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

**MEH:** [GIVES IDENTIFICATION] Karen, your first trip to Black Mountain was in 1946. How had you heard about the college?

**KK:** Well, I was at Brooklyn College, where I had been studying with Serge Chermayeff, who knew about Black Mountain and knew about everything. I had graduated in '46, so he thought that it would be a good thing for me to go down there for the summer. I'd been studying design all the time, with him. That's how I ended up there.

**MEH:** So you studied art.

**KK:** In Brooklyn College.

**MEH:** Not clay.

**KK:** There was no clay in Brooklyn College. No, it was really drawing and design. I think I thought of it more as a kind of a Bauhaus course. I did that. But I did some sort of architectural things, because he was an architect and he loved me very much and he wanted me to be an architect. I didn't end up there.

**MEH:** Where are you from?

**KK:** New York City. Born in Brooklyn. I grew up in the Bronx until I was beginning high school, and then we moved to Brooklyn.

**MEH:** What was Brooklyn College like at that point? Chermayeff was there. Was there a heavy Bauhaus influence?

**KK:** No. Only he. I mean he was. Well, they brought good teachers. Kepes was a teacher, and Schawinsky was a teacher. I mean he brought in very good –

**MEH:** You mean the Schawinsky from Black Mountain, from the Bauhaus. Xanti?

**KK:** Yes. Xanti?

**MEH:** Xanti, yes. He was teaching art?

**KK:** Yeah. Well, design, art.

**MEH:** Do you know if he was teaching any theatre?

**KK:** No. Because I don't think the art department had theatre in it. I mean if Brooklyn had theatre, it had nothing to do with the art department. It was a city college then, a university now, and it was very departmentalized. It wasn't like Black Mountain. It was a big school, big school. But the design department, the art department was wonderful. I'll just say something that would be more current. Chermeyeff died a few years ago. Over the years he had given me a number of paintings – really lovely. He came and visited after I graduated. I had about four paintings, which were destroyed in the fire. Then he died a few years ago and I have been given through a woman who takes care of his wife – and maybe they got it through Ivan– I don't know – but I have a number of paintings I can show you later. Betsy, David's sister, just brought me three little paintings at M.C.'s exhibition. I'll have to have them framed. It's not the same things I had before, but I love having them back again.

**MEH:** Do you remember that first summer how you physically got to Black Mountain?

**KK:** We didn't have a car. How could we have gotten there? By bus. I don't remember.

**MEH:** Train?

**KK:** I really don't remember.

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

**KK:** No, I think that was my first trip. I studied with Albers, and then I went into the Wood Shop, and Molly Gregory – this is all coming back [LAUGHS] – was she the wood teacher then? So I made some furniture-like things. I enjoyed it. But I loved working with Albers. It was good, a good double experience. I don't know how much else I remember about it. I know it was a good summer.

**MEH:** Do you remember how his classes really compared to what you were doing at Brooklyn? Was it more of the same, that you recall?

**KK:** No, it wasn't really the same, because he went into – As I remember, the kind of problems that he put us – we had a problem of working in different whites – white color. There was a lot of collage work, working with materials. You'd put a hard one next to a fuzzy one and then they related to each other. We hadn't done those things with Chermayeff. But, of course, the classes were different. I mean Brooklyn College, you know, if you go to a city college, it's probably a three-hour class once a week, whereas in Black Mountain you did it every day. You did a lot of it. It was much more intense.

**MEH:** You had a study that summer in the Studies Building?

**KK:** Yeah. Must have. [LAUGHS]. You tell me, I must have had one.

**MEH:** Did you take classes with any of the other people? Varda or – I think Jacob Lawrence was there.

**KK:** No. I sort of saw Varda. All the people were there, were present, and one knew things were happening. But I think I only took Albers and the wood.

**MEH:** Do you have any recollection of the Greek party they had that summer?

**KK:** Greek –

**MEH:** A Greek party. It was a big costume party with a Trojan horse.

**KK:** Yes, I remember that. I don't know that I had much to do with it. But Varda was this big sex image. All these young girls [LAUGHS] floating around him. I wasn't sexy. I was young enough, but not that type. Not beautiful enough. When you say that, I remember. I mean I wouldn't remember unless you reminded me.

**MEH:** Do any other particular memories of that summer float?

**KK:** I don't think so. You remind me. Then I'll remember.

**MEH:** Sometimes things will trigger memories. Was Molly Gregory raising the roof on the farmhouse yet?

**KK:** I don't think so. I don't remember that.

**MEH:** What was she like?

**KK:** When you say that, I see her. She had a brown-face and short white hair and very vigorous. I think I didn't have much to do with her, because I sort of went in with my own project. It was more than I worked in the studio. She didn't give me a project and she wasn't really a teacher in that sense, but that was fine. I turned some bowls on the lathe. I was just experiencing wood, and I never had done that. Just enjoying the material rather than working with a teacher. I'm sure that she knew what I was doing. That's my memory.

**MEH:** How did Albers conduct his class?

**KK:** It was probably a combination of lecture, of talking about the problem. But probably the more important part was when the people brought their work in. Then he would kneel down. I can see him kneeling down and looking at the work spread out on the floor, and then speaking about the work more than – I mean, there was abstract lecturing too, but I think it was more related to what the people had done. I think so.

**MEH:** So you left Black Mountain and went back to Brooklyn College?

**KK:** No, I had graduated by then. What did I do then? I worked for a while for Chermayeff. He had opened an architecture office in New York City. I don't know what I did there, probably filed photographs. I mean, I did whatever. He really would have liked me to go to Harvard, but I didn't. It was the right decision, because really clay was the thing. I hadn't found it yet, but clay was really my material.

**MEH:** I think I have some reference to your working for a pottery somewhere?

**KK:** Oh, yes, in Pennsylvania. That was when I began living with David Weinrib, and he was working at this pottery in Pennsylvania.

**MEH:** Is that where you met him?

**KK:** No, we met at college earlier, the first year. Then he went to Alfred and we sort of lost contact. Then I met him again afterwards, after I finished college. We went up there in Pennsylvania and lived in a tent in the summertime and then I began working in the factory.

**MEH:** And that was your first work with clay?

**KK:** First with clay, I was modeling. They made some molds of some of the things I made. I made lamp-bases – a few. But then the next big step was when we went to Italy in I guess '50-'52.

**MEH:** Was that with a particular program?

**KK:** Well, there was a friend who had said about going to the school in Sesto Fiorentino, where I could learn to work with clay. So we moved there, and David went to the Academia and studied painting. I started working in a school, a high school for children. I learned to throw there and we set a studio up in the apartment. I had a wheel and I began making work and taking the pots to be fired in a local factory. That was really the beginning. Those were the pots I used to show in my slide show, some early early pieces. But we only stayed there a year or a year and a half and came back to Alfred.

**MEH:** Just where were you in Italy?

**KK:** A town called Sesto Fiorentino. It was outside of Florence. I'm sure it's much bigger now, but it was nice. It was a pottery town. There were about a hundred potteries there, firing with wood. They made lamp bases. They made all the sort of typical export Italian ware. That was very popular in this country, because they hadn't had it during the War. This was '50. When we left Italy and came back home, we went to Alfred and I got a fellowship there.

**MEH:** David had already been there?

**KK:** He'd been there, but he hadn't finished, so he needed that. He left before the degree, so he used that extra year. But it was after being there for the year – that summer we heard about Black Mountain and applied just for the summer job and came down.

**MEH:** At Alfred, who was teaching there at that time?

**KK:** Dan Rhodes was teaching there and a technical person. There must have been another. With my fellowship, I just worked under Charles Harder. I just worked. I think they wanted me there working, really. They didn't assign me anything. I just had a space and was working and was there. But I never got the degree, because I left. When we went to Black Mountain, I would have needed to have come back for a second year, but we didn't. I mean that was the big step. I always have credited my getting the job because Chermayeff always recommended. He recommended my fellowship in Alfred. Nobody had ever heard of me. I'd been in Italy for a year. But I guess people trust other people they respect when they recommend them.

**MEH:** So Robert Turner had been there. Had you known Robert Turner?

**KK:** Had I met him then? No. I know him now. He'd been at Black Mountain and he built the kiln and studio and then he went to Alfred. I met him in Alfred. Sure, I knew him.

**MEH:** What was Alfred like then?

**KK;** Well, it was a very strong, very important ceramic college. It was wonderful. I loved it there too. We just didn't stay. A real small town, probably still is a small town. When we were there, they were in a kind of a transition then, just this very small facility. Then after that, they built the big building they have now. I liked the small – the big one wasn't there. The small one was fun. Just little spaces, with studios open all the time. Good spirit. A wonderful place.

**MEH:** Were there that many places then in this country that were doing that type of pottery?

**KK:** Well, Alfred was and is one of the important ones. There were others. I'm sure that Kansas City, and Ohio – I'm sure there were many others, but since David had gone there and Alfred was the New York college, and it had a wonderful reputation then as it has now. I didn't even think of anyplace else.

**MEH:** Were you working mostly in stoneware there?

**KK:** Yeah, only stoneware. I never worked in earthenware. I've really only worked in stoneware.

**MEH:** But when you came to Black Mountain, you were familiar with it.

**KK:** Oh, yeah.

**MEH:** You'd been there.

**KK:** Yeah. We had the studio. It was easy. We just got to work as soon as we got in. They let us have that wonderful apartment at the end of the Studies Building, upstairs. That was very nice.

**MEH:** That opened onto the deck?

**KK:** Yes, it was straight. Like here's the building and it was that end apartment. I'm not sure there was a deck there. But it was like it went straight across the Study Building and then the pottery was in the field. It was bigger. I mean it was an apartment. It wasn't just a study. We probably had a study. No, we didn't need a study, because we had the pottery. Yeah.

**MEH:** Now when you came, you were there as not really as faculty. That was in the summer of '52.

**KK:** Potter-in-residence, they called it. Potter-in-residence. I guess we stayed as Potter-in-residence all along. It wouldn't have made a difference if we were faculty. But we started working there and selling in the Southern Highland



Handicraft Guild, in the shop in Asheville. Also sent things up to America House after the year. We were making stoneware things and they were very well received. There weren't that many stoneware potters in that area at that time.

**MEH:** This was basically utilitarian stuff?

**KK:** That's what it – Well, David was different – David always made tiles and more decorative things. I mean he didn't just make a cup or a bowl, but I was a very straightforward potter. Containers and cups and dinnerware. That's what I love to make. When you see the photographs, they're basic pots. I think a lot of it is that they were stoneware, so they had a very different quality from the sort of mountain – They definitely were not mountain pots. There's a huge field of – since Penland has changed now to be this kind of center that it is, and there are so many, so many craftsmen and potters around the area. That whole mountain region has changed very much since then.

**MEH:** I don't think at that time of stoneware as being – It was fairly new ware at that point.

**KK:** I think we might have been the newest ones. I mean maybe some of the mountain people were making stoneware, too, but it was so different. It was very traditional pottery, and mine was not. That was a big difference.

**MEH:** But it was interesting that you were using stoneware and it looked very different, just in terms of the design and the form.

**KK:** Yeah. The form.

**MEH:** It was still very utilitarian.

**KK:** Yeah. I mean, things sold well. There was no doubt that – There was a wonderful woman at the shop there – Margaret. I guess the manager. But I had

a booth at the fair one summer and I bought things – the beautiful tray, a few bowls.

**MEH:** Were you receiving a salary at the college? Do you remember?

**KK:** At the beginning, could we have been getting twenty-five dollars? A week, or a month? I don't know. Very little. I think we got whatever anybody else got, which wasn't much. But we got our food. The big difference – I mean, we were the best off in the college because at least we had an object we could sell. Especially after the first year, when things were really bad. I don't know if we got anything after the first year. But it was all right, because we were making a little money, and nobody else was.

**MEH:** Well, that first summer you were there was really an exciting summer.

**KK:** Yeah.

**MEH:** That was the summer that Kline was there and Tworkov and Cage and Cunningham.

**KK:** Yeah. But the second summer was wonderful, too. The second summer Cunningham came down, and it was the second summer that we organized workshops on Peter Voulkos and Dan Rhodes and Warren MacKenzie and his wife. So, the pottery seminars were the equal of the painting and everybody else. That was important.

**MEH:** I think pottery was really the focus of summer.

**KK:** Do you think so?

**MEH:** Yeah. I mean Vicente was there and the musicians were there, but from what –

**KK:** There weren't that many painters there?

**MEH:** There weren't very many painters there. That was really the pottery summer.

**KK:** Well, maybe the potters – They were important people and they did bring people in.

**MEH:** We'll come back to early projects, but let's stay with the summer of '53. Daniel Rhodes was at Alfred?

**KK:** Yeah.

**MEH:** So you knew him from there.

**KK:** Yeah.

**MEH:** How had you known MacKenzie, Warren MacKenzie?

**KK:** Well, I don't know if we ever met him, but we would know him by reputation. They were in Minnesota, he and his wife. Voukos, of course, was the most important potter in the country. But he –

**MEH:** Really?

**KK:** Oh, yes. He won all the prizes. He was still in Montana. He hadn't moved to California yet. But he was a very important person. People were happy to come. I think they were two weeks each, the seminars or the workshops.

**MEH:** So you were aware – he already had a reputation.

**KK:** Oh, yes. Well, he wasn't making big pots then. Yes. Yes, he was already making big, but classical. He hadn't done all his free expressive things. That really coincided with coming to Black Mountain, and what he claims, and what Rose Slivka who wrote the book about him says is it was Black Mountain that kind of opened his head to Abstract Expressionist paintings. Then after coming to Black Mountain, he went to New York a lot in the summers and worked in Greenwich House and was part of that artists' group. I think he would have found it by himself, but maybe not. I mean who knows? You can't – you can

never say if somebody is part of a certain movement or meets certain people that they aren't important to them. Because he was very classical, what he made in Montana. They were gorgeous but they were really perfectly thrown lovely things.

**MEH:** What was the Archie Bray Foundation at that point?

**KK:** Well, I don't know how long it had been going, but there was a person, Archie Bray, who had I guess a brick factory. He obviously was sympathetic to pottery. I'm not sure exactly the history of how it happened, but they had this place that's still in existence – all these years – with a number of young people coming and working there. Very important place, because they still have wonderful potters there. They tend to come for a few years and then move on. They don't stay there. The people who direct it stay longer, but the people who come, resident, I'm not sure how long they're able to come for. But what it was, I guess, is one of those places that young people can go and work and not be in a school situation. It's a big working place and that's very very good. But it's still going – a lot of years.

**MEH:** So, the three of them were down there that summer. Were there many students interested in pottery at that time, do you recall?

**KK:** Well, I think the people who came for them came just for them. I mean they were interesting. I don't think it was the normal Black Mountain College students. We maybe had a small number of people who were interested in clay, but it was not one of the really important things. It was also moving into writing very much more. Well, painting, too. The painting students and writing. That was more important. But we had a few people. It didn't matter. I mean we were

working. We didn't care if we had nobody. [LAUGHS] Not nice for the college,  
but –

**MEH:** But it was really an ideal setting, I should think, for young potters just getting started.

**KK:** It was perfect for us. Really perfect. We had a wonderful studio, and a kiln. We had everything that we needed.

**MEH:** Let's come back to that. Do you have particular memories of the summer of '53? The three potters were there. Cunningham was there with his dancers. So that was big that summer.

**KK:** Yeah. I mean I think I would say that Merce and his group were the most important thing for me. I would go down and sit down in the Dining Room and watch them practice. Is that the summer that John put on his Happening? I think so.

**MEH:** That was the previous summer.

**KK:** Previous. But then M.C. came down and must have worked with – because you see if Merce came and David Tudor came, then M.C. would come and then she worked with us.

**MEH:** What was Cunningham like then?

**KK:** I probably never said a word to him. I don't know what he's like. I mean I just adored his dancing. I mean not that he was standoffish. I was always a very modest, quiet person so it was more like being present and seeing what was going on, rather than having a conversation with him. I probably never said anything to him. No, no. [LAUGHS] I still wouldn't probably.

**MEH:** Was that the summer – I'm not sure, I could check – I think it was the summer before that they did the Occuptoire de Brunhilde? Do you remember that?

**KK:** It might have been that summer. I don't really remember.

**MEH:** There was one summer people have told me about, it may have been an Olson birthday party, where you appeared through the fog and the water –

**KK:** That was a play, a big festival play. It was either summer, I don't remember which one. Yes, I stunned them all because I –

**MEH:** What was your role? Tell me.

**KK:** Well, it was in the lake, and I rose from the depths. I don't know who I was. Maybe I was Persephone. I don't know who I – Or, I was the beautiful one who gets born on a seashell. I don't think I was that one. You know. [LAUGHS] I don't remember.

**MEH:** You didn't know you blush!

**KK:** [LAUGHS] No! It wasn't difficult for me to be that. I think the thing that I think that was so stunning to everybody else is that I was this quiet potter down there who didn't talk to anybody, and then suddenly there I was, this glamour figure. [LAUGHS] Not that they pursued me afterwards! I don't know what – I don't remember. You probably have it in your – what the festival was about.

**MEH:** I may have it somewhere. I can't remember now.

**KK:** And they also put on Peer Gynt. That wasn't this play. I think that was the summer of '54, because in '54 Paul Williams – the group had bought The Land up here. I stayed on to teach the summer course and came up in the autumn. David came up and spent the summer building the pot shop. I think the theatrical things were wonderful there and very important. Just hearing about

them from M.C. It had always been theatrical, always part of the whole program. But you can only do that in that kind of small school. If there was any theatre at Brooklyn, it would have nothing to do with anybody else. They would have done some formal teaching, whatever they did. I don't even know if they had a theatre department or anything. But, of course, theatre wasn't a department. It was everybody doing this at the time that they were doing it. That was so wonderful.

**MEH:** What do you think was the effect of having no departmentalization?

**KK:** Well, certainly in theatre it was so powerful, because it cut right across everything so that people could join in and do things that they would never even dream of doing. I mean, they didn't have to be "in theatre" to take part in theatre, or do a costume or do whatever – or music, or any of that. Just do it together. That's the best way to be able to do those kind of things. But it's unusual.

**MEH:** Why don't we come back and then – What was the pot shop like?

**KK:** It was a contemporary building, very nice, with the kiln inside and wheels. We put in more wheels when we got there. It had everything one needed to work in clay. Set out in the fields, it was very private. It probably could hold six or seven potters working. I don't think we even had that many. It was really an ideal place for a small school. Yes, it was.

**MEH:** But you expanded it – not only wheels.

**KK:** Yes. Well David had a – what's his name –

**MEH:** Jack Rice?

**KK:** Jack Rice built this extension. I think it was for David to work in, kind of a sloping roof and exotic. Have you interviewed Jack Rice?

**MEH:** Yes.

**KK:** Is he still alive and everything?

**MEH:** As of two years ago he was still alive.

**KK:** And his wife? Still with the same wife?

**MEH:** [AFFIRMATIVE]

**KK:** Isn't that wonderful. [LAUGHS] What a miracle. He lives in that canyon? Because I visited them once – early on, at the beginning when I wasn't long out of Black Mountain.

**MEH:** Well they have a beautiful house now up on a ridge.

**KK:** I think they had it then too. I think that when I visited they had a beautiful house. Not in a canyon? [TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION]

**MEH:** Yes, it was in kind of a canyon.

**KK:** Yeah, they had that when I was there. It would be strange to see them again. This beautiful Barbara. Sultry eyes. She's probably white-haired now. Jack with his sexy malehood. [LAUGHS] I haven't seen many of the people from Black Mountain. I used to sometimes see them in New York, some of the poets. Dan Rice. But they were not my friends. We were not personal friends. We didn't keep it up. I saw the Fiores. They came to my opening last year. Joe and Mary Fiore. You must have interviewed them. Because they now have a place in Maine and they have a place in New York City. They look just the same – it's really nice to see them [LAUGHS]. I mean physically they are the same kinds of people.



**MEH:** Going back a little earlier, then we'll go back. The summer of '52, when you arrived. When you arrived in the summer, did you really expect at that time to settle in to stay?

**KK:** No, we were just hired for the summer. But once we got there, they probably realized that Hamada and Leach and Yanagi were coming, and they really needed to have a potter there. Whether they hired us thinking that we might stay on and giving – it would be a good way to test us out, wouldn't it, have us there for the summer and see if they wanted us. So it was at the end of the summer they asked us to stay, and we were very happy to stay. But the intention, we were not hired for the year. We were hired just for the summer.

**MEH:** So, the first summer you were there was a special summer session, not the regular one.

**KK:** Right.

**MEH:** I think Cage and Cunningham were there that summer.

**KK:** I think so.

**MEH:** And M.C. Richards probably.

**KK:** Yeah. She would have been there, if David was there.

**MEH:** So that would have been the first time you met her?

**KK:** Yeah.

**MEH:** Do you have any particular memories of that summer?

**KK:** I think my strongest memories are of Merce and the dance group. The excitement of the painters that were there. But, as I say, I was so – I always – That's why I don't want to even be interviewed [LAUGHS]. I was sort of not there. I mean, I was there, but I was very shy, and in my studio, and I didn't go

out in the world very much. The painters came down and enjoyed the studio. They probably were relieved to be away from all of the glamorization of the painting, of the writing program. It was Tworikov, and I've seen Esteban Vicente a number of times in New York. I saw them [UNINTELLI WORD]. I haven't seen him now for two years, but he's come to my shows. He's in his nineties. Hilda? Hilda and the musician –

**MEH:** Stefan.

**KK:** Stefan Wolpe.

**MEH:** Did you feel that the crafts – pottery – did you feel a real division between that and the more arty, traditional sense of the arts, there?

**KK:** I felt that Olson valued it. We had no doubt. I mean, Olson loved to come down and see us and was always very loving and warm. There was no problem with that level, and the staff. But I mean we knew then – I mean the students thought we were just nothing. They would have no respect for what we were. Not that they even saw what was going on. Somebody wrote a book afterwards and said mean things about me that, as I say, I didn't know – I mean I didn't know – If you're really innocent, you don't know people look down on you. I never felt looked down on. I just didn't feel part of their life, but I didn't want to be more than I was. It was so extreme, some of the writing, especially. Not the visual arts. More the writing. Like Charles, he just seemed to really glorify everything. That was his style, and that was their style, and it was fine. But, you know, it was not something that –

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

**KK:** He was a big, warm, powerful person. He was always fun to be around. Whenever he talked, I might not understand everything but he was worth hearing. He was a very strong person. But I think he had some illusions about things, but lots of people do. These very powerful people very often are more full of illusion than others. I'm sure he thought when he had plans that if Black Mountain did one-two-three-four, we would have a great flow of brilliant students and money. We were teetering on the brink of starvation. Everybody was, but the ideas were always that something glorious was going to happen. They carried it on for a few years, but they stopped. I'm just remembering Wes Huss. We were friends. I even saw him afterwards. He's out on the West Coast someplace. We used to write to each other. We don't anymore. But he seemed more earthbound than Charles. They were kind of working together.

[IRRELEVANT REMARKS ABOUT LUNCH].

**MEH:** So, Olson did come down to visit the pot shop.

**KK:** Yeah. They just liked to – Yeah.

**MEH:** He had great respect for the pottery. He wrote with great respect.

**KK:** (OVERTALK) I know he did. I don't know if he wrote, but he came down. I think he liked seeing the earthiness. His nature was to be a kind of an air person and an earth person. So we were his earth persons. If the whole aspect of the place had been negative towards us, we wouldn't have stayed, because it really isn't nice. If the students felt like that, that didn't really matter. If they did, they didn't show it. Nobody was rude. We had nothing to do with them, which was fine.

Jorge Fick – I've seen him in later years. I shouldn't say this, because we liked

each other. I mean, there were a number of students that I did make a connection with. If it's not to everybody, that's okay. I wouldn't now.

**MEH:** I don't really think that was the case. I think probably one person made a comment about all the crafts.

**KK:** Right. Then it got immortalized in some book. [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** Exactly.

**KK:** Oh boy, did you hear that!

**MEH:** But there was a lot of pretentiousness among people then.

**KK:** That's a good word. I'm being polite.

**MEH:** That's okay! (OVERTALK)

**KK:** Young artistic souls feel really superior. It's just like how they treat their parents or any older person. "I'm just so special." It doesn't really matter.

**MEH:** I think people – these were students. You sort of form alliances and, you know, "we're artists, we're not craftspeople," you're trying out ideas and different clothes.

**KK:** It didn't really matter, because, you see, before that, when Albers was there, Anni Albers was there and her daughter. There was a real craft – not clay, but textile was respected. But they didn't, they didn't have a textile program after that. Oh, the other person I was really very friendly with was Mrs. Jalowetz. I haven't heard from her, thought about her for lots of years. But I went to tea all the time. I mean she really felt like a motherly friend and it was nice to see her. Dehn. There was a woman Dehn.

**MEH:** Toni.

**KK:** Toni Dehn.

**MEH:** I think Max Dehn probably died right before you came.

**KK:** (OVERTALK) He died. He was not there. But she was there. Then I made a plaque for their graves. Or could it have been Dehn – and who was the other person?

**MEH:** Jalowetz.

**KK:** Mr. Jalowetz.

**MEH:** Mr. Jalowetz, Heinrich. Max Dehn.

**KK:** There were a lot of people that were very warm and humanly connected. Mrs. Jalowetz really was. Did she stay there till she died? No, she must have gone to her sister.

**MEH:** Who were your students? Did you have students?

**KK:** I don't remember any of them. We had a few. Now don't let anybody know that, that I don't remember their names. [LAUGHS]

**MEH:** Let me see if I can – Did Cynthia Homire, was she studying then?

**KK:** Oh, did she study with me? I mean I knew her. Did she study clay?

**MEH:** I'm not sure. She did clay later, but not necessarily at Black Mountain.

**KK:** I don't think so. I knew Cynthia Homire.

**MEH:** What about M.C.?

**KK:** Well, M.C. was only there for summers. She wasn't there all the time. I mean she came in and did things. Yeah, we became friends and then she – But she'd go back to New York all the time.

**MEH:** What was M.C. like then?

**KK:** Same old M.C. [LAUGHS] I can't even tell you. I don't know. That's what was so extraordinary to be part of this memorial with everybody talking about her and

seeing that video and everything. I didn't really see that really gutsy happy M.C., because I don't think she was that in the years that I knew her. I loved seeing the video. We're going to get a copy, too. I didn't know that person. My thoughts about it after seeing the video and everything is that probably the years that she was at Stony Point she was unhappy – "depressed" is the contemporary word. So ,she was up and down and lots of things because that's the kind of person she was. But she didn't walk around singing and throwing herself around the way she did, later on. So she must have been having a hard time with David Tudor and then her next relationship.

**MEH:** I think two thing. As wonderful as the videotape is, that to a certain extent –

**KK:** It's selective.

**MEH:** It's selective. Also M.C. was performing for the camera and loving it. Loving it.

**KK:** Well maybe that's so too.

**MEH:** Partially.

**KK:** Ann and I were talking afterwards and she said "Well, when my video – " I mean, I have a couple that was making a video, and they have hours. They have me teaching. They came up at the fire and photographed the building as we were taking things out. I mean, they've really been – were part of my life. They came to an opening at Garth Clark. They haven't done a sit-down interview. This is the kind I hate worse. I mean I don't mind doing something and being photographed. I gave like a three or four day workshop in Pennsylvania and they were there the whole time. I didn't pay attention. It was fine. Because I told them "The way to get my ideas about form and clay and everything – come to a workshop." I can't sit here and lecture about them, but

when I'm talking to students, I'll tell you everything." So they have tons of material. They're trying to raise funds. That's what's holding them up now. But Ann would say "Oh you have to sing and – " That's not my nature. I mean that's what made her video so exciting, and I'd love to give some little excitement, but I don't think I'm going to do it because that's not what I am, really. Can't suddenly start slapping my butt [LAUGHS].

**MEH:** You walk out wishing you could, but (OVERTALK) it's not you.

**KK:** Bang, bang, bang. But I never saw her doing that either.

**MEH:** I think to a certain extent it's wonderful. She was performing.

**KK:** But that tells something about her. Not everybody can perform.

**MEH:** Exactly.

**KK:** I mean, she did theatrical things. She did a lot of things before I met her. I think at Stony Point she would have done more things like that, but she wasn't in the right group. I have – Well, one friend in particular, whenever we're together we laugh. I mean he thinks I'm the funniest person in the world. He says, "Well Ann doesn't know about the – " you know. I mean some people are funny on their own.

**MEH:** And some people bring funniness out (OVERTALK)

**KK:** Some people need to be with somebody. So, she was saying – Maybe we will. Like whenever we're together, it's not just funny, but we just have this kind of lively back-and-forthness that is very hard to do sitting and talking here like that. With other friends, too. It just needs a certain atmosphere. But I'm never as theatrical as M.C., because she was wonderful. It's okay just exaggerating,

because it's a piece of her that, you know, we have no way of knowing otherwise.

**MEH:** I thought it was wonderful.

**KK:** I loved it.

**MEH:** I think also what you see is I think that [TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION]. But going back to M.C., I think the Black Mountain years were the years of struggle that the later M.C. grew out of. I think through her whole time at Black Mountain, first, she came as an academic, so there was this whole struggle to sort of give up that image of herself, as a scholar, traditional scholar. Then dealing with her first marriage ending, and then David Tudor, which I'm sure must have been a struggle as a relationship.

**KK:** A struggle.

**MEH:** In which she was redefining herself, totally – and that's not easy.

**KK:** It's true. In Stony Point it was the same thing, too, that she was taking up a new craft. Then she wrote Centering there, and that was one of her biggest accomplishments. She obviously was able to withdraw from whatever was difficult there. Some of it too in Stony Point is that she was always hoping for community – always hoping. I mean she said it so many times in her work. She hoped for it at Black Mountain, and she had it to a certain extent, then it wasn't. She came to Stony Point. But she picked the wrong people. We were all individual people, so we didn't make the kind of community that – But then she ended up in a community, at Kimberton, like her last years were. Then there was some negativities about that because you get into a big community and there's authoritarian – you're not really free. I mean it's very hard. At least at



Stony Point, it was a totally permissive community. Everybody was free to do really what they wanted. Even philosophically we thought like that. So to me it was a wonderful place. But for her, I guess we didn't have a spiritual base and we didn't have a group dynamic that was really out into the world so that she could have gone to another community. Most people that are writing – Well I guess a potter could be out in the world, too. But I was the most non-community person, though community and loving persons but not going out in the world in any way. I have a wonderful story to tell you about M.C. Do you want this on this film? When she moved away and she lived in this walk-up in New York City, and she went to England – I guess it was in '66, '67 maybe, to teach there. M.C.'s physical image was – she always dressed beautifully, but she always wore trousers. Like on a concert she'd wear a long Indian Santa Fe skirt with fringes, but generally she wore a man's shirt and a vest and a pair of trousers. She was wonderful, because she was rangy and tall and moved like that. Then she came back from England. I went to visit her in the city. First of all, she was then calling herself Mary Caroline, instead of M.C. Her British friends call her Mary Caroline. Paulus called her that. I always called her M. I mean I didn't call her Mary Caroline. Then she had bought beautiful handwoven tweed skirts. Skirts. She had sweater sets, cashmere or some sweater sets. A scarf. They were lovely. I mean, I in those days used to dress like – not as expensive – but when I lived in the city, until I came to Vermont, I even threw in skirts. I wore skirts and I wore cashmere sweaters. My getting dressed up outfit was kind of a velour skirt that my mother made me and a beautiful cashmere sweater. I had a whole range of colors and that's what I wore. So what she was

wearing was exactly what I would have worn too. It was so interesting, because suddenly this woman re-did herself. But, of course, all through her writing, that's what she keeps saying. You keep on – for her, she keeps on taking new steps and redoing herself and changing and growing. I think that's what's so exciting and that's what all those people at the memorial were saying. So many of her words say that too. Always change. Always move this way and then take the opportunity and go that way and do this and do that. I don't know. I've never heard anybody else say it. Maybe nobody was that intimate. For me, I came there at the moment and I saw it and I really knew, because when I said to other people, they didn't know. Probably she tempered that and then I don't know, maybe she didn't continue with all these gorgeous garments.

**MEH:** I wonder what was happening that triggered that particular –

**KK:** Well, I think she went to England, where people do wear tweed skirts and sweater sets. She wanted a more feminine, softer image. I never heard that she fell in love with anybody or anything. I don't think she needed to do that. I think it was really for herself. Then she had this big cape, which she wore. She could wear that with trousers too. Maybe nobody else saw it except – Because when I said to Paul – But, of course, he became her friend after – I mean lots of people wouldn't have known except if they'd been present at that moment. Maybe she had one outfit (UNINTEL). But, oh, I thought “Wow! M.C., you really are gorgeous in this way. [LAUGHS] In this new way.” So it's so interesting. I mean I could wear a skirt and I have one. But I've moved into trousers now in my older age. I mean I [LAUGHS] – Who knows. She was an interesting woman.

**MEH:** Okay, going back to when you arrived at Black Mountain that first summer, there were a lot of things happening. Then already the pottery seminar had been organized.

**KK:** Yes, Hamada and Leach. Charles had done that. Because he had this big institute or something, didn't he, with some of the religious people coming? He had organized that before. Von Franz.

**MEH:** That was later in the spring. But for the fall –

**KK:** But I think he was thinking of this long – Before we got there, he had made this long seminar, and maybe Hamada and Leach were the first section of it. I don't know. I never heard those words, but he could have. But he organized it without having a potter there, which was impossible, because he wasn't there any more – Turner.

**MEH:** You obviously would have been aware of Leach and Hamada.

**KK:** Oh, yeah.

**MEH:** What did they represent at that point to you in the pottery world?

**KK:** Leach was very very important for his book. He was really the leading – Maybe it was the first book, philosophic book, about pottery and everything about it that struck a chord with all the young people then. I'm not sure anybody reads it anymore, because they move from such different places. But in those days, we really wanted to be potters. We were not being – Well, if you were a sculptor, that was something else, but most of us were potters. Hamada, I always have considered him my only teacher in ceramics. His presence and his working in a quiet way. It's not just me. I mean hundreds and hundreds – Anybody who came in contact with him. Both his work and his presence and the way he

worked and everything. It was really beautiful. Just the modesty and the quiet of it. Then I saw him afterwards when he had shows in Bonniers, where I sold a few times. He was a really powerful person.

**MEH:** What particular memories do you have of the pottery seminar?

[INTERRUPTION] For the fall of '52, what recollections do you have of the seminar? It was Hamada, Yanagi, Leach, and –

**KK:** And Marguerite Wildenhain. But she didn't really present. She wasn't a presenter. She sat there. She grumbled and complained and didn't like any of it. She was not a fourth person for that particular way, because she was Germanic and had a very different idea. But because she had a previous relationship with Black Mountain they had invited her, not realizing this. They didn't know.

**MEH:** I think before you came, they felt like they needed some hostess.

**KK:** Oh, you think she was going to be the hostess?

**MEH:** I think that the idea was that they felt they did need somebody there (OVERTALK) who knew something about pottery

**KK:** Oh they did need – Oh, but she wouldn't have because what we did is we mixed the glazes for them and got them the clay and fired the kiln. She couldn't have done that, because she had nothing to do with that material. She would never have deigned to do that, because that was like a servant's role, which we were happy to do. I mean we were [LAUGHS] – You love to be a servant of somebody you respect so much. But she didn't respect them particularly, so that's not for her. Wrong mistake – because she certainly didn't throw. I mean she had nothing to do with presenting her work there. But I enjoyed meeting

her. Just seeing her garrulous nature. She was really a funny lady.

[INTERRUPTION]

**[END OF VIDEOCASSETTE 1, BEGINNING OF VIDEOCASSETTE 2]**

**MEH:** [TECHNICAL REMARKS NOT TRANSCRIBED]. Let's see. We've been talking about M.C. I do think that the Black Mountain years were years of struggle, and the Land years also. Okay, let's go back to the pottery seminar. Do you have particular memories of that seminar?

**KK:** I was so much into the experience of Hamada – of the whole thing. It was the first time I'd ever seen anything like it. I was a beginning potter. I'd just worked in Italy a little bit, really a young person. So I think it was just wonderful to be there, mostly for Hamada. I mean Leach was moving.

**MEH:** What was Hamada like? How did he work?

**KK:** Well, he sits on this wheel that somebody else has to kick – like a British wheel. To make it go around there's a kind of pedal on the floor, so somebody stood there pedaling. He just sat cross-legged because he would have – At home he would have had a Japanese style. They'd rotate it with a stick, but he didn't do that. So this person was making the wheel go around. He just worked. He made cups, he made teapots, he didn't talk. He knew how to talk English, but he pretended he didn't, in public. I mean, Leach was the talker. Just seeing him, this beautiful smiling – Somebody had given me a photograph from the workshop, a big beautiful – Oh, I would appreciate a photograph of him if you have it in your records – that I used to have over my wheel, which of course burned. It was beautiful. Then he came into our apartment and he said a few nice words about my work. He was just wonderful. I mean that's the main thing.

I don't remember any of this – I know that one of the students was from up near Stony Point, Janet Leach. She went to England afterwards and she finally married Bernard and went back to – You wouldn't have known it there. I mean people were making relationships. We didn't make contact with anybody. I mean just in a general way. Nothing else to say. I don't know who the other students were. The students didn't matter.

**MEH:** But at the end he sold his pottery?

**KK:** No, they gave them away. Did they auction them, or give them away?

**MEH:** I was thinking they sold them and then gave the money to the college. I think there's some record of that.

**KK:** If he sold them, it was to students. I don't remember. Why don't I remember? Because I don't have much of a memory. I got a teapot. I got some pieces from him, from Hamada. Probably a bowl from Leach.

**MEH:** Did they burn in the fire? Do you still have them?

**KK:** Yeah. We don't have them.

**MEH:** But you had thought – I'm just interested because for records. Had you sold that, or did you still have it.

**KK:** I sold the teapot.

**MEH:** So that may still exist somewhere.

**KK:** Oh yes.

**MEH:** Do you know who has it?

**KK:** Well, it's through Christies. I mean, we could find out, but it doesn't mean (INAUDIBLE). We desperately needed money at some point and we sold it. I have a little cup. It might be someplace downstairs. It might have survived.

**MEH:** Why did you decide to leave Black Mountain?

**KK:** Well, we knew that Black Mountain was about to finish. It was really desperate that last year. They butchered the animals and they were in the freezer. I say, like we were squeaking by because we had some income, but it was not nice to be there with all that tension and difficulty. But we might have – We probably would have stayed another year or two, if they had wanted us to still stay there. But we were not accumulating any money or anything. We were just barely living. Then that summer M.C. and – I guess she was the instigator really, but Paul Williams wanted to have a community, and he was there. So, Paul and John and M.C., I think David Tudor was always neutral about these things. [TECHNICAL INTERRUPTION] So they invited us to come up, because I mean a lot of it is she wanted – I don't remember exactly how it happened, but she wanted a pottery and we were the perfect companions for that. So, we said "Yes, yes" from the first. Then M.C. on the tape, on one of the tapes. Maybe there was a tape that Roger Phoenix made that you probably can see in the library. They have an interview with her too. She explained that they'd gone up, you know, north and looked and looked for land all over. I wasn't part of that, because I was in BMC.

**MEH:** You were at Black Mountain.

**KK:** I mean Black Mountain. I stayed there for the summer. But they were looking for a place that was near enough to commute to New York if you need to, and still be rural enough. Rockland County at that time was very rural, because the Palisades Parkway hadn't been built yet. You had to go up 9W. So all the opening up of that area came after that. They found this 114 acres with a

farmhouse, and they bought it and started building. The pot shop was the first building, because, well, we all needed that to work. There was no reason for it not to be the first building, because we lived in the farmhouse, and Vera and Paul and their children lived away from The Land. They rented a place. Those were exciting days.

**MEH:** So you really went from one community to another.

**KK:** Right. Yes. We were lucky to be at the right place at the right time. You know, so often that's what life is. You're just there at some time when something is proposed and it's what you really want in life. It was perfect.

**MEH:** At that point you had gained a little recognition for your work.

**KK:** Just barely. [LAUGHS] Barely, barely. I mean, I'd had a show at America House. All that recognition came very, very slowly. I mean just by doing the work and selling it. But I always thought that I was sort of the – The American Crafts Council is a very different place now than it was then. It was just beginning then. I was lucky enough to be just always in on the beginning of things. When you're in on the beginnings, you very quickly become part of the group. I had some pieces in some exhibitions and got a little bit of recognition. But not much. I mean the main thing is that Bonniers wanted my work, so I had this wonderful place to sell practically everything I made.

**MEH:** That was through America House?

**KK:** No, no. We just went, went in and he liked it and that was it.

**MEH:** Who was "he"?

**KK:** Well, he is a man called Görren Holmquist. He's no longer alive. But he owned Bonniers, which was a wonderful, wonderful store. Did you know about it?



**MEH:** No. That was my – When you said "Buyers" I thought this was –

**KK:** Bonniers. B-O-N-N-I-E-R-S. It was a Swedish bookstore and a Swedish and he was a Swedish-American man. But it was one store in New York that had very few American potters, but it had my work. He brought in exhibitions. I mean Lucy Rie was there and Hans Coper and Hamada had shows there. He was that kind of – He traveled around the world bringing the best things to New York, and I was lucky he loved my work, so it was there. So I didn't have to ship. I just drove it in. Stood on Madison Avenue while the police looked askance, quickly delivered it. So those were very good years for me. If you have a shop that wants your work. Fame was never part of anything. If I made my work and sold it, that was all I needed. That was just fine.

**MEH:** So the people, the Black Mountain people who were on The Land were –

**KK:** Well, you know David Tudor and then Paul Williams and his wife. Paul and Vera had both been at Black Mountain. LaNoue Davenport, his wife –

**MEH:** Patsy?

**KK:** Patsy had been at Black Mountain. She called me when she read about M.C.'s death. We had a big mailing that we sent out to raise money for the catalogue. So, I don't know if she was on that list, because she's not on my list. I haven't spoken to her for thirty years. But she really wanted to find out more about M.C. We had such a good talk, and she was so tempted to come. But she didn't really have either the time or the money or the energy. The energy more than anything. So I told her "Get a catalogue. Don't come." Because people sometimes they feel as if they should and they feel guilty if they don't, and then somebody says to them, like me, "It's all right." So she couldn't come. I think

she's living alone. It seems to me that her second husband was either dead or divorced. Did he die?

**MEH:** I'm not sure. But I saw her two years ago when I was in California. She lives in a little apartment. She's doing some beautiful things. She's very active in music and doing beautiful little collages – a Black Mountain sort of mentality.

**KK:** Because she was saying that she uses all the energy that she has to visit her children, and this just seemed like – to come all the way to Wooster, Massachusetts. I mean people did it. You saw, but it's hard. But I'm thinking, I don't know that there was anybody else. (OVERTALK). Oh, Stan Vanderbeek.

**MEH:** Betsy Williams for a while.

**KK:** Betsy Williams. That was David's sister. Now she was there for one year, perhaps.

**MEH:** Then M.C. and Tudor and Cage in the old farmhouse.

**KK:** Right. We had been in the old farmhouse until we got our own place, David and I.

**MEH:** That's a lot of people.

**KK:** Yeah. Well, John slept in the attic and David and I slept in the bedroom, M.C. and David slept in another of the bedrooms. It was fun. It was good. We cooked together. When you saw that little bit of me in the video, telling about her cooking [LAUGHS]. That may have been all. I don't know. But a lot of other people came as connections from somebody else, even though they hadn't been at Black Mountain they were friends. I would say that The Land probably had more music people than visual arts people. The early music was there and then John. I think there was a composer, Berman (?), who was there, and

Shigeku (?). There were a number of other people. But Remy. They weren't at The Land, but there were a lot of friends, the dance group. I mean for me those were just wonderful years, those first years at Stony Point, because I went in every Friday. That's my day off, and I went to the city and saw the art things and then went to events, the avant garde concerts and went to see all of Merce's concerts. They always gave me tickets, first row.

**MEH:** And you took all of that for granted.

**KK:** Well, it was just wonderful, but of course you do. But it was the years that I needed them, when you're a young person.

**MEH:** (OVERTALK) But you took for granted. I mean really you were so far out of the American mainstream. I mean these were the McCarthy years, and just the fifties and conservatism, and you all were living in –

**KK:** We just did whatever we wanted to. [LAUGHS] Luckily we weren't involved.

**MEH:** I mean but you take for granted that this was just normal, and it was really not normal at all in terms of expectations.

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

**MEH:** Or what would have happened if you and David had just settled in any community, even like a little Vermont town and started potting.

**KK:** Be so different. Well we almost could have settled in the Highland area, because it was there. The market was open. I'm very glad I didn't. It took a lot of years before it became a very lively area. We had no doubt that we wanted to come back to New York, though, because we were both New Yorkers, and we really wanted the art. I mean all the excitement that was there and that we took part in for years and years is what we – It's true. When you say it's not part

of the whole world. But it was our world, so you think that's what the world is about. Very good years. Then, as life – as I got older, it wasn't so necessary anymore. The art world changed. I still like to go and have three or four days and zip around and see everything [LAUGHS]. But I mean I'm up here where there's nothing, and it's okay. You know, life is just different. I think too as one – There was an International Woodfiring Conference in Iowa City two weeks ago. I mean I just went just before we went down to see M.C. There were people from, really potters from all over the world. It was fun. I never go to conferences, but this one was a small one. It was just four hundred people so it was very nice to be there. That whole clay world is a different clay world from the rest of the world. There are a lot of people in it. But I did have a sense, because I'd been in Minnesota a number of times, which is around where Warren MacKenzie is. He came there with his teaching. Of course, I didn't want to teach, but he was a very intense teacher. He's retired now. So he raised up a whole – many generations of potters, who are really wonderful potters, and many of them have settled in that area and Milwaukee is a really – Is it Milwaukee? That's wrong. Minneso – ? St. Paul.

**MEH:** I think St. Paul

**KK:** Minnesota. It suddenly sounded like the wrong name, but it's – But I mean around it they have a wonderful clay center and a lot of activity. I remember saying once at a talk, if I had, instead of going to New York, if I'd gone to Minnesota, I would have had a life there that would have made me very happy too, but it wouldn't have been this New York City life. So I'm not sure my work would have moved into the kind of new sculptural work that I've been doing the

last ten years because even if I don't directly relate it to the art world, the art world has always been very important to me. So underneath it, it really bears its fruit. If you're just a potter in Minnesota, it's not the same thing, just like being a potter up here. Who knows it? I mean, I look in the magazines or the newspaper. There's so many I don't even look anymore, because what's the point of looking if you have no chance to see any of it.

**MEH:** Actually I was going to ask you what, what do you think was the importance or the impact of being in this community of people at Black Mountain and at Stony Point who were working in other fields in the arts, more – not as grounded in the earth as yours.

**KK:** I don't even have the words for it. I've even answered it before you asked it. It undoubtedly made an enormous difference on so many levels one doesn't even know how to name them. Because it's not just visual arts. I mean, when you see people dancing or hear music, it's all part of one's world. I should think that living like I lived – if I would have lived here my whole life, it would be different. I don't think I would be making what I've been making. I might have been. Who knows? But I don't think so. Because you see somebody like Warren MacKenzie isn't. He's making wonderful pots, but he's doing the same pots that he's done for forty years. A lot of potters are like that. They keep following their same path, which is okay. But to sort of move out into another world, you maybe have to be conscious of the larger outside world. I don't know. Don't really know. It's interesting, because sometimes there are people who make very nice straightforward pots and then they want to really move into the art world. Well, first of all you make about ten times more for each piece – or

twenty times more. Very often they don't succeed, because it's not good. They might have made a lovely cup and a bowl, but that doesn't necessarily mean you can make a lovely sculpture. I mean what goes into the sculpture is lots of other things. Certainly being in the New York art world when I was there – it's a different world now. Even when I lived in New York I stopped going to the galleries after a while. I can't bear what's going on now. Though I'm more tolerant now. [LAUGHS] I flipped into – I could go see that figure with the breasts out of dung and I don't think it would scare me. It wouldn't revolt me, maybe. Maybe it would. But it's like when one gets older – I hope I am – I think I'm less judgmental now than I was in my middle years. You have to be judgmental at a certain point, because (OVERTALK)

**MEH:** You're defining yourself then, and you have to say "This is okay and this isn't."

**KK:** You have to be more like that when you're sort of younger and uncertain. I love to go in now. I don't do it as much as I'd like to. To really see what's going on. I have a friend that I love to go around with. We have a good time. If we at the end of a day of looking see two things that we like, it's a successful day. We always see two things. Sometimes we see five things. I mean in spite of all the stuff that's around. So we sort of go into the galleries peeking, peeking.

[LAUGHS]

**MEH:** Peek quickly and out.

**KK:** Peek quickly. [LAUGHS] But I think if you see two or three things that are really lovely or moving or important in some way, that's all you can expect. That's fine.

**MEH:** One other question. When you went from New York to – Did you have a car at Black Mountain? How did you get back and forth?

**KK:** We bought a jeep, one of those army jeeps. Little one. Very cheap. Not a big truck, just a little jeep. I remember we once – M.C. I think even was saying, I remember that we once came up to New York, the three of us, in this jeep with the dog Rocky. We were singing "Mussadog" (PH) I guess we were singing and doing things. I don't remember. [LAUGHS] We had fun. But when you sat in that – it was just a jeep with like a little canvas top. The non driver had a sleeping bag on the feet because it was cold. That's the car we had. Then when we came up to Stony Point, we sold it. Then just to show the kind of naive, wonderful people we were, Paul Williams bought a VW Beetle. It was the only car we had. A lot of people – not Paul and Vera. They must have had their own car, though I don't remember. No, Paul, it would have been his car. But (UNINTEL), he must have [LAUGHS]. We were going to the city, sometimes five people in this Beetle. It was at least a year before we bought a car. We were too poor. We were so poor. We had very little. When we lived in the farmhouse together, I think we had twenty-five dollars a person for food for a week. We would buy all our – everything – you know, toilet paper, entertain, everything. But my favorite (UNINTEL) is that – I mean sometimes a lot of the dancers would come up. We'd have big crowds from New York City, and we would get hamburger for three pounds for a dollar. So we would buy six pounds of hamburger and make a cookout outside somehow. But it was okay. We managed. It's fun to live like that, especially when you don't have children. When you're just young.

**MEH:** Your son was born while you were at The Land.

**KK:** Oh, yes. But when we moved into the house. Then the next year he was born. As soon as you're not living in the same house, things change. But that first year we played poker. M.C. said that, too. We played poker practically every night. Because John was our leader then. [LAUGHS]. We went to see every movie that was in the area, as they changed. Every movie. It didn't matter what. If we hadn't seen it before, we all went to see the movie together. In this little car.

**MEH:** One car, you'd have to go together.

**KK:** I haven't gone to the movies since. Because Ann hates movies. [UNINTELLI WORD] I probably haven't really seen movies since 1958 or something. Then the poker games stopped for me, because I would come over from my own house too and play poker with them. Our poker for years was penny poker. It was fun. It was not serious. We were serious, but there was no real shark there. Just really fun. So you could laugh and you could just have a good time. Then somebody – I don't know who – somebody came and suddenly began betting quarters and fifty cents. Somebody raised the ante like that, and I think I lost about eight dollars. I stopped playing poker. I said, this is beyond me. I couldn't – With a penny, I could lose as much as I – If I lost a dollar, it was a lot of money. But I wasn't really a gambler. I mean I wasn't really a gambler to take part in something that felt to me – Then the thing became tenser too. As soon as you get money involved, then it becomes a real game.

**MEH:** Pennies are fun.

**KK:** Yeah. Well, we played wild cards. We did everything. But on that level, where you're just doing it for fun. But I remember, as soon as this one person came in,



the others kept it up, probably. I mean it became maybe for them a real game.

Though I don't think John was really a gambler. I think he did whatever. I think living with John was a good experience.

**MEH:** Do you have particular memories of him from that period?

**KK:** Well, he was always telling jokes and telling stories. He also liked to – now I'm probably saying it very tactlessly – he played the baby to M.C. and I. We were his mothers. [LAUGHS] This brilliant person, who he was, and he was then, too. But in our family group, it was like "Oh no, no, no, no. No, no, no. Come on." Just little things and we would immediately kiss him and give in to him. [LAUGHS] Isn't that interesting. This brilliant person, he had this underside of being really – He probably just loved being able to behave foolishly and let himself go with us. Sometimes he'd talk seriously, but rarely. Rarely, in that atmosphere. I think he had to have – We were his family, so he wouldn't have to do that. Well, I'm sure he did with M.C. at times, but not much. But he was fun. I mean fun was a big part of living together. I think we've said enough.

**MEH:** That's fine. Do you have any other memories of Black Mountain or any reflections on it, positive or negative, in terms of how it worked or didn't work? What it meant?

**KK:** I know often when I've given workshops – I don't think my analysis is going to be original – but young people are so curious about Black Mountain, so I tell them a little bit. Then they ask "Why did it close? Oh why did it close?" My analysis is this was the fifties. The times. It's just like earlier in the period, young people, before the War, they were looking for alternative ways of existing and finding out – so they were going there. Then the War just stopped it. When

those soldiers came back, they didn't want alternative. They wanted to get on with their lives. So I'm sure that that must have dropped the base of students. Students were –

**MEH:** Actually, the soldiers did come, but then the GI Bill ran out. There was a big drop. I think the fifties, definitely.

**KK:** The fifties with McCarthy. I mean the whole tone of the country was anti-experimental. I mean anybody going there would be called a Communist or something.

**MEH:** Even last night I was looking at television in this motel and they were doing a biography of Ingrid Bergman. The fact that she was denounced on the floor of Congress as an immoral woman.

**KK:** When she slept with the wrong – Yeah.

**MEH:** I mean, I'm afraid it could happen again in the state we're going right now, the direction we're going. But just think that this could be done.

**KK:** Right. In our lifetimes. This wasn't in 1850 or something. (OVERTALK)

**MEH:** (UNINTEL) in Salem. But to realize that. –

**KK:** We do go through these waves, don't we. What I say to these young people, too, if Black Mountain had hung on, been able to exist until the sixties, it would have blossomed again. After that fifties period then the sixties came in, and then people – But they didn't have money, but their parents had money. They might have, they might have revived again. You know, the kind of Olson's Black Mountain, which was not the Albers Black Mountain. We're talking – when you say "Black Mountain," people think it's one thing. It's so different, the time of the beginning, and the time of Albers was totally different.

**MEH:** The time you were there, '46 to '54.

**KK:** I think when they were there, they were very authoritarian and German, and "This is how you do it." They might have been experimental on some level, but they were really an organized school like the Bauhaus. Then with the later period with whats-his-name, it was very different, very different. Very experimental. Really far out. There were so many – It also seemed to me that Olson was taking some of these really ordinary young people and really blowing them up, which might not have been good for them. Though it might have been excellent for them. I don't know. Because he was always searching for genius, and I don't know how many geniuses were in that group. Maybe some. Some.

**MEH:** I think part of his way of thinking was sort of in these superlatives.

**KK:** Yeah. But just think of a young person coming from a little town in Idaho or something and coming there. Then he does this little bit of something and then Olson, this Great Person, just plays him up. I mean that's not really – I mean it can be very destructive to him. I don't know how much it helps. Maybe it does. I don't know enough of history of how young people pass through that and what happened to them at the end.

**MEH:** In that period you definitely need a critical eye.

**KK:** But it didn't affect us. I'm saying that my life went on, right way over here. Personally it was fine. People coming down. Of course the summers were wonderful when they had one of those abstract expressionist painters came down. It was marvelous.

**MEH:** The summer was very different from the winter.

**KK:** Oh, totally different. When you got those painter people – and Merce is not a flibberty-gibbety. I mean Merce and John, too. They'd come down very clear about what's going on. It may not be the traditional thing but whatever it is they're doing is really powerful. So they got a strong energy. Yeah. But those people wouldn't stay there in the winter. That's not what they were doing. Of course, Albers was there all year round. If some of the people from New York had thought to stay there.

**MEH:** Do you have any particular memories of parties that we haven't spoken about? Or celebrations? Performances?

**KK:** I'm not remembering. I mean I know they had them. I remember being told that you need a long skirt when you go to Black Mountain. I thought that was wonderful. To have to even think of getting dressed up on Saturday night was wonderful.

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

**KK:** Isolation from the local people?

**MEH:** [AFFIRMATIVE]. And from a big city. I mean when you were at The Land, you could go down to New York one day a week.

**KK:** I mean maybe it was all right, because there was so much going on there. Maybe they didn't need it. I should think going to Asheville wouldn't have been a big kick besides the movie theatre. Maybe – I mean maybe isolation was good, because it really centered it in on themselves instead of going other places. Maybe it would have been much harder. Maybe you couldn't have had that kind of place, twenty miles out of New York City. It would have been too

much of a distraction or something, when you go to one place like that. If the energy's there. Just think, it held really important people. They didn't seem to mind. I think it was all right. Living outside of the community, communities often did that. I mean we did that in Stony Point. I don't remember my neighbors. But I don't know my neighbors here. I live too much in my own life. Ann knows a lot more people because she's out in the world more. We have a few good neighbor friends, but I don't drop in across the road to have coffee with my neighbor. I don't. Whoever. I never did that ever [LAUGHS]. It's not been my life.

**MEH:** Did you visit Penland at all when you were at Black Mountain?

**KK:** We might have gone up once, but it was a weaving school. It had nothing to do with – We went to see Daniel Boone, someplace up there – in Boone, North Carolina. He made me certain pottery tools on his forge. We went to some of the local potters. When we had our car, we did a little amount of running around. Not very much

**MEH:** Did you have any contact with other potters working in the area?

**KK:** No. I don't think there were many. There might have been some of the traditional potters, but we weren't that interested in them. But I don't have any here either. [LAUGHS] I'm not one to ask. I didn't have them in Stony Point. I've never been a joiner. I mean at some point I supported all the organizations, but I never went to their meetings. It's one thing to give them a membership. I mean there's a Vermont Council. I give them my twenty-five dollars or thirty-five dollars. I'm a member, but I've never gone to a meeting, because that isn't what I do. But for people who love meetings, that's fine. Maybe as I get older I'll be

more tolerant. Because time is so short. Time is short. I think that's it.

[INTERRUPTION IN TAPING]

**[END OF INTERVIEW; END OF TRANSCRIPT]**