating both of them, taking what I wanted and what I could see from Bodky and taking what I was getting from Cage. For me, I didn't have to take a side. I could do both.

MEH: What was Cage doing that summer? Was it the Satie…?

PW: Yes, yes, he put on the Satie Festival, right. It was quite ambitious. He had most of his music. It was largely piano music, I guess. Richard Lippold was there, who also is a very fine pianist. So when something called for two four hands, why Richard Lippold and I played together. Sometimes John played alone or Richard played alone. I don't think I ever played anything alone. So, in maybe two or three of the concerts I had a job to do, which was fine. I had just graduated in music that June, and I was still in pretty good shape. My fingers were from playing, so I could do it. Then I took all of Albers' art classes and just had a wonderful time.

MEH: You'd finished the degree.

PW: I had finished it, and had that behind me.

MEH: What do you remember about Cage that summer? What was he like?

PW: Youthful, and mischievous. Good-natured, liked to laugh. He and Merce were extremely close then and were sort of absorbed in each other, let's say. That was in that period when they were. So, they were self-contained. I guess that's

the word. So, he wasn't looking for people to form a group with or to be on his side or to influence. He just was there, and then also he formed that friendship with Buckminster Fuller. The de Koonings were there. They were all having their very exciting time, the fact (INAUDIBLE) together. Of course, I knew Cage for seven years after that.

MEH: We'll come to that later on.

PW: So I'm just saying what I remember of him then as being youthful. He was. I guess he was just about thirty years old. Just doing his thing. He didn't seem to care what anyone else thought. It didn't matter to him. (LAUGHS).

MEH: Do you remember the Satie play they did that summer?

PW: You know, I don't remember that. I have no memory of it. I might have seen rehearsals of it in the Dining Hall. I remember they just were all just having a wonderful time (LAUGHS), being funny and crazy and silly. I was still a little bit of a St. Louis prude. I still thought, "Oh, what are they doing? They're so silly! Oh, I don't see what's funny about that – what they're doing." I guess I couldn't see the humor in it. They just seemed to be acting dumb or making things up. Of course, they were making up the first Happening.

MEH: Going back a bit. After Wunsch left, there was really no one teaching drama at that point.

PW: No.

MEH: Did you work with Arthur Penn at all, when he started teaching the class?

PW: No, I didn't. I didn't. By that time I was committed to music as my major, and I couldn't have – I was so torn. I could have stayed there ten years just taking

class after class. As long as my parents were willing to pay the bill, I would stay there. I'm still like that today.

MEH: What did you have to do to prepare for graduation? How did you go about this?

PW: Well, first of all I had to get into Senior Division which was a test to show that I had enough of a background in other things to warrant my specializing in music – which I did. I had to take it twice. That was one reason I was there so long. So, the second time I passed it. Then, I guess it was with Lowinsky that I outlined what I would have to do, what would be expected of me to accomplish it. So, there was a plan, just as my son has now, of so much music history and so much of repertoire on the piano and so much harmony, theory. So, I just followed through and plowed right through, marched through with it. It was hard on me, because I was having to give up other things in order to do this. It was hard. I probably missed some of those activities because I was busy doing homework. I was in my study, and I couldn't just go off and go to everything that was being done. People would say, "Oh, aren't you coming to this concert?" or "Aren't you going to go to that?" or "Aren't you going to do this? This is happening." I said, "Well no, I've really got to study." I guess I just couldn't stay in line, not forever. Then I ended up with just Charlotte Schlesinger because Lowinsky left. So, she became my one and only teacher – my piano teacher and the teacher I did my music history with and sort of the one I was beholden to. She wasn't a taskmaster at all though. She was just very casual about it. In fact it was she and Johanna kind of who were holding my hand until I got

through with that. Then William Mitchell from Columbia University came down and was my examiner.

MEH: Did you play for him? Or do papers?

PW: Right. I had to show him my work. I had to discuss things. If he wanted to discuss history, I could discuss that with him. I showed him my harmony. I had this little group of madrigal singers. I had them perform and he could see my skill at leading or choosing music. I think I do have a program that was taken. It was from that winter, that someone gave me. Maybe you gave it to me. I wonder. But anyway I have a program where Charlotte and I shared the leadership of the concert. So, I was responsible for some of it and she was for the rest. It wasn't really all that satisfactory to me, just working with one person like that.

MEH: She surely didn't have the background in early music that Lowinsky had had.

PW: No. In fact, her background really was as a private school – secondary private school teacher. I don't think she really had conducted choruses or anything very much. Also her health was very fragile.

MEH: What was she – Can you describe her as a person?

PW: Well, she had quite a heavy accent. I think she herself had been from Germany. Schlesinger, right. She somehow found herself teaching in a private school in New England. I don't know how she found her way down there or how she was contacted. She was quite good, a good pianist, but I don't think all that good. She had funny mannerisms. Well, her sight I thought was very bad, so when she played she had to get up very close to the key, to the music, and play with

her hands down here. She smoked one cigarette after another so either a cigarette was hanging out or her fingers were all yellow or butts were down there at the end of the piano. She had migraine headaches frequently, so she was just out of commission quite a bit. She was fragile. Not totally available. As far as personalities, I wouldn't say our personalities clicked very well. Not that we argued but it just wasn't – It was limited. So, I kind of graduated myself and kind of saw myself through the program and did what was necessary to get my B.A. I have my piece of paper that says I graduated. But I'm one of the few who did. Not many people who did.

MEH: I think about maybe sixty people over a period of years.

PW: Yeah. Also I was there from the beginning to the end. I don't know, maybe some other people came midway in their college career.

MEH: It was a very exacting process.

PW: Yeah, it was.

MEH: It wasn't just a matter of taking for a B.A. I mean your son's doing this but he's getting a Ph.D.

PW: Right, right.

[END OF TAPE 1; SIDE 1, TAPE 2 BEGINS]

[IRRELEVANT PRELIMINARY REMARKS NOT TRANSCRIBED]

MEH: We had been talking about the graduation process, right? What courses did you take other than music and art and drama?

PW: I took a course in the Bible. I've forgotten who taught it. Maybe Dehn, Max Dehn? Straus? Somebody like that. Very European types. In the middle years

that I was there, there were all the people like Straus, Dehn, and Hansgirg and Mrs. Hansgirg. That was the really European era.

MEH: Right. What was Straus like? How do you remember him?

PW: Well, he was the typical I think European professor, doctor. He was a doctor type. That's all I can say. (LAUGHS) I don't know. I had no connection at all with someone like that.

MEH: What about Hansgirg?

PW: Oh, he was the same, the same kind of person. I don't think any of those European men really could connect to a young American girl (LAUGHS). They didn't have the slightest –

MEH: So, you took a course in Bible. Did you take any science?

PW: No. I think I took Acoustics. I had to take Acoustics, which I couldn't understand. But I do have this written down somewhere. In fact the Archives has a copy of all the courses I took. I got that from somewhere, maybe from you.

MEH: But as long as you could pass the senior exam, you were okay in these subjects?

PW: Yeah, right. Right. I mean when I had absolute blanks – I guess I had enough of the other to pull me through and that they let it go, they waived it. At Black Mountain they probably waived things like that easier.

MEH: You had a study in the Studies Building?

PW: [AFFIRMATIVE].

MEH: Where did you practice?

PW: I practiced in Roundhouse and in the Dining Hall behind the silver curtain. I had to practice behind the silver curtain when people would come in early for dinner. They would sit in a little area where the newspapers were, and they would sit there and smoke while I was practicing. (OVERTALK) I remember thinking, "This isn't very private, you know. There's somebody in there." You could hear the paper opening, and the cigarette smoke coming over the silver curtain.

MEH: What was the silver curtain?

PW: That was for – That was the curtain for the – whenever there was any drama.

MEH: How was it placed? Where was it located?

PW: At the end of the Dining Hall.

MEH: The fireplace end?

PW: Yeah, the far end.

MEH: Was it always there?

PW: As far as I remember it, yeah, it was always there. The grand piano was pushed away back in there to protect it from people trying to use it. So, I was sort of enclosed in this cocoon of the silver curtain. Usually I was by myself. But then, as I said, early, before dinner some people would come in and start reading the paper. Sometimes they'd start whistling to the music (LAUGHS) that I was playing, or I could tell that they knew what I was playing because I kept playing over and over and over and over. Then I would rehearse, I mean, in the Roundhouse. That had a good piano. Otherwise, it was a little cubicle out in the woods somewhere, which was terrible. There were awful uprights, and there was no heat. You know, it was pretty bad.

MEH: Okay, we may come back to Black Mountain, but let's move away from there. You left after the summer of '48.

PW: [AFFIRMATIVE]. Right.

MEH: And what did you do then?

PW: Again, I went home for two weeks and then left home again (LAUGHS) and went to New York because I had so many friends who also were going off to New York. Particularly, my friend Polly Pollet, Barbara Pollet. She said, "Oh you've got to come." She said, "You can stay with me," or something, but they lived out in Poughkeepsie or – Scarsdale! They lived in Scarsdale. So, I took an apartment in New York City, and I roomed with Joan Stack for a while. It was just a furnished room. I think it was fifteen dollars a month and we divided it. She got a job fairly quickly at the Metropolitan Museum, and I got a job through Polly's sister at the Museum of Nonobjective Painting, which was what they called the Guggenheim Museum. That was perfect, because it was just one to six, six days a week.

MEH: What were you doing?

PW: I was a receptionist. Sold prints and talked to visitors and pretended that I knew all about the art and showed them around.

MEH: Where was it located then?

PW: It was right next door to where the Guggenheim is now. Closer, I guess, to 89th Street. It was a beautiful townhouse. The first two floors, two or three floors, were galleries, and then the Baroness von Rebay, she was, you know – you've heard of her? Right. Well, she had her quarters on the top floor with her

poodles and her medicines and everything. That's where Simon Guggenheim used to come in and go up to see her and talk about the –

MEH: Was she director at that point?

PW: [AFFIRMATIVE]. She was. She loved the paintings of Bauer, I've forgotten his first name. So, mostly his paintings were on display and none of the Klees and the Kandinskys and all of the other really great art. There were some Bolotowskys, too, that they had, which just sat in the basement while she put on her favorite who was Bauer. Rudolf, Rudolph Bauer. We were really there to talk to visitors. We were supposed to actually sell the idea of nonobjective art, and I guess I was hired because I'd been to Black Mountain. So, I learned a lot about Kandinsky. We were always supposed to put music on, so there was continuous music, but it was always this Bach b-minor suite or the Brandenburg Concertos. That was it.

MEH: So they weren't being very adventurous with their music.

PW: No. No, they weren't. Right. You know, you're right about that. She had this very traditional streak, and she was very Germanic, being a baroness, so she wanted the music of Bach and then Bauer. I suppose he was – maybe he was a German Jew. Also, I remember that the father, the stepfather of Polly and her sister Elizabeth Pollet, was also a painter, and his work was there. Scarlet, Ralph Scarlett, and his work was in the museum. Then friends from Black Mountain would drop in and say, "What are you doing here? Are you working in here?" I realized how lucky I was to get that job because think of all of the girls in New York City just graduating from Bard or Hunter, whatever, would love a

job like that. I just walk in – and it was because of the connection, you see, that I knew someone from Black Mountain who, one, knew about nonobjective painting.

MEH: Did you continue with your music then?

PW: Right. Right. Right away I wanted to do Early Music. One of the workers there knew about Eric Katz and his madrigal group at the New York College of Music. So, I went over there on a Wednesday night, and he said, "Come in, come in!" He knew some of the people that I'd studied with. He was from Germany himself. So, I started right in being in his madrigal group. He had a virginal, which is a sort of spinet, a harpsichord spinet, not a (UNINTELL). So, he said, "I don't have a place for this. Can I leave it in your apartment?" So, it was in my apartment. He had taught the recorder to some people in the group, and one of them turned out to be my first husband. So, that was recorders and harpsichord. Pretty soon we got viola da gambas and had a real group going, called The Musicians' Workshop.

MEH: So you met your husband there.

PW: I met him in the group.

MEH: How did you come to move out to The Land?

PW: Paul and Vera were always interested in having some kind of a community. They were very sympathetic with artists and musicians who had to live in New York City and try to bring up children. We were all beginning to have young babies and children. They thought these people need to have a decent place to live, but close enough that they can drive in and out to the city to do what they

need to do. So, that was part of it. The first people he got were M.C. Richards and David Tudor and Cage and Weinrib. I guess that was sort of the nucleus. Then they kept coming to visit us, because they knew we had young children and they had young children, whereas these other people didn't have families. So, they talked us into it, and we went out in 1956 and joined. You probably have interviewed quite a few of the people who ended up out there.

MEH: What did "joining" involve? Just moving in and paying rent, or what?

PW: Yeah. Someone had to sponsor you. So, we were sponsored by them. It's true, Paul Williams designed and built the houses, with the help of the men, but didn't charge for his own labor. He amortized the cost of the house over thirty years, so the rent was just nothing. It was like two hundred dollars or a hundred and seventy-five a month, you know. So, there we were. Our little house was kind of designed for us, for two children. Everything very small, the way your apartment is. Small rooms, but everything you needed, and in beautiful countryside – a hundred acres of beautiful woods.

MEH: How did The Land function as a community?

PW: Well, that varied. I know Vera wanted it to be a real community where we even cooked and ate together, and garden and share things – more barter. She wanted to do that, whereas other people wanted to have their own washing machine in their own house and not have a community laundry. Or they didn't want to participate in the gardening, down the hill or something. So, we ended up being fairly independent. The houses all faced the woods and then their doorways faced the square, which was sort of European style. We did have

community meetings, and we had to decide about when to clear the brush and certain trees to cut down or when to fix the road or extend the road, just things about where to keep the garbage or to build a new bridge over the little stream down there. I guess we didn't really have any urgent matters because everything was new. The houses were all new, the plumbing was new, and everything worked. I think many years later when I wasn't there any longer, that's when the houses began to need a lot of maintenance and improvements and that's when they started having much more to discuss. We did have arguments about people who wouldn't cooperate (LAUGHS) and help like, "Why doesn't he ever do this? We're out here clearing this –" Because we had a brush day every Saturday morning, right, but certain people would never come. We didn't know what to do about that. Then once a couple, a family, couldn't make their payments, and so that was a big thing. "Well, we can't kick them out, can we?" "No." Well, somebody, "Yeah, sure, we can kick them out." "No, we can't kick them out." So, we all decided we would pitch in and pay their monthly payment. It finally went on month after month, and then finally we said "Well we'll do it till the end of the year." Then the end of the year came, and then we had to keep extending it and sort of discuss the whole thing. We also were politically involved in the Peace Movement at that time, in the '50s, and there were people who went off to protests. So, there was that interest that we shared. We were considered kind of Bohemian (LAUGHS), I don't know what. People out there out in the heart of rural New York where incest was rampant. I mean all these hillbillies sort of sitting around, and we were going back and

forth and doing these sort of crazy things on our property – being artists and musicians and potters. Then the children finally all started needing to go to school, so we formed our own school. I taught in that, and Remy came out and taught in that. He and I taught a class together where I played the piano. He improvised, and we improvised together. But then I left after seven years. La Noue and I were divorced, and I left and came to California.

MEH: Did he stay at that point?

PW: Yes, and he's still there.

MEH: Oh, really!

PW: Still there. By now the house is paid for! (LAUGHS) Because it's been over thirty years. So, I think the only thing he has to pay is his maintenance and taxes.

MEH: So, while you were there, you had two small children. Did you have time to do anything musically?

PW: Well, that was an advantage. The mothers shared child rearing – not rearing, but watching. So, one morning a week, I would take all the kids, and then the other four mornings I could practice if I wanted to. I kept going into town, into New York – we called it "into the town" – to rehearsals, but I finally kind of gave it up. It was too much. I sort of just had – I thought, "I can't be a mother and do all this at the same time." So, I sort of gave it up.

MEH: What was Le Noue doing at that time?

PW: Well, he was pursuing his career. He was going into town to rehearsals and being in programs. Then finally he was hired by New York Pro Musica, and he

got a good job with – So, he was gone a lot, and on long tours, really long. John Cage and Merce Cunningham and also Tudor, they'd be gone on long, long tours. So, that's why the brush wasn't getting done. It did try to be a co-op. If you talk to Vera, probably, you'd get a different story because I think she really wanted it to be more cooperative. M. C. Richards maybe wanted it – the garden, you know – for everyone to have something to do with that.

MEH: Did you really collaborate on artistic projects? Or was everybody sort of on his own bent?

PW: No, we didn't. We didn't collaborate, because we each had our own house, so we could do whatever we wanted within the house. There weren't anything – We had a festival every year, and we would sort of agree on a theme, maybe, and have decorations or things in the woods. We had lots of potlucks, so we did share our own cooking skills with each other. But the best part for me at that time was – being a young mother with young kids – having other friends take my kids for those four mornings a week. And for them, too. That's when Vera did her art work, those four mornings that she had free. So, it worked out. It was the best time to be there. I don't think there's any point in having that kind of life when you're older. It's not for me.

MEH: So you came to the West Coast, and did your kids – you still had small kids. Did they come with you?

PW: Right, right. They came with me. Well, they were, let's see, twelve and six, I guess, when I came. They were with me for a while, and then the older one, when he became a teenager, he wanted to live back there. I thought that was

pretty sound. So, he moved back, and Mark, the younger one – see they were six years apart, my two children – he stayed there until he was in high school, and then he moved back when he was sixteen. They both lived there for quite a while. So, they're very steeped in that cooperative. They had that experience. The children loved it, the children who grew up there.

MEH: What did you do professionally here?

PW: Well, when I came here, I came to the L.A. area, and I found a group of people to play with, to perform with, because Early Music had caught on by then everywhere in the country. L.A., being a big city, had several groups. I got in touch with some of them whom I had heard of. They said, "Oh, we'd love to have you. Come in – " and so I was in a couple of groups right away.

MEH: Could you earn your living doing this?

PW: No. No. It was just a concert here, a concert there, or a little mini-tour of two or three days. But I taught. I taught in the private schools. In fact, I taught in a private school in Bel-Air where Reagan's children went (LAUGHS). So, it was mostly private schools because they would just want you maybe two mornings a week. It was nice because I would be home when my kids were home and have the same holidays. So, that was good.

MEH: What were the groups you were playing with?

PW: Well, one was called the Camerata Musicale, and another one Musica Pacifica, and another one The Renaissance Consort. That one played for Young Audiences. I don't know if you've heard of that, but it's a national organization where they send professional groups into schools. You're paid union scale. I did

a lot of that. I've played everywhere in L.A., every – You know, name it, I was in that town, even as far as Palm Springs and San Diego and even here in Santa Barbara.

MEH: What were you playing?

PW: Well, I was playing harpsichord and recorder and viola da gamba.

MEH: So, you played all the instruments.

PW: [AFFIRMATIVE]. We would have to stand and demonstrate the instruments, and then play and gear it to children so that we could talk their language and answer their questions. They liked it. It was very popular.

MEH: When did you move to Santa Barbara?

PW: Oh, well after that, I stayed in Long Beach so I was living in Long Beach and working in L.A. I went back to college. I went to Cal State Long Beach, Cal State University Long Beach and got a music therapy certificate and a gerontology certificate. That took quite a while to do the internship, a six-month internship for each certificate. But I loved it, because I wanted to do music in a new way some way and not do the performing anymore. So, when I moved here then to Santa Barbara, I had that background. I went to Adult Ed, and they said, "Oh, we've got classes here. Come, come, work for us." So, that was thirteen years ago.

MEH: Did you have any problem with – They accepted your Black Mountain graduation?

PW: At the university I had a problem, yes, at Cal State Long Beach. They said, "Well do you know anybody?" I think I got something from Lowinsky or had he

died? I don't know if he was still alive and could help out. But they said, "Well, do you know anyone who graduated from Black Mountain and went on to anyplace from there?" That would be good enough. So, I wrote to Lucian, who had gotten a doctorate somewhere, and there he was at Scripps College. He wrote a very nice letter. I think I even had to write to one other person. But I could think of them, and they came through. So on that basis I was allowed to be a graduate student. I made all the best grades (LAUGHS). I made straight A's. Took tests and everything. I was almost sixty years old then when I did that. So, I was very proud of myself that I could go to a conventional university and park my car with hundreds of cars and walk up hills and go into classrooms and sign up and do all of the legitimate stuff and got my certificates.

MEH: How would you compare that experience to your Black Mountain experience?

PW: Oh, just night and day, really night and day. Because Black Mountain was really basically I think a community rather than a place of learning.

MEH: Do you think you learned as much as you would have if you went to a traditional school for your bachelor's?

PW: No. You know, I don't think I – Not academically. That's because of the limitations. I mean, I see that now in my son and also with other people, because at a university you have so many classes to choose from, and you have the latest, most up-to-date contemporary stuff and the best new books. At Cal State Long Beach I was learning the best new stuff about music therapy or about gerontology and the latest research on everything. So, I learned a lot academically. But, of course, forget about community! Except maybe

sometimes in a certain class, you'd sort of begin to bond with certain students. I keep in touch with two of them that I met there thirteen years ago. So, yeah, there was some bonding, but it would just be in that one class not in the whole place.

MEH: Do you think there are aspects of Black Mountain that we haven't covered that you think are important?

PW: Well, I think I did mention that then they knew nothing about conflict resolution or mediation or even the fact that a teacher does have to have some teaching skills to put across their ideas. Today certainly I think even the most experimental place should have all of that. I think places like Sarah Lawrence certainly does or the place in – New Hampshire College or the smaller liberal progressive places. I think all of those teachers now are trained much differently. So, they still have the community, but maybe a higher quality they're turning out – I mean, like the men at Black Mountain, I think – whenever I see some of them today, I think they're really of the old mentality (LAUGHS).

MEH: That's interesting.

PW: If they'd had a more, a broader psychological basis or – to teach, just teach them how to act (LAUGHS) or how to be in the world or with other people or with women or whatever, that that could have been very good for some of them, who in a way never grew up. But this is just – I'm just guessing at this. I think the young people today are getting much, are getting better training. Like my sons are much more compassionate and understand women and understand problems in general.

MEH: I think that's generally the case in that – I'm not sure that in 1945, if they had gone to a college, things would have been any different.

PW: Oh, yeah, right. If they'd gone to a co-ed college or some kind –

MEH: I think it's not like today. If there were a Black Mountain today, I'm sure there would be a different consciousness among men and women. I mean a lot of women have complained that the college was very chauvinistic and patriarchal.

PW: Especially with the Europeans there. That sort of set the tone.

MEH: And then Olson came in. He was like the epitome of the –

PW: Yeah, that's the amazing thing. See, I missed that whole, that last phase of the college. I sort of feel that maybe I was in the old-fashioned, still in the old-fashioned part. But I don't think I would have gone through there in the last part. I don't think that would have appealed to me at all. But that's just hearsay, also.

MEH: Another question I had: did you go into Asheville or Black Mountain?

PW: I never went into Black Mountain, but I did go into Asheville a few times. To buy bear's claws at the bakery store. There was a bakery there that sold bears claws. That was one thing, the food was just really terrible. It was really under, under adequate during the War years.

MEH: In quantity or quality, or both?

PW: Both! Both. I don't think we got nourishing meals or adequate calories or vitamins or anything like that. I mean it was just – There was a lot of canned food, just heating up canned vegetables. The cook, do you remember his name?

MEH: Cornelia and George?

PW: Yeah, George. They were wonderful people, but they just cooked with tons of grease and oil. It just wasn't good (LAUGHS). I don't know how the faculty could stand it. So, we were in a sense under-nourished. We probably weren't getting the right food we should have gotten for our teeth and for our general health, but because we were all still young and we'd had probably good food at home, we could last out a number of years without its beginning to show up on our health.

MEH: How did you dress at the college?

PW: Very simply, and that was wonderful. Just slacks and shirts. We used to like to dye our shirts, the women. We got men's white Oxford cloth shirts and then we would dye them different colors.

MEH: Did you use just commercial –

PW: Rit, right, right. But we would have orange shirts and purple shirts. I don't think we tried tie-dye. We didn't know about that. Just blue jeans and sandals. We made our own sandals and wore them when it was warm enough. I know when I first came, I had all of this, these clothes from my high school, lovely cashmere things and skirts (LAUGHS), beautiful things, and sweaters and coats. It was all totally inappropriate. So, in a way I think my parents were glad they didn't have to put out as much money for me. I didn't have to have a new wardrobe every year.

MEH: Do you remember any parties in particular?

PW: You mean in the Studies Building or in the Dining Hall?

MEH: Both.

PW: [LAUGHS} Well, let's see –

MEH: Any you're willing to discuss.

PW: Well, again, I think I was in that more subdued part of the history, or else I was so protected that I didn't know about any wild parties going on. I'm sure, I guess there were. But except for that very first summer I went there, and we were all crazy and just stayed up half the night. I think we got ahold of some beer or something, or my father sent me a bottle of rum in the mail because I asked him to (LAUGHS). It was just silly, but we weren't doing anything naughty, let's say. But I guess later people were – for those days. But in the Dining Hall, they were fun parties, you know. Jimmy Tite would play jazz, or Eddie Woldin. People would dance. It was a dress-up time, if you did have any kind of dress-up clothes, you could sort of show them off at that time. Sparkle. Let down a little bit. Oh, one thing that was wonderful was the Interludes. I guess you've heard about the Interludes. Right. When things seemed to get stressed out there and the teachers would seem to be under pressure and the students were. There was just sort of a low mood, probably when the food had gotten just too bad, then they would have a big community meeting, and someone would stand up from the faculty and announce we were going to have an interlude – from Monday through Friday – which was very long. During that time you couldn't totally goof off, but if you wanted to catch up on a lot of reading, you could do that, or if you were an art student you could just do nothing but paint, or a music student do nothing but practice, or a poet you could just do

that, and kind of goof off. But I guess you had to show up for the work program. The faculty could just go up and hide out in their houses and not come down for anything. So, those were wonderful. I think that was a great idea. Sometimes they were just maybe for two or three days. But I remember one once, it was a whole week, and I sort of liked that. But there wasn't much privacy. I remember that I was in a dormitory the first year. I'm just am not good with a whole lot of people, and so I complained to I guess my advisor. I got moved down to one of the bedrooms downstairs, which shared a bathroom. I think there were two or three people to a bedroom. So, I got a bedroom with only one other person so that was – An older student who was kind of serious.

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

PW: I remember one of my roommates with Mimi French, Miriam French. Have you ever found her?

MEH: [AFFIRMATIVE]. She lives in Florida.

PW: She was a weaving student, but she was very quiet. I think Joan Stack also was. I seem to like quiet, quiet people. Today we can find out our "type" – there are many different tests we can take. On all of them I'm an introvert. I come out as a strong introvert. I always thought, "Oh, I must be an extravert. I go out there and I teach, and I do all that – I perform and do all that." But then I realized I go out and do all of that, and then I come home and I just will stay at home for two days and be totally happy and not talk to anyone, you know. So, I guess the introvert part is strong, and especially now as I'm older, it seems

more natural to just be that way, although extraverts really wear me out! Have you ever taken any of those tests?

MEH: No, I haven't.

PW: Oh, it's fun. You know, personality types. Now if we'd had those, some of those, at Black Mountain, that would have helped because sometimes you wonder, "Well why is that person so loud? Why is that person trying to get me to do this or do that or always wanting to be busy or always wanting to do something?" It probably was a strong extraverted person. It wasn't someone trying to annoy you. It was just that was their personality, their type of person. So, if we knew more about each other that would be – That's one way we could get along better too.

MEH: I think you're right. I think that the community was troubled from the beginning because the people who wanted community had no real knowledge of what it meant to be a community and how to resolve conflict. The college attracted a lot of very strong egos, people who really naturally did not work together well in a communal setting and had no idea how to resolve things. The sort of thing that we would know today about. If they had been willing even to take advantage of it.

PW: Right, or we would call an outside mediator now to help. I think people were just behaving the way they'd ever behaved in their houses, in their homes that they grew up in, depending on where they came from. Then, as you said, the strong egos, which might be one reason some of them got to where they got, because of their strong ego. But it didn't necessarily make for that community. Right.

MEH: Okay, before I turn this off, do you have any other thoughts? Observations? Memories?

PW: I think that my life there made an impact on my later life in the community that I lived in and in my life in teaching and with my children and with friends. I do find that when I meet people who have had no exposure to anything like that, that I did – it was just so unique and so really different – I feel there's this kind of vacuum between us. Like there's a whole area where we can't speak the same language and that I was the one maybe who had the advantage of this experience that they didn't have. They can't imagine what that was like. So, it sets you apart in a certain way. But then the task is to allow that to inform the way you are now and the way you relate to people now and to share that as much as you can.

[END OF RECORDING ON SIDE 2, TAPE 2]

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]